



SEASON OF CREATION

LITURGICAL CALENDAR - 1ST SUNDAY



CLIMATE
WITNESS
PROJECT



Cover image by Betsy Ratzsch, originally for Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, Michigan, representing the theme of Gathering. The image includes a variety of grains: rice, millet (major food source in Africa), thistle, wheat, and oats to symbolize the diversity in our gathering as we join with churches all over the world in celebrating the Season of Creation.

Liturgy Lessons

In the church calendar year, Creation Season occurs during Ordinary Time. It offers an opportunity to join with our Christian siblings in churches around the world who are also adopting a Season of Creation into their church calendars.

In 1989, September 1 was proclaimed as a day of prayer for creation for the Eastern Orthodox Church. It was embraced by other major European churches in 2001, and by Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church in 2015. Since then, many churches have extended this day of prayer for creation into a Season of Creation starting on September 1 and ending on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology. In recent years, Pope Francis and the Vatican have called on Catholics to join the ecumenical Season of Creation.

In this liturgy for the Creation Season, there are a couple things that you may notice: First is the language used for the opening hymn, “All Creatures of Our God and King.” “Brother Sun,” “Sister Moon,” and “Mother Earth” can seem rather off-putting, perhaps seeming new-agey. In fact, this is the original language used by St. Francis of Assisi in writing his canticle. This language is used as a way to help us see and remember our relationship to the non-human parts of creation. Yes, God gave humans a special role as caretakers of creation, but so often we take that role and use it to justify our exploitation of the rest of creation. If we can think of creation in a relationship with us, we can cultivate a love that will help us care for it in a more humble fashion. Second, this liturgy intentionally includes time for lament. When we think about Creation in worship, we tend to praise God for its beauty or we focus on our duty as caretakers. We have often neglected to lament the brokenness and the groaning of all creation. So in addition to a time of silence for confession, in this liturgy we will have a moment of silence specifically dedicated to lament.

Gathering

Call to Worship

(Please rise in body or in spirit)

Leader: We have been appointed by God to join our voices with every creature under heaven.

People: Let us raise a song of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Gathering Hymn

This version of the familiar hymn uses the original language as written by St. Francis of Assisi.

All sing: All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
O brother sun with golden beam,
And sister moon with silver gleam,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O brother wind and breezes soft,
O clouds that ride the winds aloft,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
O sister water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Dear Mother Earth who day by day
Unfolds such blessings on our way,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
let them God's glory also show,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Greeting

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: God of creation, we give thanks for the beauty and goodness of the earth that you called into being and continually nurture and sustain. Our voices join in praise

with all creation: with the sea that roars, the trees that clap their hands, and the birds that sing in joy. By your Spirit, weave us anew into your purposes for abundant life, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray,

People: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Lament and Confession

Leader: Beloved, we are made in the divine image, and God called us good. Yet we go our own way, causing harm to ourselves, to one another, and to the earth. So let us lament, and confess our sin to God and to one another.

Song of Lament

(In silence we lament the brokenness in Creation.)

Leader: God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you.

People: We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. We acknowledge that we have benefitted from and participated in the exploitation of your creation through fossil fuel industries, through plastics that have suffocated our landscapes, through the pollution of waterways, extinction of species, and destruction of places called home both near and far, and through a broken relationship with the earth which gives us life. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve your purpose of shalom for the whole community of creation. Amen.

Silent prayer of confession.

(Please rise in body or in spirit)

Assurance

Leader: Friends, hear the good news: Jesus Christ says, “See, I am making everything new!” In Christ, we are forgiven. In the living waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit has washed us clean! Glory to God!

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Word

(Please be seated.)

Prayer for Illumination

Leader: Gracious God, as we open the scriptures today, speak your Word to us, that we may be recreated in your Son, Jesus Christ. In his life, may we have new life; in his light, may we see light.

People: Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Job 38:1-18

Leader: Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?— when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped’? “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed like a garment. Light is withheld from the wicked, and their uplifted arm is broken. “Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading: John 1:1-14

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept

him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Creation Psalm: Psalm 19

Leader: The heavens declare the glory of God,

People: And the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

Leader: One day tells its tale to another,

People: And one night imparts knowledge to another.

Leader: Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard, their sound has gone out into all the lands,

People: And their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.

Leader: The heavens declare the glory of God,

People: And the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

Sermon

Offertory

Leader: Beloved, everything in heaven and earth belongs to our merciful God. Let us come with joy and offer what God has entrusted to us, gifts as a sign that we dedicate our whole lives to the healing and flourishing of all people and all creation, through Jesus Christ.

