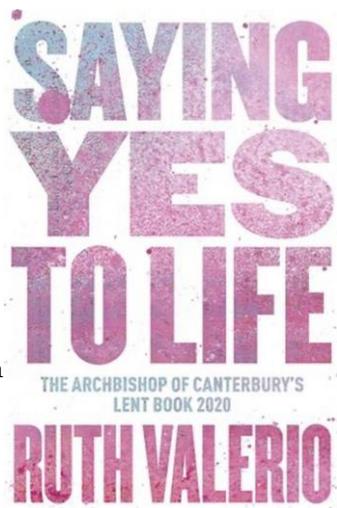


Week 5. Let the waters teem and the birds fly

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. (Genesis 1: 20-23)



Opening Prayer

Do you have a favourite place by the sea or a favourite memory of a holiday or visit to the sea or ocean?

Spend a few moments quietly in prayer thinking about this place, ask God what he might want to say to you?

The Hummingbird Story, by Wangari Maathai

The story starts with an enormous fire, which breaks out and rages through the forest. All the animals flee to the forest edge to watch – all that is except a tiny hummingbird.

'I will do something about this fire' said the tiny bird. So it flies to the nearest stream and dives beneath the surface. Rising into the air, it carries a bead of water in its beak that it releases over the flames. The fire is huge, but over and over the hummingbird flies to the stream, and returns with a droplet in its beak, and lets it fall into the flames. Each time, the bird believes that this one drop might make the difference.

The other animals – some with large trunks and large mouths like the elephant and giraffe, lion and leopard laugh at the diminutive creature, 'what do you think you are doing?' they jeer. 'You are only a hummingbird. You can see how big the forest fire is. Do you think you are going to do any good at all?'

Without wasting any time and tired of their discouraging words and inaction, the hummingbird turns to the animals, as it prepares to fly back to the river, and says, 'well I am doing the best I can!'

In this story, the Hummingbird may appear small, insignificant and vulnerable and that her actions were not making any difference. Yet each one of us can

each carry that droplet of water in our beaks, we can each make a change to the way that we live to affect our world for good and be prepared to step forward and encourage others to work together to make a difference.

Bible Reading in Groups

Read the following passages: Gen 1:20-23, Nehemiah 9:5b-8, Ps 24:1-2

- If you had to describe this passage in 3 words, what would they be?
- What does the passage tell you about who God is?
- What does it tell you about how important the seas are to God?

Group discussion:

Q1 What experiences have you had of seeing 'teeming' in the natural world? Reflect on those and take time to appreciate those experiences and thank God for them.

Q2 How do you feel about the suggestions that it is unchristian to eat meat from chickens that have been reared in cramped and intensive conditions? What are the implications of our decisions?

Q3 In the video, we are encouraged to do something. What one thing can you do that will make a difference to the environment? What can we do together to encourage our church and community to work together to make a difference to the environment?

Q4 Consider in your group all the different types of plastic you have in your home. Of the plastic items that you regularly throw away, eg cleaning products, milk containers etc – what other choices or alternatives can you use instead? Discuss.

Q5 How could we as a church together make a difference practically on plastics and sustainably/ethically sourced fish and chicken?

Resources:

Sign the Tearfund rubbish revolution petition - Let's get Coca-Cola, Unilever, Pepsico and Nestlé to take responsibility for their plastic waste. Fill in the form online and we'll add your voice to the petition:

<https://weare.tearfund.org/revolution/>

Blue Planet - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLx4fVsYdTI>

What do you think of David Attenborough's final comment, 'Surely we have a responsibility to care for our blue planet? The future of humanity, or indeed all life on earth now depends on us.'