

Supported by the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches, ELCA worshipping communities are encouraged to celebrate this new day, using the lectionary texts provided by the Consultation on Common Texts. The date to observe [“Creation in Christ”](#) will need to be determined locally. Although celebration is encouraged on September 1 or the Sunday following, with the observance of Labor Day in the United States some communities may opt to celebrate in late August or later in September, perhaps aligning with the autumnal equinox. Others may keep a [Season of Creation](#) beginning on or near September 1 and ending with the commemoration of Francis of Assisi on or near October 4. Adopting this new date on the liturgical calendar will be an evolving process, just as the process to get to this point involved much thought, prayer, and deliberation. You are encouraged to discern what works best in your context, knowing that resources and support for this day will be available over time and will be renewed and refined along the way.

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Day Texts

Introduction

Since the seventh century, September 1 has symbolized the day of the creation of the world in the Byzantine tradition and has been the opening feast of its liturgical year (known as the Feast of the Indiction), in a parallel with the feast of Rosh Hashanah marking the Jewish New Year. Creation in Christ celebrates the ongoing creation of the world in and through Christ, who sustains, unites, and holds all created things. We hear today of the triune God who creates all things: sun and moon, shining stars, sea monsters, creeping things and flying birds—and, yes, even human beings. God-in-Christ still takes care of all things and invites us to join in as caretakers of God's good creation.

Color: Green or White

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, our hope, our heart, our home. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end,
**we confess that we participate in systems
that perpetuate oppression and injustice.**
**We are often numb to the pain of the world around us,
resistant to change that costs us something,
and reluctant to love our neighbors as ourselves.**
**We sin against your good creation,
failing to be faithful stewards
of the land, the sea, and all their creatures.**
**Make your home among us once more, O God,
naming us beloved and opening our hearts
to do your will. Amen.**

All you saints and sinners, this good news is for you:

God knows you,

forgives you by the self-giving of + Jesus Christ,

and frees you to love the world as you have been loved.

Creation's story will not end

until mourning, crying, and pain are no more.

When everything else changes, God's love is steadfast and sure.

Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God

in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

or

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Water! Water! We praise you, O God, for water—
the local bodies of water,
the rain that nourishes animals and plants,
the water for drinking and bathing.
We praise you, O God, for water.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for our water stories—
a flood that cleansed the earth,
the sea that drowned the enemy,
a river that healed leprosy.
We praise you, O God, for water.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We remember the waters of Jesus—
baptized in the Jordan River,
calming the Sea of Galilee,
drinking from Jacob's Well,
healing at the pool of Bethesda,
washing the disciples' feet.
We praise you, O God, for water.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for this font,
for through this water
you have birthed us into the family of Christ,
bathed us in forgiveness,
and enlivened us in the Spirit.
We praise you, O God, for baptism.
We praise you, O God, for baptism.

O God, you are the Ocean, sustaining this earth.
O God, you are the River, saving us from death.
O God, you are the Fountain, granting us health and well-being.
We praise you, O God,
today, tomorrow, forever.
Amen, and amen.
Amen, and amen.

and/or

Litany of Praise for Creation

Glory to you, O God:
you speak a word of power,
and so you create the world.
We praise you, O God:
We praise you, O God.

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
for the earth ordered from chaos,
and for light and dark,
we bless you, O God:
We bless you, O God.

For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
and for the cycle of evening and morning,
we exalt you, O God:
We exalt you, O God.

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,
for the land with its mountains and plains,
and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
we magnify you, O God:
We magnify you, O God.

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God:
We extol you, O God.

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God:
We glorify you, O God.

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God:
We adore you, O God.

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God:
We worship you, O God.

