



Canford
PARISH CHURCH

 CANFORD MAGNA CHURCHES



Life Group &
Bible Study Groups
Study Booklet

Introduction

'The Lord said to Job

'Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone –

while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

The irony in the passage above from Job 38:4-7 puts humanity in its rightful place when it comes to the massive questions our global community faces. If we truly believe God created the world we have to also honour the special responsibility we have been given to steward this precious planet. As Job and his friends were humbled after they felt they had all the answers, so we too have to look to God and the Bible for guidance to fix the biggest global emergency currently affecting our world – climate change.

As we begin Lent this weekend our special focus for this next 40 days is going to be Care of God's Creation. This is the Church of England's Lent Campaign for 2020, [#LiveLent](#), and each day involves a small challenge to change our habits. I'd love you all to engage in this study and sermon series – do join a Life Group to get involved. Our [website](#) has got details of all the links to books, videos and resources.

This isn't something that just affects us individually. It affects children and their children, and our brothers and sisters around the world, where the impact of climate change is being felt even more acutely. To quote the Archbishop:

God has entrusted us to look after his wonderful creation. We are called to care for and honour God's creation as a way of delighting in its Creator. We are also called to care for our brothers and sisters all over the world who face having their families uprooted and their livelihoods destroyed by the effects of climate change. As part of our discipleship to Jesus Christ every single one of us has a responsibility to live a life of stewardship.

Do engage. Do join in. If we all make small changes it can add up to a big impact on our beautiful world.

Chris Tebbutt



March 2020

About Canford and our Life Groups

Canford's vision is 'To become a vibrant, overflowing, multi-generational Church growing in the likeness of Christ'. Our values are that we will be 'Authentic, Joyful, Compassionate and Intentional'.

As an evangelical charismatic Anglican church, we place a high priority on Bible-based ministry, together with a commitment to be open and give space for the work of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.

We believe that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." and so we see studying the Bible, individually and in groups, a vital part of growing in our faith in Jesus Christ.

Consequently, we strongly advise all our members to join a Life Group. In Life Groups we pray and worship, study the Bible, discuss and debate, enjoy fellowship and mutual pastoral support. We also encourage Life Groups to think about supporting one of our Mission Partners in prayer and practical ways. We also see belonging to a Life Group as a sign of unity within the church. There will be times when we are encouraged to study and work through issues together.

If you are not in a Life Group, or Bible Study Group, and you'd like to be, please have a word our Life Group co-ordinator, Sandra Webster,
churchwarden@canfordparish.org

There is not a mass of information in each study – the reason being that we want the Holy Spirit to prompt discussion at each Life Group meeting, rather than give each member information overload. If you want more background think about getting one of the excellent books listed in the next section. But remember, the best commentary is the Bible itself, especially if you pray and ask God to reveal his precious Word to you through the Scriptures.

The suggested format for each week is

Welcome – a warm up exercise or reflection to begin the evening – this may be with refreshments or you may have those at the end.

Worship – it is good to worship together – prayer and praise unites us the body of Christ.

Word – the core to each of our Life Group evenings is our Bible Study. Through it we not only gain knowledge but also hear other insights from other group members. These questions are merely there to stimulate your thoughts rather than setting a limit on the true meaning of the Scripture.

Witness – having learned something new, how is the Holy Spirit prompting you to apply it in your everyday life? How has this study changed you to become more like Jesus Christ?

Recommended books

Saying Yes to Life, Ruth Valerio, SPCK

[#LiveLent](#), available hardcopy and as an App, SPCK

Genesis, Walter Bruggemann, Interpretation

The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17, Victor Hamilton, NICOT

Genesis 1-11, JW Rogerson, Sheffield Academic Press

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1 March Let there be light Genesis 1:1-5

Welcome

Welcome all the members to the group. Talk about how the daily readings are going. (If you haven't already started, you can look [here](#) to find the App or call into the office for a hardcopy booklet). If you are a new group go round the group just introducing yourselves.

Worship

Invite the Holy Spirit in prayer. There may be differences in opinion on Scripture, the urgency of Climate Change, and our Christian response.

Sing Songs of Fellowship 3-1419 'Light of the World' or watch the video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MmRGSEG2LM>

Word

Read Genesis 1:1-5

Watch the introductory 14 minute [video](#) to the series.

1. In the book, Wangari Maathai remarked, 'One is left to wonder whether conceiving of God as the origination of all that is would make people of faith recognize that they have a responsibility to be the custodians of God's creation and, in the process, their own survival'. Take time to reflect on this. What place does God as creator have in your faith and in that of your church? How might it make a difference if that understanding was more strongly emphasized?
2. Do you agree with the statement made by Chris in Sunday's opening sermon, 'There is an inextricable link between creation and salvation? How does Scripture support your argument?'
3. Where does light feature in your own life? Can you share any particular experiences that have given you a new appreciation of light?

