Pastor Jamie's Sermon

Good Shepherd Church, August 23, 2026
"Care for Creation: Affordable and Clean Energy"

Young at Heart Message

Today we are continuing our sermon series on Care for Creation by talking about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

From the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "energy is crucial for achieving almost all of the Sustainable Development Goals, from its role in the eradication of poverty through advancements in health, education, water supply, and industrialization, to combating climate change."

I was hesitant to begin this sermon series because, in today's world, if you try to talk about climate change or care for creation, it is immediately assumed that you are getting political.

And that's primarily because somehow, care for creation and our climate has become a polarizing topic over the last several years.

But the reality is, conversations around care for creation and for our world have been around for a very long time.

The Moravian liturgy on creation was published in our Book of Worship in 1995.

If we used that liturgy in full today, we would find that it resonates just as well with the issues we are facing today as it did then.

But, there are some other examples of how the conversation and awareness campaigns around caring for creation have been discussed over the years.

In fact, I want to share three examples that encourage kids in particular to care for the environment (and there are many more examples, as we heard earlier today in our opening meditation).

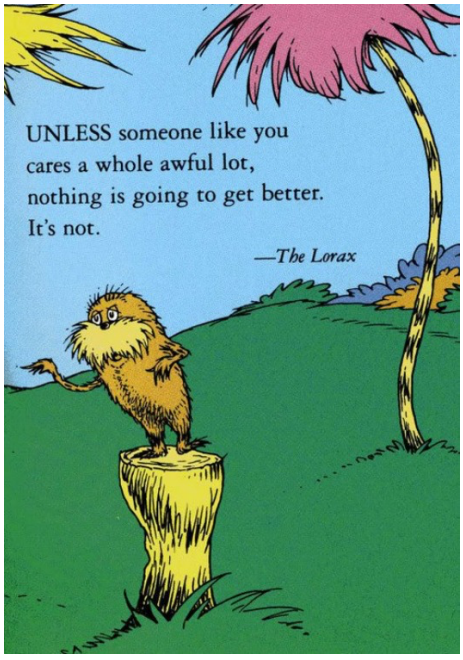
First of all, did you know that Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* was written in 1971?

The premise of the book, for those of you who are not familiar, is that a man called “The Once-ler” develops a product called a “Thneed” which requires that he chop down trees for production.

The Lorax repeatedly tries to get him to stop chopping down the trees, but he is so driven by money, power, and greed that he does not heed the Lorax’s warning.

Eventually, he chops down every single tree, so there are none to be found. The animals must leave their homes because they can no longer live without the trees.

At the end of the book, the famous line from The Lorax is:



In other words, it is not only our responsibility to care about the environment, but it is our opportunity to make a better world.

In many ways, Dr. Seuss was ahead of his time and was predicting the consequences of the way that humans have forgotten our call to care for the Earth.

Our second two examples take me back to my own childhood. I am not sure how many of you will remember either of these examples.

First, there's Captain Planet, which originally aired from 1990-1992.

It resurfaced again from 1993-1996.

As a kid, I remember watching Captain Planet and I also remember, even then, the feeling of responsibility for caring for the environment.

The theme song went like this: "Captain Planet, he's our hero! Gonna take pollution down to zero."

So again, even in the early 90's, there was an awareness that we might be pushing the environment harder and further than we should be.

And our last example is another one from my childhood that I remember fondly. This one is a bit more obscure and I find that many people have never heard of it.

Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest was a movie that released in 1992.

Robin Williams played a lovable and comical, and a bit erratic bat named Batty Koda.

Batty famously warns about human development in the rain forest by saying, "First, all these trees go. Then come your highways, then come your shopping malls, then come your neon signs, and then… toxic waste!"

The "bad guy" in this movie is a character named Hexus who is actually created from the smog and smoke and fumes of the machines that are destroying the rain forest.

At the end of the movie, one of the characters has a seed which he has the opportunity to plant.

The fairies and the other creatures of the forest wait expectantly for him to plant it, and one of the characters says to him, “For our children, and our children’s children. Help it grow.”

Once again, this movie highlighted a growing awareness of and concern for the destruction humans have been doing to our planet for a long time.

So, this isn’t a new issue, and it’s not just a today issue.

The Message

In fact, our scriptures open with God’s first creation being light, i.e. the sun.

And as we heard last week, the very first book in the Hebrew Bible – Genesis – talks at length about our responsibility of caring for God’s creation, which God entrusted to humans as one of the first acts of God toward humans.

