

A full-page background image showing a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright yellow orb in the center of the horizon, casting a long, vertical lens flare. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The ocean has white-capped waves breaking. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted branches of coastal plants, some with small white flowers, framing the scene.

CHURCH MISSION COMMITTEE

REFLECTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION - OCEAN

OUR OCEAN, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

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Our Ocean, Our Responsibility:

Preserving Barbados' Blue Heart

The rhythmic pulse of the Atlantic Ocean is a constant in our lives here in Barbados. It shapes our shores, influences our climate, and is deeply interwoven with our culture and economy. The vast blue expanse that surrounds us is more than just a body of water; it is a source of life, a canvas for divine creation, and a mirror reflecting the community.

This article, through a collection of voices, shows what the ocean means to us and, more importantly, how we can come together to preserve this vital part of our creation.

The Sea, The Ocean, it is all Good

In Genesis 1:9-10, God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ^[10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. This water, which was gathered, covers three-quarters of the Earth's surface, contains 97% of the Earth's water, and represents 99% of the living space on the planet by volume.[1]



In reading this verse, you may wonder what the distinction is between ocean and sea. While the terms are similar, a "sea" is typically a smaller body of saltwater, often partially or fully enclosed by land, while an "ocean" is a massive, expansive body of saltwater that covers most of the Earth's surface. As such, Barbados, located further outside the Caribbean chain, we are surrounded by one of the five oceans, the Atlantic Ocean and not the Caribbean Sea.

Why did the Lord call it "good"? Because the ocean is the heart of the world. It regulates the global climate. Similar to the human circulatory system, ocean currents transport oxygen, water, and nutrients, providing life-sustaining support for ecosystems and economies worldwide. The health of the ocean is directly linked to the health of the entire planet and its inhabitants.

[1]United Nations. (2025). UN Sustainable Goals. Retrieved from Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>



What does it mean to us?

The poet Rumi once wrote, "You are not a drop in the ocean, but an ocean in a drop." This beautiful paradox speaks to the profound connection between the individual and the whole. Just as the ocean is a collective of countless drops, so too is our community a collection of unique individuals. And just as the ocean teems with diverse life, so too does our community thrive on our collective strengths, thoughts, and actions. Therefore, when asked to write an article, I was inspired to get my family and friends into the conversation.

When asked to describe what the ocean means to them, the responses were as diverse and rich as the marine life it holds. For some, it is a source of "calmness," and total 'bliss' a "place of peace and restoration" where they can "submerge themselves". The "rhythm of the waves lapping on the shores calms the spirit," and its beauty, reflecting the colours around, fills us with awe." Others see it as a reflection of the "vastness of God's love," full of both the known and unknown. As Psalm 104:25 says, "There is the sea, great and wide; creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great."

I say the ocean is a symbol of God's power and love. Providing a "life-sustaining force" which is a regulator of "temperature," and a keeper of "balance." It is a source of "life, culture, and connection," providing opportunities for "recreation, and business." It supports the Barbadian economy, providing natural resources to sustain our tourism and fishing industries. Also, it is a pathway for transportation of the goods we require to maintain our lives as around 90% of goods used around the world are transported across the oceans. Furthermore, it provides a layer of protection through coastal ecosystems such as coral reefs, which are natural coastline barriers against 97% of the energy from waves, helping to prevent loss of life, property damage, and erosion.[1]

Some persons also highlighted that it has "many unknowns." In terms of all the life it holds and what it would look like and how it could affect our lives in the future due to Climate Change. With mismanagement, the ocean can become a source of "flooding" and health issues, like the sargassum that plagues our shores. It can also be a source of "death and destruction due to its power." Yet, even with its complexities, the ocean is seen as a space of "freedom," "bliss," and "adventure"—a place of "therapy" and "tranquillity." It is a powerful reminder that "scary things are sometimes beautiful."

[1]

WWF-UK . (2025). Top 10 facts about Oceans. Retrieved from WWF: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/fascinating-facts/oceans>

Creating the Ocean We Want'.