Witness

All of us need to make changes if the climate crisis is to be averted. What changes have you made over the past decade and what further changes would you consider making in the future, bearing in mind we all have to half our emission of CO2 in the next ten years if we are to reach the climate target of net zero and 1.5 degrees by 2050?

What changes would you like to see our church make?

Light of the world

You stepped down into darkness

Opened my eyes, Let me see

Beauty that made this heart adore you

Hope of a life spent with you

Here I am to worship

Here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that you're my God

You're altogether lovely

Altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days
So highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

8 March Let the waters be separated Genesis 1:6-8

Welcome

Welcome to week 2 of the study. How is the App or [#LiveLent](#), book going? This week we are challenged about our use of, care for, and sustainability of water. Also, about how we often take water for granted but others have to walk miles for even the smallest drop.

Worship

Do you remember that children's song 'Have you heard the raindrops'?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3OQEVBmndA>

It's an incredibly simple and some may say childish song, but it does connect us with the idea of our need for physical water with the need for all humanity to connect to God through Jesus, the living water of life.

Pray for those areas that are experiencing drought around the world, and also for those experiencing flooding in the UK at the moment. Pray also that the Living Water will flow into those parts of our nation parched by apathy to the Gospel.

Word

Read [Genesis 1:6-8](#)

Watch the 11 minute video for this week where Ruth Valerio interviews the Archbishop of Cape Town, an area that has experienced severe water shortage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQ5SqG1Di7o>

Use the interview to explore issues surrounding water justice in parts of the world experiencing climate crisis induced water poverty.

Reflect on the passages referred to in Wendy's sermon on Sunday, particularly Ezekiel 47:1-12 (get someone to read it out). Water is used as a sign of the coming of the Lord. Why is water such a powerful symbol of the source of fruitfulness and healing? Reflect on the second reading we had in church on Sunday, John 4:1-12.

Water is there at the beginning of the Bible, and also at the end. To end this section on God's Word, read Revelation 22:1-5.

Witness

Wendy spoke about the action they had taken lately in response to the use of water in their home.

What personal action will you take to look after the world's precious resource of water and those that depend on it?

How could we as a church or as individuals support people in countries affected by poor water quality or shortages? E.g. Myra's Wells in Burkina Faso <https://www.myraswells.org>

Water of life

Have you heard the raindrops drumming on the rooftops'?

Have you heard the raindrops dripping on the ground?

Have you heard the raindrops splashing in the streams

And running to the rivers all around?

There's water, water of life, Jesus gives us the water of life;

There's water, water of life, Jesus gives us the water of life;

There's a busy workman digging in the desert,
Digging with a spade that flashes in the sun:

Growing into the likeness of Christ...

Soon there will be water rising in the wellshaft,
Spilling from the bucket as it comes.
[chorus]

Nobody can live who hasn't any water,
When the land is dry then nothing much grows;
Jesus gives us life if we drink the living water,
Sing it so that everybody knows.
[chorus]

15 March Let the land produce vegetation Genesis 1:9-13

Welcome

This week the challenge is about how we treat woodland and vegetation and what we can learn from Day 3 of Creation. What is your favourite tree, and why? The challenge is that in the same way all vegetation was all seed bearing.

Worship

Begin by singing that well known hymn 'All things bright and beautiful'.

Pray about the current health situation developing in this country and across the world (Covid-19 virus) and for wise government here and abroad. Pray for elderly members of our congregation and those who have experienced bereavement in the recent months. Thank God for the health and strength we are enjoying.

Word

Read Genesis 1:9 - 13.

Watch the next video in the series.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=12&v=vVqXJNW1MR0&feature=emb_logo

How has your life been impacted by deforestation farming? Have you visited a farm in the last year, or your ancestors had farming connections? Discuss the description (verse 11) of all the vegetation and trees being 'seed bearing'. How does that have a bearing on us?

Read Revelation 22:1- 4 What link or contrast do you see with the creation story in Genesis 1:1 – 13 and this passage if any?

Read John 15:1 - 8. The Vine produces fruit and we are expected to do the same. What 3 things are required?

Witness

What can we do to help communities impacted by deforestation? Look up on the internet those Christian organisations helping churches in areas affected.

Also, thinking about our neighbours closer to home, how can we help those in our church and beyond who might have health issues during this difficult time of Coronavirus.

o *Refrain:*

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

2. Each little flow'r that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.
3. The purple-headed mountains,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky.