Bless us, your creatures.
Accept our praise,
and make us worthy of your marvelous creation.
We praise you, O God:
We praise you, O God.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.
Amen.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit breathes life into the universe.
We praise you for your wondrous creation.
Bless us and all your handiwork with your infinite light,
and direct our lives to the care of this good earth,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

or

O Blessed Trinity,
we worship you, the Source and Savior and Strength of all the worlds.
We laud you for your wondrous creation.
Breathe your blessing on us and on all that you have made,
and form us by your wisdom to be caregivers of your gift of this good earth.
Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and unto ages of ages.
Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. How manifold are your | works, O LORD! * In Wisdom you have | made them all.
Alleluia. (Psalm 104:24)

Readings and Psalm

Genesis 1:1—2:3

Creation of the heavens and the earth

or Genesis 2:4-25

The garden of Eden

Psalm 148:1-14

God's splendor is over earth and heaven

Acts 17:22a, 24-28

God gives life and breath to all mortals

John 1:1-5

All things came into being through the Word

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate. Note the use of brackets for optional content.

We join with Christians far and near to worship God the Creator, praying for the earth and for all in need, responding to each petition with the words, "Your mercy is great."

A brief silence.

O God of mystery, mercy, and might, for the church we pray:
that churches around the globe collaborate in care for the earth,
and that all the baptized nurture a zeal for the wellbeing of creation.
Hear us, O God, source of life [*and ground of our being*]:
Your mercy is great.

For the earth we pray:
that this bounteous creation receive continued divine blessing,
that the air be wholesome, that the waters be plentiful and clean,
that the land be treasured, and that animals be protected.
Grant that what on earth has been despoiled will be healed.
Hear us, O God, our creator [*and fruitful garden*]:
Your mercy is great.

For the nations we pray:
that farmers, herders, foragers, fishers, and grocers provide the food humans need,
that legislators strive in all things for the common good,
and that science and technology lead us toward more responsible ways to live.
Hear us, O God, our stronghold [*and sun of justice*]:
Your mercy is great.

For our country we pray:
that national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges be safeguarded,
that all natural resources benefit the whole population,
and that our children learn respect for nature.
Hear us, O God, our guardian [*and rainbow of promise*]:
Your mercy is great.

For those in need we pray:
that humankind be sheltered from pandemic and from extreme weather,
and that all who are sick or suffering receive medical attention and communal support.
Give heed to those whose names we call out to you (*especially*).
Hear us, O God, our healer [*and heart of the universe*]:
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We praise you [*for Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi, and*]
for all believers who have lived and died in communion with the earth.
Grant that in your good time we join with all your creatures in your presence forever.
Hear us, O God, the beginning and the end:
Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O God, our maker and keeper, we commend ourselves and your whole creation,
trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Offering Prayer

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Preface

(Adapted from Renewing Worship/Enriching Our Worship)

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,
almighty and merciful God, through your eternal Word,
the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things:
our Savior, Jesus Christ.
You laid the foundations of the world
and enclosed the sea when it burst out of the womb.
You brought forth all creatures of the earth
and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing;
all you create is a sign of hope for our journey.
And so as the morning stars sing your praises,
with the heavenly beings and all creation,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn¹:
Holy, holy, holy...

Thanksgiving at the Table

O God triune, how majestic
is your name in all the earth.
Over the eons your merciful might
evolved our home, a fragile tree of life.
Here by your wisdom
are both life and death,
growth and decay,
the nest and the hunt,
sunshine and storm,
darkness and light.
Sustained by these wonders,
we creatures of dust join in the ancient song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune, you took on our flesh in Jesus our healer.
In Christ you bring life from death;
we remember his cross,
we laud his resurrection.
Broken like bread, he enlivens our body.
Outpoured like wine, he fills the earth with goodness.
Receiving this mystery,
we mortals sing our song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

¹ Modified from *Enriching Our Worship 1* (Church Publishing, Inc., 2000). Used with permission.

We praise you for the heart of Jesus,
so filled with your love for this earth.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered around this table,
we your children unite in this song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune, you create the worlds,
you uphold the living,
you embrace the dead.
Send forth your Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.
Strengthen us for our journey with this meal,
the body and blood of Christ.
Give us a future that trusts in you
and cares for your earth.
Empowered by your promises,
we rise from our deaths
to praise you again:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

Amen, and amen.
Amen, and amen.

Invitation to Communion

The gifts of creation for God's beloved creatures. Come and share.

