



**CHURCH MISSION COMMITTEE**  
REFLECTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION

**FLORA AND FAUNA**

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# Flora and Fauna

Flora and fauna are essential for human enrichment and a healthy life. They provide important benefits like oxygen, delicious food, building materials like lumber and even medicines and teas like lemon grass, bay leaf, senna and castor oil. Spiritual rejuvenation and mental well-being are influenced by interacting with the natural world in ways like going to the beach, gardening, viewing beautiful scenery and flowers and even walking and hiking. Anxiety and depression can be combatted by deepening a connection nature by meditating outdoors. Here in the church, the adoring of the altar with flowers and also at wedding and festivities beautiful flower arrangements are used to bring nature inside.



Climate change is impacting Barbados and Hurricane Beryl last year reminded all Barbadians that responsibility for the environment and all living things falls to us and humans have had a negative effect on us all. Flying fish, sea eggs, dolphin are all foods that Barbadians love and enjoyed being plentiful in past years, however these are now scarce. Sargassum seaweed inundates our shores, degrading beaches and creating low-oxygen conditions as it decomposes, which severely impacts fish populations and other marine life. The dense mats also act as a physical barrier, making it difficult for turtles to reach nesting sites and for hatchlings to enter the sea. Furthermore, coastal erosion is causing turtle nests to be washed out to sea, and development along the coast presents obstacles. Crucially, artificial light pollution from nearby properties is also a significant factor that disorients hatchlings and nesting adults.

Barbados fishing fleet was devastated last year during the hurricane. Many small livestock farmers keep chickens, blackbelly sheep and cows and when there is excessive heat chicks die and cows produce a small quantity of milk.

## ***Ecosystem Services***

The art and culture of CARIFESTA is built on expressions of flora and fauna of the Caribbean and encourages us to embrace one another in love and friendship

Fruit trees, shade trees and flowering trees and animals provide crucial resources for human survival and health. We know of the Barbados Mahogany for furniture, the lovely mangoes and our indigenous blackbelly sheep. Bees pollinate flowers and produce honey that we all love and protecting bees is necessary

## ***Improved Health***

Scientists show that exposure to green spaces and natural environments significantly reduces the incidence of mental health issues like depression and anxiety, as well as physical ailments. The green spaces in Bridgetown like the Freedom Park and Botanical Gardens are examples of these



## ***Mental & Physical Restoration***

Outdoor recreation in like swimming and hiking around the island offers a powerful restorative effect, improving motivation for exercise and to learn about our island. It also supports appreciation for our gullies and hidden spaces and reinforces why Barbadians should not dump trash and impact our water supply. Spiritual connection and grounding fosters a deep sense of connection to the Earth, reawakening humans as part of the larger ecosystem and promoting mindfulness and emotional awareness

## ***Inspiration and Creativity***

Barbados' aesthetic beauty and spiritual significance of natural landscapes and inspire art and cultural traditions, contributing to a richer human experience. Our National Anthem speaks of "these fields and hills beyond recall are now our very own". We have our own "stick licking art which is done with guava sticks"

## ***Cultural and Religious Value***

Barbadian culture holds deep spiritual and cultural connections to nature, with specific plants and animals often playing significant roles in religious practices and beliefs. The Barbados coat of arms symbolizes the island's natural heritage with a dolphin (fishing industry) and a pelican (Pelican Island) supporting a shield with the Pride of Barbados and bearded fig tree; an arm holding crossed sugarcane stalks, representing the sugar industry.

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