As we know, the sun is a powerful source of energy that makes all life possible. Without the sun, human, animal, and plant life could not survive.

We are then told in Genesis 1 that a “wind” from God swept over the face of the waters.

This “wind” is *ruach* in Hebrew, which is sometimes translated as the breath of God.

So, the mighty breath of God created the earth as we know it.

And in creating the earth, God also offered in God’s very first acts, two sources of energy to sustain the world: wind, and sun.

These are two powerful sources of global energy, and they are named in the first chapter of the very first book of the Bible.

That should mean something to us right off the bat.

The Gospel of John also opens with creation, describing life coming into being through God.

That life is named as “the light of all people.”

We are told that Jesus was with God at the very beginning of creation, and that not one thing came into existence without Jesus.

This recalls Proverbs 8:22-31 and the creation of Wisdom, personified in the Hebrew Bible as a woman (she is often referred to as “Sophia” in the Greek).

She is the first of God’s creative acts and was brought forth before the beginning of the earth.

She, Wisdom, witnesses the formation of the earth and the sea, and she rejoices and delights in the creation of humanity.

The writer of John uses this image of God’s wisdom as firstborn, and calls it reason, or Word.

John opens his Gospel with: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.”

Here the feminine Wisdom becomes the masculine Word, and John uses this title for Jesus.

The enlightenment or Wisdom of God becomes Jesus, the Light of the world.

Light, throughout the New Testament, is often portrayed in juxtaposition with darkness and connected to the divine, to life, and to Jesus.

The heavenly city on earth, presented at the culmination of the book of Revelation, is lit by the glory of God, and its lamp is the Lamb (Revelation 21:23-25).

Light is not only a necessary resource, but one supplied by God.

So what does all of this mean for us as we think about ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all?

I had originally planned on starting today's sermon by outlining just how much I rely on energy on a daily basis.

I consider myself to be *fairly* mindful of the environment and my impact on it. But as I was going through the exercise of noting how much I rely on electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and other non-renewable energy sources, I realized that I actually cannot say that about myself at all.

In Canada, and likewise in much of North America in general, we rely heavily on natural gas, wind, hydro, and fossil fuels as energy sources.

We are starting to see more solar panels around the city, but it is still not a primary source of power.

We are also incredibly fortunate to have access to these resources. Most of us at this point could not easily survive without the energy we have easy access to, and yet, we take that energy for granted every single day.

Just look at our sanctuary.

First of all, the lights are on. Then we have screens to project my sermon. We have an A/V system that allows microphones to project my voice.

We have a coffee maker to make coffee, and a hot water kettle to boil water. We have a fridge to store food and beverages, and a dishwasher to save us a lot of time washing dishes.

And of course I'm sure there are many things I'm forgetting.

But the point here is this: we are fortunate that we have access to these things which have become necessities in our lives.

Not everyone does have access. In fact, in many parts of the world, our consumption rates would look like luxury and extravagance.

And I don't say this to make us feel guilty. We could not easily get "off the grid" even if we wanted to. The access to these resources is so ingrained in our culture that giving them up or reducing our use is quite difficult, if not impossible in some cases.

I say this instead to make us aware of the amazing gifts we have in accessing these energy sources.

And, I mention this so that we can wonder together if there are ways that we could – either individually or as a church – reduce our impact on the environment together.

In the resource provided by the Board of World Mission, they offer three different examples of churches across the world who are utilizing solar energy.

I would be happy to share more information on these stories and how they made it possible if people are interested in exploring this as an option for our church.

But in the meantime, let us, together, become more aware of our impact on the environment and our church's impact on the environment.

And, let us give thanks regularly for the resources we have access to every single day that we are so accustomed to that we forget that others may not have the same luxuries.

And most importantly, let us remember that God created the sun and the wind as just two examples of energy sources that were there at the beginning, sustaining humanity well before access to other resources became available.

As we continue on our journey exploring the concepts around Care for Creation, may we all remember Dr. Seuss's famous words:

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

May we be people who care. May we be people who act. May we be people God can rely on to care for creation as we were called to do.

Amen.

Let us pray:

Dear God, you called forth light, creating life-giving energy and warmth in the form of the sun. You then gave to the world your Son, who is called the Light of the world. May your Holy Spirit guide us now, to share that light and energy with the abundance of life that surrounds us. Give us the courage to care a whole awful lot and to be agents of change for the betterment of our world. Amen.