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

Creator God bless you and keep you.
Creating Christ shine through you with grace and mercy.
Creative Spirit nourish you and give you peace.
Amen.

or

God our Mother root you deep in grace.
God our Neighbor stand with you in strength.
God our Nourishment sustain you in hope
and bless you unto evergreen life.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Flourish with creation.
Thanks be to God.

Acknowledgements

All Creation Sings (Augsburg Fortress, 2020): Thanksgiving at the Font, Form B (p. 59);
Thanksgiving at the Table, Form C (p. 37);

Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks: Litanies, Laments, and Thanksgivings at Font and Table (Gail Ramshaw, Augsburg Fortress, "Litany of Praise for Creation," p. 12)

Sundays and Seasons (Augsburg Fortress): Confession and Forgiveness, Seasonal Worship Texts for November 2027. Offering Prayer, Prayer after Communion, Seasonal Worship Texts for Lent 2026.

Additional items were crafted for this resource and will appear in *Sundays and Seasons*.

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Day Resources

Creation in Christ, Year A
Tuesday, September 1, 2026
or Sunday, September 6, 2026

Overview

Joining the Cosmic Choir: An Introduction to a Liturgical Festival of Creation

The following essay was first published in Sundays and Seasons 2027, Year B, © 2026 Augsburg Fortress.

Introduction

You may be familiar with experiments in celebrating a liturgical “Season of Creation.” It is commonly observed in the time between September 1 (sometimes called “Creation Day” or “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation”) and October 4 (the commemoration of Francis of Assisi). Recently, an ecumenical conversation began about inaugurating a liturgical festival of creation (sometimes called a “Feast of Creation”) within this season that might be observed across denominations and even across Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. This essay offers support for planning a liturgical festival of creation even as ecumenical plans continue to unfold.

An unfolding path

Efforts toward the festival originated in 1989, when Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios offered an invitation “to the entire Christian world” to mark September 1 as a day of prayer for creation, including “thanksgiving for the gift of creation” and “petitions for its protection and salvation,” though this occurred often without a set liturgy.

Not only had September 1 long served as the beginning of the liturgical year in the Orthodox Church, but it had also been associated with *the* beginning—that is, the beginning of creation. (There was even a charming tradition among the Orthodox that traced the first day of creation precisely to September 1, 5509 BCE.) There is some historical evidence, however, that the date for the beginning of the liturgical year in Eastern tradition was originally the September equinox and was moved sometime in the fifth century to synchronize with the imperial taxation calendar that began the first day of September. (Given that the equinox, in March and September, is the only time the day is essentially equal in the northern and southern hemispheres, and light and darkness are more or less in balance around the world, the September equinox—or the Sunday following it—holds special promise for a festival of creation, particularly as a sign of the equity we seek in environmental justice.)

Over the years, popes and ecumenical patriarchs began to meet on September 1 for prayer and advocacy with other ecumenical leaders. In 2024, a major conference in Assisi, Italy, gathered church leaders, scholars, and ecumenists to consider proposals for a “Feast of Creation” across Eastern and Western traditions. With the death of Pope Francis in 2025, the future leadership role of the Roman Catholic Church in this effort was unclear. Nevertheless, as of this writing, the efforts continue across denominations and around the world, including in the ELCA, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Council of Churches.

Keeping time for creation

As you think about how your worshipping community might take part in this unfolding creation-focused time, first take inventory of any existing or potential creation-related practices during autumn with which to link a festival of creation. Many assemblies celebrate a blessing of the animals on or around the October 4 commemoration of Francis of Assisi. Some congregations keep each Sunday in September as part of a season of creation, either by integrating creation themes into worship using the Revised Common Lectionary texts (the more common pattern across the world; see seasonofcreation.org) or by designating ecological themes for individual Sundays (a pattern developed largely by the Uniting Church of Australia and some partners in the United States). There may be a congregational or ecumenical observance of a day of prayer and action for the care of creation on or around September 1. Perhaps the congregation celebrates an annual fall festival, picnic, or other outdoor event at this time of year that has some relationship to creation or creativity and might be integrated into a season or festival of creation. (Note that in the United States, Labor Day is observed on the first Monday of September, and while this secular holiday celebrating the labor movement is often associated with picnics and other outdoor activities, it is also a weekend when many Americans are on vacation away from their home congregations.)

