

[Today's writer is Jenni Jones, Praedikantin in Bournemouth]

Dear church members and friends,

On this third Sunday after Easter our theme is **God's New Creation**. The theme fits well with what's happening in nature at this time of the year. As always though, everything has its dark side. So whilst we enjoy spring blossom, the burst of greenery everywhere, glorious birdsong etc, we cannot help but think about the damage mankind has done and continues to do to the planet. And sadly this includes the damage we humans do to each other.

Today's prayer – a long one which I've divided into three parts – picks up on this. The prayer praises God for his good creation in the beginning but also recognises that we have made it not so good. Our petitions are for things to be made better. As we pray it today, meditate upon the parts which speak to us, and perhaps return to it at other points during the week, we do so as Easter people.

What does this mean? Well, we know that like everyone and everything else in nature our life is subject to change and eventual decay. Our faith doesn't make us immune to this natural process. But as Christians – followers of Jesus Christ who has himself been raised to new life – we have been given a promise. The apostle Paul writing to the church in Corinth puts it like this:

*"We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus ...
So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day...
So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new!"*

[2 Corinthians 4,14 & 16 and 5,17 if you want to look it up.]

Our hope as Easter people is that God is making all things – including us – new. In our three-part prayer today, we address in turn God the Father, then God the Son, and thirdly God the Holy Spirit. Running through all three parts are glimpses of the new creation that Paul talks about.

I chose the *handwriting* font for the prayer so that it seems more personal, like reading a letter we have written to a loved one. You could also read it out aloud, slowly, with pauses - spaces for glimpsing what that new creation might look and feel like for us and for others.

So let us now light a candle as a symbol of our hope, and pray, each in our own homes. As the candle's flame reaches upwards so also will our petitions rise to the one who is both the source **and** the goal of our being.

Yours in Christ,

Jenni Jones

*Das frische Gruen ruehmt deine Gegenwart,
Gott, du Schoepfer des Lebens.*

Die Sonne feiert die Auferstehung. Mit ihr zusammen feiern wir dich. Im Licht der Auferstehung bitten wir dich: Weck das Tote auf. Erwecke die abgestorbenen Hoffnungen zu neuem Leben. Schenke dort neuen Mut, wo Verzweiflung und Ratlosigkeit laehmen. Erhelle mit deinem Osterlicht die Orte der Finsternis. Erfuelle die Schwachen mit deiner Lebenskraft. Heile die verwundete Schoepfung. Mache diese Welt neu.

Wir loben dich und rufen : Halleluja.

*Die Freude ueber neugeborenes Leben erinnert uns an dich,
Christus, du Freund der Menschen.*

In den Augenblicken des Friedens kommt uns deine Auferstehung nahe. Voller Sehnsucht nach Frieden bitten wir dich : Versoehne die, die im Streit liegen. Schenke den Voelkern Versoehnung, und denen, die sich ueber die Wahrheit und den rechten Glauben streiten. Lege denen, die durch Hass und Gewalt verdienen, das Handwerk. Schuetze die Verwundeten und Verfolgten. Breite deinen Frieden aus.

Wir loben dich und rufen : Hallelujah.

*Die Hoffnung gegen den Augenschein bezeugt deine Macht,
Heiliger Geist, du Trost und Leben.*

In den Liedern der Freude singen wir, wovon nur der Glaube weiss. Erfuellt von deiner oesterlichen Gegenwart bitten wir dich : Begeistere deine Kirche. Eine sie. Gib den Kranken Hoffnung und denen, die ihnen beistehen, Liebe. Nimm dich der Sterbenden an. Troeste die Trauernden. Beruehre uns und alle, die zu uns gehoeren mit deiner belebenden Gegenwart.

Wir loben dich und rufen : Hallelujah.

*Lebendiger, barmherziger Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist,
du machst alles neu.*

Hoere unseren Dank. Hoere unser Lob. Hoere unsere Bitten. Amen