

# *Cosmos Sunday*

## *(Australian Version 2)*

### *Introduction*

**Cosmos** refers to the entire universe, every dimension of time and space, spiritual and material. The cosmos is both the glittering galaxies that humans have begun to explore as well as distant domains far beyond our imagination. In addition, there are unknown domains deep within each minute molecule we have yet to comprehend. All creation is one sacred cosmos, a spiritual universe filled with God's presence.

### *Setting*

To capture a sense of the entire cosmos in worship requires imagination. We need to move beyond an anthropocentric world to an image of worlds beyond worlds with which our world is connected. One suggestion is to create a massive web of creation, a wide web of coloured cords that stretch from one side of the chancel to the other, with the altar or a cross visible behind the web. At one point in the web, Earth as a green-blue planet can be identified. The sun, stars and other images might be located on the web.

### *Special Focus*

The special focus for this service is not only the cosmos in all its immensity and wonder, but also the spiritual impulse or presence that permeates the universe and is connected with each of us on Earth. That impulse is also called Wisdom!

### *Themes*

In our call to worship we invite all the domains of the cosmos, not matter how great or small, to join us in worship. In our confession we recall how we have focused on our human selves as the centre of the universe and treated planet Earth as a garbage dump. We have also seen ourselves as pilgrims en route to heaven and considered this vast physical universe transitory and disposable. We celebrate the entire universe as our sacred cosmic home.

### *Optional Liturgies*

Additional liturgies which may be considered are *Sacred Energy: Mass of the Universe* available from Bill Wallace in New Zealand, [pathways@snap.net.nz](mailto:pathways@snap.net.nz). *The Cosmic Walk*, and *Creation Day* or *Wisdom Sunday* also on this website.

## *Songs*

A special song/hymn appropriate for this Sunday is located in *Habel Hymns Volume One*. The melody is the well-known **Amazing Grace**. The words follow.

### **THE COSMIC CHRIST**

1. Amazing is the Christ who died  
To void all sin and curse,  
Just as amazing is his life  
That fills the universe.
2. The risen Christ is more than one  
Who waits on some far shore;  
In, with and under ev'ry thing  
Christ is the living core.
3. The hidden Christ sustains for us  
The blueprint of the skies,  
The wisdom in each fragile form,  
The soul that lights the eyes.
4. The cosmic Christ moves deep below  
To heal the wounds within,  
When all creation groans in pain  
Because of human sin.
5. The cosmos hails the Christ, the One  
Who reconciles all things,  
'Til all creation rises new  
With healing in her wings.
6. As Christ unites the universe,  
Restores this Earth once more,  
A cosmic song reverberates,  
A rich symphonic score.

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*Final Sunday in the Season of Creation  
(Australian Version 2)*

## *Cosmos Sunday*

*We worship with the entire universe*



*“Praise him you highest skies” Ps.148.1*

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

*This Sunday we worship with the entire universe, conscious that the cosmos is a vast sacred space of which we humans on Earth are a minute but privileged part. We join the Psalmists and call on the skies above and the deeps below to shout with songs of praise. And we celebrate that wonderful spiritual force called Wisdom that permeates, activates and unifies the web of worlds that is our cosmos.*

- 2. A psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung when the presiding ministers enter or after the greeting.*
- 3. An Invocation, such as the one that follows, may be said before or after the greeting.*

In the name of the Creator of the cosmos,  
In the name of Christ who fills the cosmos,  
In the name of the Spirit who animates the cosmos. **Amen.**

**Holy! Holy! Holy! The Cosmos is filled with God's presence**

- 4. The Greeting. The presiding minister greets the people in these or other suitable words.*

The Cosmic Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

- 5. These or similar responses are used.*

Risen Christ,  
**Your presence fills the cosmos.**

Cosmic Christ  
**Your presence pulses  
through all galactic space  
across light years of time.**

Living Christ,  
**In this nano-second we call 'now',  
in this nano-space we call 'here',**

We celebrate your presence among us.  
**Christ, make your presence felt! Amen!**

- 6. An Invitation. The minister or members of the congregation may invite domains of the cosmos to worship in these or similar words.*

We invite the cosmos to worship with us.  
**We invite glittering galaxies high in the sky  
to radiate the splendour of God's presence.**

We call distant domains of space to celebrate with us.  
**We invite nebula, nova and black holes  
to thank God for their fascinating formation.**

We summon that piece of stardust called Earth,  
**To pulse with the rhythm of God's presence  
and celebrate God's glory in this planet garden.**

We invite millions of living species to dance with life,  
**The turtle, the toad and the elephant,  
the earthworm, the ant and the dragonfly.**