5. The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water,
To gather every day.

6. He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

4. The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

22 March There will be lights in the sky Genesis 1:14-19

Welcome

Matt shared his experience of looking up at the stars with his young sons. Can you remember any particular moments when the night sky caused you to look in awe. Do you remember the moon landings? Have you ever felt curious by what a horoscope might say about your life?

Watch this week's video about Cosmology and astronomy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAHf-isYdVO>

Worship

Matt said that although we are very small in the grand scheme of things, we are not insignificant. God knows us intimately and desires for us to share our lives with him. He has come to dwell in our hearts through the Spirit.

Use the words of the song below to offer up your worship to our Immanent/transcendent God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2U7ffUM5Ec>

Word

Matt shared some thoughts about the context into which our creation narrative found its completion. i.e. Babylonian exile.

How does this cause you to feel, are you ok with it, or do you think it undermines scripture or threatens your own view due to previous teachings or assumptions that you may read into the text. We are taught to disagree without being disagreeable, did you find this hard?

God separated light from darkness, night from day. How do you feel about light pollution? God separated the light from the darkness and declared it "good". Did he declare the darkness to be "good", or did he declare the separation "good"? Read Genesis 1:14-19 and discuss.

How do you feel about the amount of money and energy put into space discovery, do you think there are any moral/ethical implications? Think about such things as the Hadron Collider which is financed by over 40 countries around the world at a cost of over £6 billion. Could their findings affect your view of God as creator of the universe?

Matt said that when we look at a clear starry sky, we are compelled to worship. The beginning of Psalm 1 reads, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." Do we think that all of God's creation worships him, even the stars in the sky, by declaring his glory. Read Psalm 148:3. and sing along to 'Great in Power' by Hillsong Worship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhrnsaeHPh4>

Witness. - Let there be darkness.

1. Take a look at your gardens and see if you are providing safe dark spaces for wildlife.
2. Why not get a night vision camera to try to see who comes looking for food in your garden at night.
3. Take a look on a clear night, how is light pollution affecting your ability to see the Milky Way. (i'm not trying to make you hungry)
4. Can you spot any satellites. There are Apps available to help you see them and the International Space Station.

So Will I (100 Billion X). Hillsong Worship

God of creation
 There at the start
 Before the beginning of time
 With no point of reference
 You spoke to the dark
 And fleshed out the wonder of light

And as You speak
 A hundred billion galaxies are born
 In the vapor of Your breath
 the planets form
 If the stars were made to worship so will I
 I can see Your heart in everything
 You've made, Every burning star
 A signal fire of grace
 If creation sings Your praises so will I

God of Your promise
 You don't speak in vain
 No syllable empty or void
 For once You have spoken
 All nature and science
 Follow the sound of Your voice

And as You speak
 A hundred billion creatures catch Your breath
 Evolving in pursuit of what You said
 If it all reveals Your nature so will I
 I can see Your heart in everything You say
 Every painted sky
 A canvas of Your grace
 If creation still obeys You so will I
 So will I, So will I

If the stars were made to
 worship so will I
 If the mountains bow in
 reverence so will I
 If the oceans roar Your
 greatness so will I
 For if everything exists to lift
 You high so will I
 If the wind goes where You
 send it so will I
 If the rocks cry out in silence
 so will I
 If the sum of all our praises
 still falls shy
 Then we'll sing again a
 hundred billion times

God of salvation
 You chased down my heart
 Through all of my failure and
 pride
 On a hill You created
 The light of the world
 Abandoned in darkness to die

And as You speak
 A hundred billion failures
 disappear
 Where You lost Your life so I
 could find it here
 If You left the grave behind
 You so will I

29th March Let the waters teem with living creatures and let birds fly Genesis 1:14-19

Welcome

How are you getting on being separated from the members of your Life Group? Think about doing this study by WhatsApp or similar. You might need to break into a smaller group of about 4 or 5, otherwise the conversations become a little complicated.

Worship

Listen and sing along to either (or both) **Morning has broken** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rifby1tVE8> or **How great Thou art** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc0QVWzCv9k>

Pause and consider the beauty of the earth in all its variety. Pray for understanding and God's insight into his creation this week.

Word

Read Genesis 1: 20-23

Look at the video www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources. Listen to Prof. Meric Srokosz from the National Oceanography Centre.

Do you have a favourite sea, lake or river spot? Think of some of the tiny organisms and huge creatures that inhabit that place and wonder at the diversity.

Read Psalm 69: 34 "Let heaven and earth praise the Lord, the seas and all who move in them". Does thinking about the fish praising the Lord give you a different view of them?

Have you ever listened to "Tweet of the day" just before 6 a.m. on BBC Radio 4? How many birds can you name? What do you think about the ravens feeding **Elijah in 1 Kings 17?**

As Jesus was going to Jerusalem he longed to gather the folk under God's wings. What did that mean for them and for you? Rarely is a picture of a hen gathering her chicks seen today. What about battery hens? Should Christians buy them or their eggs? Should we go for free range?