Whatever the other seasonal rhythms, the purpose of a liturgical festival of creation is to bring the creation themes present elsewhere during the season and the year to special prominence in a single liturgical occasion. With no set date for the celebration yet established, the most fitting date for a congregation's festival of creation might be in early September, near October 4, or perhaps close to the September equinox (September 22 or 23, 2027, depending on one's time zone). The date for keeping the festival might even be decided collaboratively with neighboring congregations, allowing it to be celebrated as a joint service, perhaps in a beloved outdoor place.

Themes as wide as the cosmos

In the ecumenical conversations about a potentially shared liturgical festival of creation, there is creative tension around how the festival would balance its three main emphases: God the creator, the creation itself, and creation's current need for healing. Holding together the following paradoxes is a worthwhile challenge: God is both beyond creation and actively present in, with, and under all creation. God is both the powerful creator of the earth and the crucified creature of earth, Jesus. God's act of creation is both at the beginning of time (*creatio ex nihilo*) and continually unfolding now in living creatures and the wider cosmos (*creatio continua*). The earth is both "very good," worthy of the deep appreciation of Sabbath rest, and deeply wounded, in need of action for profound healing. We humans are all simultaneously environmental saints and sinners, yet not all people are equally responsible for environmental harm; our unjust human systems allow some to hoard earth's harvests and force deprivation and disproportionate environmental burdens on others.

Worship planners might ask: With which of these ecotheological themes are we most at home as a worshipping community, and which themes challenge us? When planning scripture readings, prayers, preaching, and hymns for a festival of creation, consider how to both root the assembly in its deepest wisdom and offer it the gift of wider horizons, prophetic challenge, and room to grow.

Joining the unending hymn

It could be that the most significant ecotheological challenge to the dominant cultures of North America isn't first of all ethical, political, doctrinal, or economic but, rather, a matter of liturgical perception: that we humans—like latecomers to a cosmic choir rehearsal—have been called to join the unending hymn of all creation that began long before humans existed. Our tradition invites us to imagine this liturgy beginning at the dawn of creation, “when the morning stars sang together” (Job 38:7) and when God the creator, in a liturgical cadence, sounded the word “Good!” over the evolving creation six times *before* humans were brought into being (Gen. 1).

Part of our task in a festival of creation is to learn to hear the choir of other creatures praising God for the blessing of their existence. “Everything that has breath” praises the Lord, proclaims Psalm 150:6. But it isn't only praise. The creatures cry out to God in their need for food, protection, and healing. Psalm 104 helps us perceive even in the roaring of predators the language of prayer: “The lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God” (v. 21). Maybe hearing more deeply the spiritually significant voices of other creatures and letting them take their rightful place as the longtime leaders in creation's songs will help us relate to these members of our creaturely family more respectfully, justly, and reciprocally.

Thomas Aquinas beautifully describes the role of creaturely diversity in helping us appreciate the profound goodness of God:

Because God's goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, God produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided and hence the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever. (*Summa Theologica* 1.47.1)

In joining the hymn of all creation, we join the cosmos itself singing back to God the love out of which it was created. Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* quotes the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan: “To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope.” This liturgical dimension of *creatio continua* not only looks back to the beginning of time but is also eschatological: Creation's praise animates scriptural images of the future consummation of all things, the fulfillment of all creation's hopes.