We invite every creature in the web of creation  
**To consciously connect with others  
in this community called the cosmos.**

Dance, creation, dance!  
**Dance with cosmic energy!**

7. *A hymn or song may follow which celebrates creation, especially the vast and diverse domains of the cosmos. Children or other members of the congregation may enter the church holding symbols of our cosmos—stars, galaxies, comets, stardust, black holes, large birds and tiny genes. They may place these symbols in the chancel or hang them from a wide cosmic web stretching across the chancel.*

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

8. ***A Remembering.** A small piece of rosemary, eucalyptus leaves or some other fragrant symbol of remembrance may be given to the people as a reminder of our past connection with creation.*

As we rub this fragrant symbol in our hands we remember times when we were acutely conscious that we were intricately connected with a vast world of time and space.

We are conscious of our place in the cosmos.  
**We remember moments of wonder,  
sensing the infinite world of space,  
connecting with endless networks in time  
and feeling the mystery of the moment.**

We remember and rejoice.  
**Thank you, God, for making us aware  
of our special place in your web of creation.**

**9. A Confession**

We remember and confess  
that we have striven to discover other world,  
while polluting our own atmosphere and  
ignoring the needs of others  
with whom we are closely connected  
in that part of the web of creation.

**We are sorry.**

**We have polluted Earth's atmosphere  
and cut a hole in the ozone layer.**

**We have turned our greed into global warming.**

**We have ignored our crucial connection  
with those parts of creation where we live.**

**We are sorry.**

**10. The Absolution.** *The people may sit in silence or they may name aloud sins against those domains of the cosmos with which we are closely connected. The presiding minister declares the absolution.*

Christ hears your confession and forgives your sins  
against your part of the cosmic community.

**Christ, teach us to love the domains  
that surround and sustain our planet.**

I speak for Christ:

I invite you to come home to Earth  
by rejoicing under her galaxy.

**Shalom! Shalom! We are coming home!**

**11. The Kyrie.** *The minister may add the Kyrie Eleison.*

As we come home to Earth,  
**Christ, have mercy.**

As we seek to love our home,  
**Christ, have mercy.**

As we seek to care for our planet,  
**Christ, have mercy.**

**12. The Gloria in Excelsis,** *a suitable hymn of praise or the following invocation may be said or sung.*

Glory to God in the highest!  
**And peace throughout the cosmos.**

**13. The Collect of the Day.** *The presiding minister may say:*

Let us pray.

*The community may pray silently. The following collect is said or sung.*

**God, our Creator, as we reflect on the mysteries of the cosmos, we celebrate the wondrous design of the universe and the Wisdom that guides its course. Help us to discern how we are connected with living members of the cosmic community. Teach us to sense the presence of the cosmic Christ, whose presence fills and reconciles all forces in creation. Amen.**

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

*14. All may sit for the first three readings for the Final Sunday in Creation, and rise for the Gospel. After each reading the reader may say:*

This is the word of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*15. A reading from Proverbs chapter 8 verses 22-31.*

‘The Wisdom Behind the World’. Wisdom is portrayed as a woman speaking. She claims to have existed before God created the cosmos and was a partner with God in the design of each part of the universe.

*15. A reading from Psalm 104 verses 24-26.*

‘A World Created by Wisdom’. The whole world is formed by the Wisdom of God thereby giving it all its parts, laws, design and purpose. That world even includes domains where God ‘plays’ with wild creatures in the ocean.

*16. A reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians chapter 1 verses 15-20.*

‘Christ, the Cosmic Power’. Christ is here introduced as the Cosmic One who is not only a force before all things existed but the one who is now the unifying impulse in all creation.

*18. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John chapter 6 verses 41-51.*

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

‘Living Bread from Heaven’. Jesus claims to be have been sent by the Father, the Creator of the cosmos. As such, Jesus is that bread from another cosmic realm who offers life to those on Earth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*19. A Children’s Address: ‘The Web of Creation’ may be told by a storyteller or by means of a puppet. A hymn or song suitable for children may be sung.*

*20. **The Affirmation of Faith.** The Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed may be said here or after the sermon, or this Affirmation of Faith may be used.*

God creates all things,  
renews all things and celebrates all things.

**This we believe.**

Earth is a sanctuary,  
a sacred planet filled with God's presence,  
a home for us to share with our kin.

**This we believe.**

God became flesh and blood  
a piece of Earth,  
a human being called Jesus Christ,  
who lived and breathed and spoke among us,  
suffered and died on a cross,  
for all human beings and for all creation.

