



# TO HOPE AND TO ACT IN THE SEASON OF CREATION

1 September - 4 October 2024

This year our youth group has been involved in a local conservation project in Whanganui. Our involvement unfolded in a way that none of us anticipated so we expect the Spirit might have been involved in calling us to it. Once a month, we head to a big weed-ridden gully to pray, do a lectio reading of a Bible passage, then roll our sleeves up and get stuck in weeding, clearing, and for the last couple of months, planting trees. Inevitably we end up just playing. The thing I've noticed about us going to the gully is how it refreshes and renews us. We've prayed different prayers and have noticed different things as we've read the Bible. We've started having different conversations with each other, and we've met new people from the neighbourhood who've joined us for the praying as well as the mahi. We've come to love this big gully. We love seeing how it's transforming, and we feel the transformation that has happened in us. To be outside and active in God's Creation has been tremendously hopeful.

When we engage with caring for God's Creation, we see that hope is vital – and that hopeful action can be transformational. Consider these two findings from the *2023 Faith and Belief Study - Te Patapātai Whakapono* commissioned by the Wilberforce Foundation, which explored attitudes towards spirituality and religious faith in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- “A major longing in Aotearoa is a hope for the future.”
- “People feel MOST hopeful about relationships and LEAST hopeful about the planet and the future of all human life.”

Hope is longed for, and hope is needed. But not just the idea of it. Hope becomes transformational when we live it.

This is a key idea conveyed by Christian conservationist Tony Rinaudo, who recently visited Aotearoa with World Vision. Tony has spent over three decades working primarily in Niger, where he developed a method that has restored millions of hectares of degraded land in Africa. He talks about this experience in a recent interview with James Beck on the [Ngā Here podcast](#). In this conversation, Tony emphasises the point that hope is not just something we talk about. Hope involves action. Hope is something we are called to embody and live out in practice.

“To hope and act with Creation” is the theme for this year's Season of Creation. Referencing Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 8, the focus is on how we might respond to the challenges of a groaning world with hopeful action.

Creating opportunities for hopeful action is something that we, the church, can offer. Because hope is something we know. Hope is something we think about and pray about. Hope has always been part of our story. We are called to be people who are hopeful, to be people who embody God's hope where it is needed most in our neighbourhoods and in our world.

The Season of Creation is a great opportunity for churches to create opportunities for hopeful action. There are numerous ways to celebrate this season, whether in church services or in a special event (I personally recommend getting involved in a local conservation project!).

I also recommend visiting the [Eco Church website](#) which has numerous resources to help you and your church community celebrate Season of Creation, including the [official Season of Creation resource](#), with additional ideas and resources from Aotearoa.

*On behalf of the PCANZ Moderator*  
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**SEASON OF  
CREATION**