Globally, the need to keep the heartbeat of the world pumping strong has been realised, and actions are being taken. We are currently in "Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development" until 2030 under the theme, 'Creating the Ocean We Want'. 10 Years. 10 Challenges. 1 Ocean.

Barbados is an ocean economy with its heavy dependence on the marine and coastal environment. It is understood that we are significantly impacted by what happens to the ocean and focus has been placed on targeting UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, "Life Below Water," which aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development." Managing our marine space is a multi-stakeholder effort. On a governmental level, this is led primarily by the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy. Agencies like the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) and the Fisheries Division are at the forefront of this work. The CZMU, for example, is currently developing a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure sustainable economic development and environmental conservation through an integrated, participatory approach to managing our marine resources.

Barbados as a country does not end at the shoreline but extends out to 200 nautical miles. Barbados is a large ocean state and the ocean provides opportunities through fishing, tourism transportation, and cultural and educational pursuits. We must do our best to protect and conserve our land and coastal space. It belongs to us.

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Allison Wiggins,
Project Manager ,Marine spatial Plan

But this is not a task for government agencies alone. The call to action is simple yet profound. Know that every choice we make collectively can improve the state of the ocean.

1 take up the Challenge

Challenge 1: Understand and beat marine pollution

- 1** Say No!! Reduce waste.
- 2** Buy the best quality you can to reduce the need for replacements. If you have it already, you don't need it again.

Challenge 2: Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity

- 1** Don't remove coral from the beaches
- 2** Support local NGOs that work to protect our marine environment.
- 3** Join a beach clean-up



Challenge 3: Sustainably feed the global population

- 1** Avoid overconsumption, especially of ocean resources to help maintain healthy ecosystems.

Challenge 4: Develop a sustainable and equitable ocean economy

- 1 Support local businesses in the blue economy, like the fishermen
- 2 Advocate for change: support and request legislation that protects marine areas and ecosystems

Challenge 5: Unlock ocean-based solutions to climate change**CHALLENGE 6: Increase community resilience to ocean hazards**

- 1 Know your coastal-related risk
- 2 Create family and business preparedness plans
- 3 Following planning regulations when building.

Challenge 7: Expand the Global Ocean Observing System**Challenge 8: Create a digital representation of the Ocean**

- 1 See something, say something. Any changes in marine space, report it eg. Coral bleaching on the reef.

Challenge 9: Skills, knowledge and technology for all

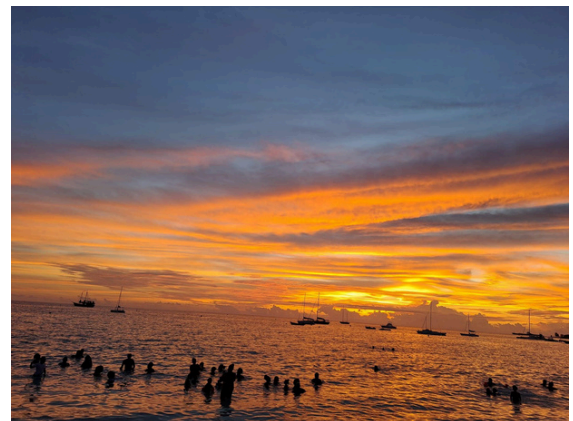
- 1 Stay informed! Keep abreast on what's going on. Check out the CZMU, MSP Websites.
- 2 Research Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially SDG 14

Challenge 10: Change humanity's relationship with the ocean

- 1 Go and enjoy the beach activities we have!! Sit on the beach and relax more often, take a sea bath, go swimming, snorkelling, go on a glass-bottom boat, or go fishing. Enjoy the beautiful marine environment.

There is always Hope

The challenges facing our oceans are immense, but we are not powerless. The oceans' vastness can be overwhelming, but we must remember that it is also a source of incredible resilience and healing. The future of our oceans is in our hands. Every action, no matter how small, has a ripple effect. When we choose to pick up a piece of plastic in support of sustainable businesses, and when we advocate for policies that protect our coastal zones, we are contributing to a healthier planet. Our collective efforts can turn the tide on these issues and ensure that this gift of life continues to bless future generations.



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