

> Season of Creation



Worship

During the Season of Creation we turned our attention to the Earth, Humanity, the Sky and Mountains.

We were reminded of our place in creation - not as the centre but as part of the wholeness. We were encouraged to see creation differently, to embrace the vocation of serving and watching over the earth, to listen for the solid speech of God and to live out the reconciling grace of our creator along the way of the cross, embodying together the radical newness of Peace Mountain here in this city.

Our thanks to Ian Ferguson, Brad Coath and Graeme Garrett for their inspiring reflections.

Thank you to Shawn Whelan for the song [‘Where were you?’](#) Dave engaged in conversation with families about solar panels, composting and soft plastic. We were all encouraged to make commitments to act for climate justice.

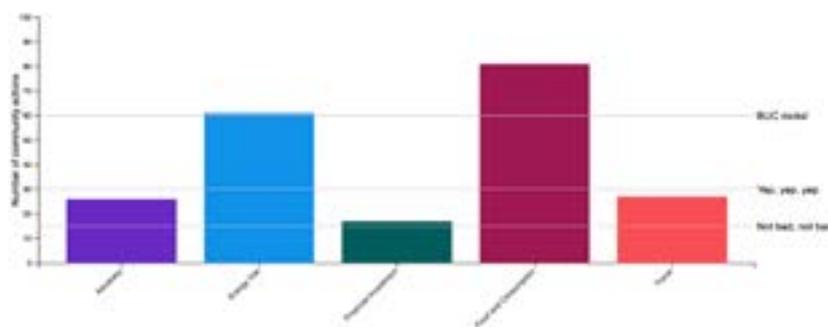
Once again in lockdown our worship was pre-recorded and offered on YouTube. Our thanks to everyone who contributed from their homes. Thank you also to Ian for the many beautiful photos.

Saide Cameron, on behalf of the worship committee

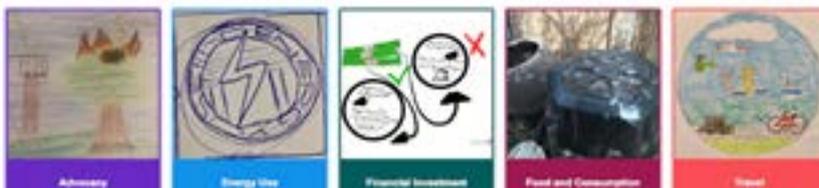
Tracking BUC’s climate commitments

Why did I make a climate action graph?

One of the goals of BUC’s Climate Action Plan is to ‘encourage and empower’ BUC households to act on climate change at home. The Climate Action Group wanted to make some progress on this during the Season of Creation by inviting people to contribute leaves to a paper tree. Each leaf would represent a pledge – an action their household would (re-)commit to – and attach to one of five branches representing our 5 action categories, Advocacy, Energy Use, Food and Consumption, Financial Investment and Travel. Over the Season of Creation, the tree would bloom and grow. This would give a tangible impression of how effective we can be together when we all do what we can, and also help us share ideas for actions. As the Season approached, it became apparent that we wouldn’t be able to physically add leaves to a wall, so I proposed a digital alternative. Rather than watching a tree bloom, we would see bars shoot towards targets.



Explanation: The graph counts the actions that BUC households have committed to either are already doing in each of the five categories shown. The actions included in each category are listed below the graph. Some actions have been committed to by multiple households, each household adds to the 'total count' (e.g. if 3 households compost and 2 households grow vegies, that's 5 actions in the graph for Food and Consumption).



How does it work? (For geek’s eyes only)

I really wanted the bars to shoot up, to ‘gamify’ it a bit. I hadn’t done that before, so I googled it and worked out that the d3 JavaScript library could do everything I wanted: read data from a csv (spreadsheet) file, and make an animated graph and action lists based on that data with coordinated colours. I had only a glancing acquaintance with d3 so getting the basics to work took a bit more googling and some experimenting on my Monash computer (thanks, Monash!), which already had a local server set up. Then I tabulated the initial real data from previous pledges that were already published on the website in narrative/dot point form. Next, I had to shoehorn the whole thing into the BUC WordPress pages. That was an eye-opener! Very frustrating that you can’t just fiddle with the html... thanks, Saide, for the patient tutorials! After adjusting my code for the times WordPress inserted extra divs without warning (!), I added the cool logos provided by Clementine, Hamish, Oscar

and Susannah. Saide and Shawn added the photo and made the page formatting fit the rest of the website, and it was ready to publish. [Watch the graph grow here.](#)

How do we add commitments to the graph?

When you email me your climate actions, I add them to my commitments spreadsheet, then replace the file in the BUC website. Then I check that the bars haven’t gone off the graph and that’s it! I’ll email you back when it’s done, so if you haven’t heard back after a week, give me a nudge to check I didn’t miss your email (and my apologies if that’s true for anyone).