Every Sunday as a feast of creation

In one of the earliest accounts of Christian worship from outside the Bible, Justin Martyr (died c. 165) summarized the reason Christians come together on Sunday for worship. His reference to the resurrection is secondary, coming after he evocatively describes Sunday as marking the beginning of creation: “We hold this meeting together on the day of the sun since it is the first day, on which day God, having transformed darkness and matter, made the world. On the same day Jesus Christ our savior rose from the dead” (*First Apology*, 67). For Justin, the first reason to worship weekly on Sunday is to give thanks for God's creation. His assertion helps us put into perspective any efforts toward a once-per-year festival of creation. Yet, planning for a *yearly* festival of this sort may helpfully remind us that our *weekly* Sunday gatherings are also feasts of creation (see the Connections with Creation content in the seasonal essays of this volume). Many of the liturgical practices and themes we might explore in an annual festival can deepen our weekly gatherings too. Moreover, we might newly notice the profound creation themes that orient our two festival cycles, Christmas and Easter. The seasons themselves are anchored by ecological and cosmic cycles, with Christmas originally synchronized with the solstice, and Easter's date determined by a sequence of ecological and cosmic occurrences: springtime in

Jerusalem, equinox, full moon, sunset on Saturday marking the beginning of Easter Sunday. The church's pattern of daily prayer, too, is traditionally a way to align ourselves liturgically with the cardinal moments of each day, especially around sunrise, solar noon, sunset, and night.

The path toward a shared annual festival of creation is still unfolding. Your planning and leadership now help create the path as we travel it.

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Ideas for the Day

The following ideas were first published in Sundays and Seasons 2027, Year B, © 2026 Augsburg Fortress.

Planning Notes for a Festival of Creation

As denominational bodies consider possibilities for a September festival of creation, local congregations are “demonstration gardens” for such celebrations. Tend your local liturgical garden and be sure to cross-pollinate with others! Here are encouragements and ideas for planning a festival of creation in the fall or for integrating some of these elements on Sundays throughout the year.

Liturgical Environment Considerations

- What time of day should the assembly gather? A special service allows for an evening gathering—a wonderful time of day to use Setting 12 in *All Creation Sings*, with ecotheologically evocative texts for evening or night. The images of darkness and light are especially welcome around the September equinox, when the whole world's darkness and light are in balance. Especially at evening, people love the elemental beauty of candlelight.
- Can the service take place outdoors, or with only a roof for a shelter, perhaps near a body of water? If so, draw on the sensory environment of the immediate natural surroundings in your planning, consider the time of day and where the sun will be, and be sure to practice in advance to note the differences in outdoor acoustics.
- If the assembly takes place indoors, can simple treasures of the natural world grace the liturgical space, especially the liturgical centers of ambo, font, and table; primary entrances and exits for the people; and leaders' vestments? What seasonal changes could be represented through natural elements or artwork?

Shape of the Service: Gathering

- As members of the assembly travel to worship, how do they encounter creation? What hymns can name these parts of creation, give thanks to God for them, sing along with them, and pray for their health and protection? The pattern of an intercessory Kyrie and a celebratory Gloria remains a highly adaptable structure for creatively naming specific needs and reasons for praise during the gathering.
- Especially at the equinox, a new fire and a blessing would honor the global balance of light and darkness and stand in symmetry with the March equinox and the new fire at the Easter Vigil.

- Children might carry in procession stylized bird-kites or animal puppets, flowers, tree boughs, Pentecost-style fiery streamers, or water for sprinkling.
- Consider how the history of stewardship of the land on which you gather can be remembered and honored with thanksgiving and repentance.
- The baptismal nature of confession and forgiveness allows for repentance and lament to be integrated into a thanksgiving for baptism that richly gives thanks for water, including local waters. In times of flood or drought, consider using Thanksgiving at the Font C in *All Creation Sings* (p. 59).

Shape of the Service: Word

- For a September festival of creation, consider the propers listed in this resource and on Sundays and Seasons.com, those suggested in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for Harvest or Stewardship of Creation.
- The prayers of intercession might be structured in any number of ways: spoken by different members of the assembly; turning toward four directions; interceding for different branches of the creaturely family, and then for those who care for them, perhaps concluding by giving thanks for the lives and witness of species that are now extinct. Or the intercessions might be a sung litany for the healing of creation: for example, “For the Healing of Creation” in *Singing Our Prayer* from Augsburg Fortress. Also see the many creation-related prayers throughout *All Creation Sings*.