Witness

What can we do to help steward our planet?

Do you recycle, compost, walk instead of taking the car?

Will you look round your home and see if you could reduce plastic?

Will you buy an electric/hybrid car next time round?

These are all relevant and life changing both for us and the world. Finish with a fun song. "Who put the colours in the rainbow" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9GsKFlaRo0> or 'Deep Cries out' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gFwpOjF-5o>

Thanks to Anne Gee for most of this week's study.

Preparation for next week

Chris writes: "Last week in our group we had some interesting debate about the origin of the Book of Genesis and who wrote it. Also, on creation. Les Sherlock would like to contribute his thoughts on this which dates the earth to about 6,000 years – the so called 'Young Earth Creationists' (YEC). This challenges the evolutionary

theory which many Christians have grown up with (Old Earth Creationists). For many YECs disbelief undermines the whole basis of the Bible, such as the virgin birth, the resurrection and the primacy of Scripture which of course Atheists refute as myth. Take a look at Les' website <http://inthebeginning.org.uk/index.html> and take the opportunity of looking up other, counter arguments on the internet. (But remember, not everything on the internet is necessarily true or proven.)"

5 April Let the waters the land produce living creatures and let us make humankind in our own image. Genesis 1:24-31

Welcome

Watch the video www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources, the interview with Justin Welby. In it, when asked what does it mean to be made in the image of God the Archbishop comments *'There is in the whole of creation something that witnesses to the reality of God ... and in us, there is something that witnesses to the reality of God that is constrained and misshapened the more we turn in on ourselves.'*

In his sermon Chris mentioned the need to stay connected during this period of isolation. If you're not meeting in a 'virtual group' this week, why not text or phone your buddy or a close friend and ask how they're doing.

Worship

Bless God for his wonderful creation and pray that as a global community with his help we can win the battle against the evil mutation that is Coronavirus. Pray for family and friends, those known to you in the community, and for the nation and all who are suffering in the world.

Sing *Bless the Lord, O my soul (10,000 Reasons)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JiddM>

Word

Read Genesis 1: 24-31

1. Pope Francis calls this world 'our common home' and Richard Bauckham talks of 'the community of creation'. Reflect on those two terms. What do they say to you?
2. Philip Newell writes 'The extent to which we fail to reflect the image of God in our lives is the extent to which we have become less than truly human'. What does it mean to you that all people have been made in God's image? Are there people in your circles or society you need to remind yourself have been made in God's image?
3. The book talks a lot about food and the role it plays in many of the issues in a sustainable creation. It addresses how to eat fish sustainably; using less plastic in our food; cutting out or reducing our consumption of meat; growing our own food, and supporting farmers who look after their land and don't use lots of chemicals. How willing are you to change the way you eat?
4. This is the last week of study. As we draw to a close and head into the Conclusion on Easter Day, what have you learnt through 'Saying Yes to Life'? What has been most memorable?
5. Reflecting on your part in God's creation, will this study make a difference to the way you live, and what are there things for which you need to repent?

Witness

In what ways do/can you reflect God's image in your own life in relation to other people and the wider world, especially during these difficult months of 'lockdown'.

End by blessing God by singing a great song of praise and worship, based on Psalm 150, *Everything that has breath praise the Lord* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7lvvd1JdQU>

<p><i>Bless the Lord oh my soul</i> <i>Oh my soul</i> <i>Worship His Holy name</i> <i>Sing like never before</i> <i>Oh my soul</i> <i>I'll worship Your Holy name</i></p> <p>The sun comes up It's a new day dawning It's time to sing Your song again Whatever may pass And whatever lies before me Let me be singing When the evening comes</p> <p>You're rich in love And You're slow to anger Your name is great And Your heart is kind For all Your goodness I will keep on singing Ten thousand reasons For my heart to find</p> <p>And on that day When my strength is failing The end draws near And my time has come Still my soul will Sing Your praise unending Ten thousand years And then forevermore Forevermore</p> <p><i>© Matt Redman</i></p>	<p><i>Let everything that</i> <i>Everything that</i> <i>Everything that</i> <i>Has breath praise the Lord</i></p> <p>Praise You in the morning Praise You in the evening Praise You when I'm young And when I'm old</p> <p>Praise You when I'm laughing Praise You when I'm grieving Praise You every Season of the soul</p> <p>If we could see How much You're worth Your power Your might Your endless love Then surely we would Never cease to praise</p> <p>Praise You in the heavens Join with the angels Praising You forever and a day</p> <p>Praise You on the earth now Joining with creation Calling all the nations to Your praise</p> <p><i>© Matt Redman</i></p>
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