Is it too late?

It’s definitely not too late to send me your commitments! In fact, I’d love to add a fourth target – email me if you have an idea what the fourth target should say. In the meantime, thanks for helping to prove ‘scientifically’ that BUC rocks!

Kate Scull

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Earth Sunday



Humanity Sunday



Sky Sunday



Mountain Sunday

'From little things.....'

or how buying unpackaged food has a flow-on effect to other sustainable actions.

Twenty years ago, a handful of BUC people, inspired by the Christian call to care for the earth, founded a food co-op. The continuing aim of the co-op is to reduce food packaging, and its impact on the environment. We buy in bulk and make dry food and cleaning products available to members at monthly distribution days. Our approximately 60 members equally represent general community households and BUC congregation members.

But members haven't joined just for the unpackaged (and cheaper) food. There's the community aspect. The buzz at each monthly gathering is an indication of the values member share.



There is time to catch up and share ideas about how to live more sustainably, reducing our footprint on the earth in a range of ways. Workshops on vegetable gardening, composting, worm farms and beeswax wrap making have inspired people to try new things. Our Facebook page is a platform for sharing photos of new initiatives, recipes and opportunities to learn more about sustainable living. Its highly likely that anyone who has ever been part of the co-op will have taken further steps to broaden their understanding of household sustainability and other actions to address climate justice. We haven't surveyed this formally but a quick straw poll amongst members indicates there is less petrol-powered vehicle use, more cycling, walking or public transport use, minimising soft plastics, less red meat and more vegetable consumption, installation of solar for electricity and hot water, more food grown at home (thanks Lockdown!), up-cycle and recycle clothing and household items, composting food waste. The list goes on.

Across the years we've probably welcomed around 250 member households to our co-op. Every small or larger sustainable action taken contributes to the common good. We are proud

that we've helped seed new food collectives in regional areas and, more recently, in surrounding northern suburbs.

During September at BUC we celebrated the Season of Creation highlighting Earth, Humanity, Sky and Mountains. Food co-op members actively participated in the BUC households-act-for-climate project, contributing many practical actions to swell the graphs. Thanks everyone!

The pandemic has impacted on our ability to open for food distribution but we are taking this opportunity to review our mission and ongoing operations. We look forward to the next chapter in the story of the Food Co-op.



Helen Rowe



5/9, [Season of Creation, Earth Sunday](#), [Genesis 1:1-2:4](#) Ian invited us to a time to rest in the wonder of the world and to join all creatures in praising our creator; and a time to recommit to working with our creator for the renewal of the world. On Earth Sunday, we celebrated the good Earth, while also lamenting her pain and humanity's part in causing that pain.



Dave (cleaning his solar panels) and Joel, joined by Raffa and Sofia, talked about climate change and Child Safe Week. They shared ideas about what we can do to make a difference.



Ian began his reflection '[Seeing Creation Differently](#)' speaking of his experience of attempting to take photos of the Whiteplumed Honeyeater explaining that 'they are helping me see my home, my lockdown prison, as part of a larger and more diverse habitat than I am normally aware of.' He asked 'What might it mean to see the earth differently, from backyard to far horizons, to see it all as God's creation, the realm of the divine?' Ian introduced us to the work of eco-philosopher Tim Morton who coined the term "hyperobject" as

a name for a real event or phenomenon so vast that it is beyond human comprehension, referencing Global Warming. He also referred to Douglas Adam's satirical view of humanity's sense of self-importance. Ian then turned our attention to the Genesis story wondering if 1:26 is where it all began and contrasted this with Jesus' divine dominion. 'The kingdom of God, divine dominion, has come near, says Jesus, and so, he goes on, repent and believe in the good news. Repent and Believe – two words that have been so reduced in meaning, rendered morally and spiritually trivial, so that they don't ask too much of us any more.' Exploring this further Ian concluded 'That's believing, living by faith. ... Faith that helps me to see my home the earth and its loving creator as so much more than my mind and my life can contain or control. And to live in it with repentant love – love for God and my neighbours of every species, love which changes me and contributes to the divine renewal of the world.'



[Read the order of service](#) or [watch again on YouTube](#)



12/9, [Season of Creation 2, Humanity Sunday](#), [Genesis 1; 26-28 and 2:5-9,15](#) Ian welcomed us to worship saying 'We praise God for the wonder of the world, we reflect on our place in the world, and we commit to the renewal of the world - this world that God loves so much that she comes to be part of it in a human life.'



Brad and Dave chatted about veggie scraps, composting, growing veggies at home, trying to source food locally, with little packaging. We encourage people to head to the website to add their actions. Clara and Hudson joined in as cameos.