Shape of the Service: Meal

- Can the offering support efforts for earth-healing and environmental justice, enact solidarity with Indigenous earth-keeping ministries, or provide a healthy share of local harvests for financially disadvantaged people?
- Perhaps arrangements can be made with a local feeding ministry so that the eucharistic table is set abundantly with beautiful fresh foods of many kinds, from which the bread and wine—perhaps also locally produced—are used for the liturgical meal, with the remainder of the food sent to the feeding ministry after the service or at the sending rite. In any case, let the bread be fresh and ample, and the wine delicious.
- Take time to plan the thanksgiving at the table, especially considering the ecologically rooted prayers in *All Creation Sings*, gently adapting them with phrases from the day’s scripture texts, and integrating images of seasonal and local ecologies.

Shape of the Service: Sending

- As with the rest of the liturgy, during the sending, consider how the double helix of thanksgiving and intercession, gratitude and urgency, can be held together to tell the deep trinitarian truth about our place in this living cosmos: created good and beloved, wounded and redeemed, breathing with and empowered by the Spirit.
- See the many blessings and prayers in Anne and Jeffery Rowthorne’s *God’s Good Earth* (Liturgical Press, 2018) for expansive imagery with which to send the assembly.
- As people are sent into the world, can they be given pollinator seeds, the gift of a small jar of honey, a beeswax candle, or a small artwork made by youth in the congregation and depicting a local natural area with a scripture verse? These items could also be brought forward during the offering, blessed, and then sent at the conclusion of the service.
- Can the sending rite lead into a true feast of creation—a festive meal celebrating the goodness of the earth’s harvests? Consider making information available at each table about earth-keeping and ecojustice ministries.

Further Readings and Resources

Berger, Teresa, ed. *Full of Your Glory: Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation*. Liturgical Press Academic, 2019.

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Stewart, Benjamin M. *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology*. Augsburg Fortress, 2011.

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Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, SeasonOfCreation.com.

Music Suggestions

Creation in Christ, Year A
Tuesday, September 1, 2026
or Sunday, September 6, 2026

Assembly Song

Hymnal Resources

ACS—*All Creation Sings*

ELW—*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

LBW—*Lutheran Book of Worship*

LLC—*Libro de Liturgia y Cántico*

TFF—*This Far by Faith*

WOV—*With One Voice*

W&P—*Worship and Praise*

Gathering

All Creatures, Worship God Most High!

For the Beauty of the Earth

God Created Heaven and Earth

Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator

Many and Great, O God

Morning Has Broken

The Play of the Godhead

ELW 835, LBW 527

ELW 879, LBW 561, MML 31

ELW 738

ACS 1091

ELW 837, WOV 794

ELW 556, W&P 98

ACS 946

Hymn of the Day

These suggestions suggest most closely the day's readings and themes and could be used as the hymn of the day or in another appropriate place in the service.

Before the Waters Nourished Earth

Christ Is the Life

ACS 1049

ACS 927

MML 28

OBS 52

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

ELW 684

WOV 757

In Sacred Manner

ACS 1071

HLG 46

Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth

ELW 735, WOV 769

The Word Who Sang the Light into Creation

ACS 973, LLC 398

/ Palabra que fue luz el primer día

ST. COLUMBA

COE FEN

VITA ET MORS

KINGSFOLD

PROSPECT

DUNEDIN

SEATTLE

TEAGUE

NORWICH

PALABRA VIVA

Offering Song

For the Fruit of All Creation

God of the Sparrow/*Dios de las aves*

The Numberless Gifts of God's Mercies

Womb of Life and Source of Being

ELW 679, WOV 760, LBW 563

ELW 740, LLC 500

ELW 683

ACS 948

Communion

God the Sculptor of the Mountains

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

When Long Before Time

When You Send Forth Your Spirit

ELW 736, TFF 222

ELW 834, LBW 526

ELW 861, WOV 799

ACS 945

Sending

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	ELW 836, LBW 551
Let All Things Now Living	ELW 881, LBW 557
O Beauty Ever Ancient	ACS 1100
Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven	ELW 864/865, LBW 549
This is My Father's World	ELW 824, LBW 554

