

## National Tree Day – Sunday 30 July 2023 Resources

The PPE Climate Action Network has created the following resources to help congregations celebrate National Tree Day on the 30 July 2023:

### Prayer Resources

1. **Bookmark** – Collect your printed bookmarks from the PPE Presbytery Office, enough for everyone attending your worship gathering to have one and give one to a friend or family member as a way to start a conversation about the importance of caring for trees and how it links to your faith.
2. **PowerPoint** – included in the email with this document is a PowerPoint of the following prayer with beautiful pictures to use in your service:

Praise to you, Creator God, for trees,  
Their beauty, their generosity,  
Cool shade,  
Providing safety and rest for birds and animals,  
Fruit for food,  
Renewing the air,  
Giving us life,  
Holy Spirit we need your passion to care,  
To nurture our trees,  
In Jesus' name. Amen.

### Song Suggestions

TIS 135 – “All things Bright and Beautiful”

TIS 137 – “For the Beauty of the Earth”

TIS 155 – “How Great Thou Art”

TIS 170 – “Thank you, thank you Lord”

TIS 755 – “You Shall go out with Joy”

“God of Creation” (words by Craig Mitchell to the tune TIS 156 Morning has broken – video of this song found at <https://craigmitchell.com.au/music/>)

“The Earth is the Lord's” (words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette to the tune TIS 143 Immortal, invisible and found at [http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect\\_earthcare.html](http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect_earthcare.html), along with other new words to old hymns based on caring for creation)

### Reflecting Theologically

The Lectionary readings for this Sunday are: Genesis 29:15-28, Psalm 105:1-11 or Psalm 128, Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52.

Matthew 13:31-33, 45-52, the parable of the mustard seed, with a small seed growing into a large tree that shelters the birds of the air fits into the theme of National Tree Day. The way God grows big things from small things can talk to the life of faith and the church and the everyday actions that we do. The three parables about the kingdom

of heaven remind us of the preciousness of the kingdom, which we contribute to with our actions here and now.

Romans 8 – This chapter contains the passage where creation is groaning and longing to be set free from bondage to decay along with the children of God (Romans 8:12-23 covered on Sunday 23 July). This Sunday's reading starts with how the Spirit helps us in our weakness and helps us to pray. There are many things that we need to pray for in relation to caring for our environment.

An alternative theological approach could be to look at some biblical texts with trees in them – for example: Genesis 2:9, 16-17 and 3:1-7; Psalm 1; Matthew 12:33-37; and Revelation 21:1-6 and 22:1-2.

## Early Word/ Intergenerational

*Tina the Tree* is a story by Lost Sheep would be very appropriate for National Tree Day. You can purchase the book or download a story telling kit for the big screen from <https://www.lostsheep.com.au/stories/tina-the-tree/>

**Tree of Life** biblical theme video from The Bible Project can be found at <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/tree-of-life/> and downloaded for free. All trees can remind us of the stories of the tree of life at the beginning and end of the bible and the invitation to be joined through Jesus into God's life.

There are many interactive ways of telling the parable of the mustard seed. You could also decorate the front of your church with trees or plants or greenery.

## Take Action

1. **Plant a Tree** – We encourage you to consider planting a native tree or shrub on your church grounds. You can find advice on suitable local native trees at your local nursery or Council. You may want to encourage your congregation to invite friends or family for your special service to plant a tree. You could also organise a small plaque for the tree to highlight your concern for trees and the whole environment.
2. **Raise funds to help others plant trees** – There are many organisations that plant trees in Australia, including the Tree Project <https://treeproject.org.au/>, Greening Australia <https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/events/>, Landcare <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/>, and organisations that plant trees overseas, such as One Tree Planted <https://onetreeplanted.org/> and Ecologi <https://ecologi.com/business/impact-shop>.
3. **Work towards a Five Leaf Eco-Award** – Holding a worship service based around the environment would count for the eco-worship part of the basic Five Leaf Eco-Award. If you turn National Tree Day into a community outreach event where you invite people from the community, family and friends to join in planting trees, then that would count for the eco-outreach part of the Award. For more information and to apply for an award, go to: <https://fiveleafecoawards.org/>