We welcomed Brad Coath, member of our congregation, as our preacher. For [Humanity Sunday](#) Brad invited us into his & Colleen's daily walking practice a time which offers beauty and lament. Referencing Ched Myer's book *Watershed Discipleship* he spoke of the way in which humanity overlays the natural landscape with a and urban grid 'the antithesis of a watershed'. Turning our attention to the two readings from Genesis Brad reminded us that the first part 'has been one of the key texts used to justify colonial expansion and exploitation of the earth for economic gain'. He examined and questioned this interpretation through the work of Biblical scholars. Looking then at the second reading Brad noted that it 'might help us to see humanity's vocation in the created order more clearly' helping us to understand humanity's place as vocational. Finally Brad asked 'How might we exercise a vocation to serve and preserve?' Brad affirmed that 'This vocation, of course, is a far cry from the kind of exploitative domination of the earth that we see all around us, as land and its resources are turned into commodities for profit. Yet, if we look a little harder, we can see ways in which this divine mandate to serve and watch over the earth is being lived out.' offering examples of what this looks like in action. He concluded 'God invites us into this vocation of serving and watching over the earth. May we know the imagination and creativity of God's Spirit as we seek to live it out.'

[Read the order of service](#) or [watch again on YouTube](#)



19/9, Season of Creation 3, Sky Sunday, Mark 15:33-39, Psalm 19:1-10, 14 Kirsty Bennett welcomed us to worship commenting that We often see the sky, or the heavens, as a backdrop or a passive bystander, rather than as a key player in creation, in God’s story, in our story. When we look more carefully, we can see in it the solid speech of God.



Dave and Susannah talked about the impact of soft plastics on our environment and shared examples of how recycled soft plastic is used to make furniture and boardwalks.



We welcomed Rev Graeme Garrett, member of our congregation, as our preacher. Graeme offered us a meditation on Psalm 19 - [The heavens declare](#). Acknowledging the mystery and grandeur of the sky Graeme instead turned our attention the strangeness of what Psalm 19 is asking us to consider ‘Not just that the sky – both daytime and the night-time sky – is magnificent, and as such manifests, at least to the eye of faith, the grandeur of God. But that sky, day and night, speaks. It tells, it proclaims, it pours forth

speech, it declares knowledge – of God.’ Graeme examined the paradox evident in the psalm and invited us to approach the how question ‘by way of sacraments’. Graeme commented that the water of baptism ‘speaks - precipitating us ‘into the presence of the God in ways that words can’t match.’ Graeme spoke of the relationship between sun and earth - bridegroom and bride. ‘This union of bridegroom and bride engenders astonishing life. The brimming vitality of the planet. That’s a word of God, says the psalmist. It speaks God’s joy in creating. All the world. All the time. Do you hear it? Do you feel it in your body?’ Graeme offered us a final sting in the line ‘And nothing is hid from its heat’ and concluded ‘In a time when rising planetary temperature, caused by flooding the living air with CO2, is threatening the life of the cosmic bride, we would do well to attend to this word of God also, which now pours forth, day unto day and night unto night.’ ‘Nothing – nothing – is hid from its heat.’ Do we hear it? Do we feel it in our bodies?



[Read the order of service](#) or [watch again on YouTube](#)



26/9, Season of Creation, Mountain Sunday, Matthew 28:16-20, Isaiah 65:17-25 Saide Cameron welcomed us to worship turning our attention to the mountain, God’s holy mountain and the beauty and diversity of the mountains.



Tim & Meredith Budge shared their love of creation speaking about the conversion of a petrol quad bike to electric and sharing this resource on their mountain property.



Opening his reflection [Peace Mountain](#) with Isaiah’s words Ian asked ‘So, where is that place? Peace Mountain? When have you been there and what did it feel like?’ He spoke of not being able to visit his own Peace Mountain - Macalister Springs in the Victorian High Country. Acknowledging then that Isaiah is speaking in visions and symbols he wondered what we should be looking out for in Brunswick. Ian explored the separation of the natural world and cities commenting that ‘Some ecologists say we should do away with the concept of “Nature” altogether in order to recapture a necessary sense of unity and wholeness and interdependence with the nonhuman world’. He affirmed Isaiah’s vision as ‘a radically new world of peace, a new city right where we are.’



Ian reflected on the impact of our choices on the ecosystems of places like Macalister Spring commenting ‘Much depends on how we live here in the city, on what we do here to build harmony and healing and mitigate the effects of climate change.’ Concluding Ian turned our attention to Jesus who from a place of violence builds a new mountain with his body from where ‘he sends his followers, us, to build that place of peace where we live, in our bodies and in the body of our community, the body of Christ. Let’s do it. Let’s live out the reconciling grace of our creator along the way of the cross, embodying together the radical newness of Peace Mountain here in this city.



[Read the order of service](#) or [watch again on YouTube](#)