Additional Assembly Songs

These suggestions are also suitable for the day or season and could be used as gathering, sending, offering, or communion song as appropriate. The song collections are available to subscribers on sundaysandseasons.com

Additional Assembly Song Resources

CBM— Come, Beloved of the Maker	MML— Making Melody to the Lord
LA— Love Astounding	OBS— O Blessed Spring
LIW— Living in Wonder	PBS— Peace, Be Still
LS— LifeSongs	

Abba, Abba, Hear Us	ACS 1072
Beautiful Savior	ELW 838, LBW 518, LS 174
Beloved and Most Loving Source	CBM 61
Can You Feel the Seasons Turning	ACS 1065
Come, Let Us Sing the Holiness of God	CBM 68
Draw us, O God, into Your Holy Future	LIW 54
Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom	ACS 1064
For the Wholeness of the Earth	ACS 1067
God Bestows on Every Sense	ACS 1069
God, Who Set the Spheres in Motion	PBS 70
Great God, Our Source	LBW 466
Hear the Spirit of Creation	LA 53
How Beautiful, O God, How Good	PBS 78
How Marvelous God's Greatness	ELW 830, LBW 515
How Wondrous Is Your Steadfast Love	PBS 84
In Love God Imagined the Worlds to Light	PBS 86
O God of Wonders	PBS 98
O Heart of God	PBS 100
O Infinite Greatness, O Limitless Good	PBS 102
O Sacred River	OBS 74
Oh, Worship the King	ELW 842, LBW 548
Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices	ELW 833, LBW 560
Praise and Thanksgiving	ELW 689, LBW 409
Praised Be the Rock	TFF 290
Sing a New Song to the God of Life	MML 62
Sing, Oh, Sing, the Threefold God	PBS 110
Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good	ELW 871, LBW 542
Tell Again the Joyful Story	LA 64
Tender-Hearted God	LIW 72

The Heavens Tell of Your Creative Glory / <i>Los cielos cuentan la gloria de Dios</i>	ACS 1070
Touch the Earth Lightly	ELW 739
What Joyous Song Unfolding	PBS 114
When at Last the Rain Falls/ <i>Al caer la lluvia</i>	ACS 1066, LLC 496
When Morning Gilds the Skies	ELW 853, LBW 545/546
When Out of Darkness God Spoke Light	CBM 108
You Fill All Creation	CBM 110
 <i>Al caer la lluvia / When at Last the Rain Falls</i>	 LLC 496, ACS 1066
<i>Al Dios creador damos gracias / Be thankful to God</i>	LLC 502
Dios hizo el agua cristalina	LLC 503
Fuera con nuestro temor	LLC 497
Oh Dios de lo creado	LLC 499
Por la fecunda tierra (Gracias, Señor)	LLC 495
¡Qué lindo! ¡Cuánta belleza!	LLC 493

Music for the Day

Choral

Carter, John. [“I Sing the Love That Dreamed Creation.”](#) SAB, pno. AFP 9781506456768.

Cherwien, David. [“Infinite Beauty.”](#) SATB, org, fl. AFP 9798341904668.

Ferguson, John. [“Let the Whole Creation Cry.”](#) SAB, org. AFP 9780806698182.

Hampton, Keith. [“He’s Got the Whole World.”](#) SATB, a cap. AFP 9780800659608.

Hesla, Bret and Zach Busch. [“Prayers for Our Earth.”](#) SATB, pno. AFP 9798889832522.

Highben, Zebulon M. [“What Joyous Song Unfolding.”](#) SATB, org, opt assembly. AFP 9798889830542.

Hovland, Egil. “The Glory of the Father” from [Augsburg Motet Book](#). SATB, a cap. AFP 9781451423709.

Zullinger, Nathan. [“God, You Spin the Whirling Planets.”](#) 2 pt, org. AFP 9798889832461.

Children’s Choir

Various. [ChildrenSing Creation](#). U/2pt, pno. AFP 9781506486635.