**This we believe.**

The risen Jesus  
is the Christ at the centre of creation  
reconciling all things to God,  
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

**This we believe.**

The Holy Spirit renews life in creation  
groans in empathy with a suffering creation  
and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

**This we believe.**

**We believe that with Christ we will rise  
and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.**

*21. **A Sermon.** This may be followed by a time of congregational reflection involving questions and discussion and mutual encouragement. The sermon may be followed by a hymn that reflects the message of the sermon.*

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*22. **The Prayers.** One or more members of the congregation may lead the people in prayer. The prayers conclude with the following prayer or another suitable prayer.*



**Jesus Christ, teach us to empathise with Earth.  
Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation,  
cries for justice from the air, the clouds and the sky.  
Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit  
in creation, groans of longing for a new creation.  
Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin,  
songs of celebration from the stars, the rains and the light.  
Christ, teach us to care. Amen**

*23. A hymn or song may be sung.*

## **THE GREETING OF PEACE**

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.  
**We meet in Christ's name and share God's peace.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

*24. **The Greeting of Peace** may be shared by the people, after which the gifts of the people are brought to the Lord's table. They may be presented in silence or a suitable prayer, such as the one that follows, may be used.*

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share.  
Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and signs of our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.  
**With all creation, we praise our Creator.**

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*25. **A Prayer of Thanksgiving.** The presiding minister takes the bread and wine for the communion, places them on the Lord's Table and says the following or an authorised Prayer of Thanksgiving.*

The Creator be with you and all creation.  
**And also with you.**

Open your hearts.  
**We open them to our Creator.**

Let us give thanks to the Maker of the universe.  
**It is right to join the cosmos in thanking God.**

God our Creator,  
source of everything in the universe,  
we bring before you this day,  
bread and wine  
and with it we bring before you the whole cosmos to say:  
**Thank you, Creator God, thank you!**

Thank you for joining the web of creation  
for living and dying among us  
to redeem us and all creation:

**Thank you, Redeemer God, thank you!**

Thank you for rising to life  
permeating the cosmos with your Spirit  
to sustain and heal all things:

**Thank you, Spirit God, thank you!**

Therefore with voices of thanks  
echoing through the cosmos  
from the first day of creation  
until this very moment in time,  
we praise and thank you saying:

**Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of all life!  
The cosmos is filled with your presence!**

*26. **The Consecration.** The presiding minister says an authorised prayer of consecration, words of institution or other suitable prayer.*

*27. **The Lord's Prayer,** if not already used, may be said here or after the communion.*

## **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION**

28. **The Invitation.** The presiding minister breaks the bread. The following invitation may be said.

Come, for all things are now ready.  
Come to the table and share with all in need:  
the gift of healing for those in pain,  
the gift of forgiveness for those in sin,  
the gift of assurance for those in doubt,  
and the gift of hope for those in tears.

**May we who share these gifts  
share Christ with one another  
and all our kin in the cosmos.**

*29. **During the communion, psalms, hymns or anthems may be sung, including the following:***

**Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against God,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against Earth,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, who takes away all sin from the world,  
receive our prayer.**

*30. **The Distribution.** The people receive the Holy Communion. As the people return to their places, they may light a candle in memory of departed loved ones or one of our kin who has become extinct.*

## **THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

*31. The presiding minister says*

Let us give thanks for this meal.

*The people say the following prayer or another suitable prayer.*

**We thank you, Christ, for the meal we have celebrated with you, and we pray that through your body and blood we may be healed and become agents of healing for Earth. Amen.**

*32. **The Commission.** The members of the Earth care or Earth ministry team may announce practical plans for Earth care sponsored by the congregation. The congregation may be commissioned for ministry to Earth.*

Christ calls you to be his disciples,  
to serve him with love and compassion,  
to serve Earth by caring for creation,  
especially those domains of the cosmos  
with which we are connected.

**We will follow our crucified Lord,  
listening for cries of injustice from Earth,  
and groaning with creation.**

**We will follow the risen Christ  
to become partners in healing our planet.**

**We will care for creation,  
honouring the cosmic community  
and celebrating life.**

*33. A hymn of praise may be sung here or after the dismissal.*

*34. **The Blessing.** The presiding minister says this or another appropriate blessing:*

Now may the penetrating power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind and your body to heal your wounds and, through you, to bring healing to Earth, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

*or*

May the Spirit of God, who is the cosmic power  
above all and in all and through all,  
fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth

and the pulsing of Christ in creation,  
through whom all things are reconciled and renewed.  
**Amen.**

*35. The president or other minister may say:*

Go in peace,  
serving Christ and loving Earth!

**We go in peace, serving Christ and loving Earth.**