(Offering)

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving to God the Creator

Leader: We lift up our hearts to you, Creator God. You spread the dazzling canopy of the heavens and established the deep foundations of the earth; you lifted up mountains and hills, and poured out oceans and rivers. You filled the earth,

teeming with life, revealing your glory, and made human beings in your image to help care for this world, our beautiful and precious home.

When human violence, corruption, and greed laid waste to your good creation, still you called us, again and again, to return. You revealed your righteous Law to show the path.

Then, in the fullness of time, out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus Christ to redeem and restore the earth, heal our brokenness, and make all things new. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with all creatures great and small, and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord. God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Hymn: [All on Earth and All in Heaven](#). *Lift Up Your Hearts* #922

Sending

Benediction

Leader: May the One who creates us, go with and before us; may the One who saves us, lead us into everlasting life; may the One who gives us wisdom, guide us in the way of justice and peace.

People: Amen.

Leader: Go and join the song of creation, go and attend to the groaning of creation, go and work for the healing and wholeness of all the earth.

People: Alleluia! Amen!

All sing: last stanza of "All Creatures of Our God and King"

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship God in humbleness,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

“All Creatures of Our God and King” Text: St. Francis of Assisi, tr. William H. Draper; music: Geistliche Kirchengesänge, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams

“Broken and Wasted” Text: Greg Scheer, adapted from a prayer by Chris Polhill from A Heart for Creation (Wild Goose Publ.); music: Greg Scheer ©2021

“The Heavens Are Telling” (Psalm 19) from Franz Joseph Hadyn’s Creation Adagio from Clarinet Concerto KV622 by W.A. Mozart, arr. Paul De Bra

“All on Earth and All in Heaven” (Psalm 29) Text: Michael Morgan ©2011, admin. Faith Alive Christian Resources; music: Thomas J. Williams

“Baptism” Karen Campbell ©2020

“Let All Things Their Creator Bless” verse 4 of “All Creatures of Our God and King”

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Thank you to Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, Michigan for allowing adaptations of their original liturgies.

Appendix

If you are celebrating communion, you may include the following in the liturgy according to the order of your service.

Table

Preparing the Table

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ, everything in heaven and earth belongs to our merciful God. Let us come with joy and offer what God has entrusted to us, gifts as a sign that we dedicate our whole lives to the healing and flourishing of all people and all creation, through Jesus Christ.

Offertory

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving to God the Creator

Leader: We lift up our hearts to you, Creator God. You spread the dazzling canopy of the heavens and established the deep foundations of the earth; you lifted up mountains and hills, and poured out oceans and rivers. You filled the earth, teeming with life, revealing your glory, and made human beings in your image to help care for this world, our beautiful and precious home.

When human violence, corruption, and greed laid waste to your good creation, still you called us, again and again, to return. You revealed your righteous Law to show the path.

Then, in the fullness of time, out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus Christ to redeem and restore the earth, heal our brokenness, and make all things new.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with all creatures great and small, and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name:

People: *Holy, holy, holy Lord.* God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

(Please be seated.)

...for the work of Jesus Christ

Leader: You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh in the body of a woman. Christ is the Word that brings order to chaos, revealing all things, birthing life by the Spirit. Christ is the Bread of Life, feeding the poor and hungry, giving wisdom and strength for each day. Christ is the True Vine, binding us together in unity of the Spirit, empowering us to bear fruit for the world. And so we give thanks that this same Christ gave us this memorial of his sacrifice until his coming again.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

People: We who are many are one body for we all share the same loaf.

Leader: After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

People: The cup which we all share is our fellowship in the blood of Christ.

Leader: Remembering God's faithfulness to us and to all of creation through Jesus Christ, let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

People: *Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*

...for the presence of the Holy Spirit

Leader: God of all creation, through your goodness we receive this bread and wine: fruit of the earth and work of human hands. By your Holy Spirit, may this bread and wine become for us the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Make us one with Christ, and one with all who share this meal. Heal your stricken world today, that the groaning of the soil, the skies, and the seas may be transformed to rejoicing as you remember your covenant and reveal your glory.

People: Amen.

The Invitation to the Table

(Please rise in body or in spirit)

Leader: Congregation in the Lord Jesus Christ, our loving Redeemer has prepared this table for all who love and trust in him for their salvation. Anyone baptized in the name of the Triune God is now invited to come with gladness to this holy meal. The gifts of God for the people of God.

Communion

Thanksgiving

Leader: Let us give thanks to God.

People: We give you thanks, eternal God, that you have fed us in this sacrament. Fill us with a vision of your new creation where all may have abundant life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Amen.