Sims, David. “In the Beginning” from [Augsburg Easy Choirbook](#), vol. 3. 2 pt, pno. AFP 9781506414041.

Messick, Pat. “God’s Wondrous World” from [ChildrenSing in Worship](#). U, orff/kybd. AFP 9781451401806.

Keyboard/Instrumental

Hansen, Sherri. “God Created Heaven and Earth” from [*Piano Weavings, Vol. 2*](#). Pno. AFP 9781506413723.

Diemer, Emma Lou. “St. Columba” from [*Organ Voluntaries on Sainly Tunes*](#). Org. AFP 9781451424201.

Kim, Marianne. “When We Must Bear Persistent Pain/Creating God, Your Fingers Trace” from [*Spirit and Song: Ten Piano Settings for Worship*](#). Pno. AFP 9798889832744.

Sedio, Mark. “Lasst uns erfreuen” from [*Augsburg Organ Library: Easter*](#). Org. AFP 9780800659363.

Handbell

Dennis, Karissa. [*“King of Love \(My Shepherd Is\).”*](#) 3-5 oct hb, opt 3-4 oct hc, L2. AG 2741.

Hopson, Hal H. “Lasst uns erfreuen” in [*Three Handbell Sketches for Worship*](#). 3-5 oct hb. L2+. CG CGB916.

Krug, Jason. “Bunessan” from *Across the Pond*. [*2-3 oct*](#) or [*3-5 oct*](#), L1+-L2. CG CGB1105, CGB1106.

McChesney, Kevin. [*“Morning Has Broken.”*](#) 3-5 oct hb, L2. Ringing Word Publications RW8209.

Preaching

Creation in Christ, Year A
Tuesday, September 1, 2026
or Sunday, September 6, 2026

What an intriguing task to preach at the inauguration of a new festival! This year's formal adoption of Creation in Christ (or the Feast of Creation) by the Consultation on Common Texts marks the first addition of a new festival to our liturgical calendar since the formation of the Common Lectionary in 1983. Even more momentous is the wider ecumenical movement behind this new festival, including leadership from the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and the World Council of Churches. Many hope that these ongoing efforts will inaugurate a new common festival shared across Eastern and Western churches—something that has not occurred for over a thousand years. Part of the preaching task, especially this year, is to situate our local gatherings within this movement.

At this beginning of a new festival, the texts offer preachers an opportunity to draw on the theme of beginnings. Indeed, the texts for the Creation in Christ in year A (2026) especially highlight cosmic origins. Both Genesis 1 and John 1 open with the resonant phrase, “in the beginning” (or, as the NRSVue translates the Genesis text, “When God began to create”). Paul’s speech at the Areopagus begins with a reference to “the God who made the world and everything in it” (Acts 17:24) and recalls that we all share “one ancestor” (v. 26). This latter observation likely refers to the mythological Adam, but scientists have now shown that we humans also share a common ancestor with all other living creatures on earth, too. Paul’s speech sought to inspire reflection on the divine gift of universally shared human ancestry; today we might similarly be inspired by the gift of familial relationship with all lifeforms on earth.

The two options for the first reading are the two foundational creation stories from Genesis. Because they are quite different from each other, planners will benefit by thoughtfully choosing between them. Genesis 1 unfolds in a litany in which the cosmos is proclaimed “good” seven times, culminating in the gift of Sabbath, a day to appreciate cosmos-wide goodness. Genesis 2 tells the beginning of the story of the garden and includes several ambivalent foreshadowings: appreciation of the gold of other lands, the combination of dust and spirit in the creation of humanity, the call to the human to “serve and protect” the garden, the introduction of healthy ecological limits that might be transgressed, and beautiful partnerships formed between humans and other creatures that are vulnerable to being violated. Both profound goodness and fragile mortality are evident in the beginning—and both call for reverent attention today.

Translations and traditions have obscured some of the mystical poetics describing God’s formation of the human creature in Genesis 2. The Hebrew text describes the *adam* (earth creature) as being formed from the *afar* (topsoil) of the *adamah* (earth). Just as *human* is related to *humus*, so *adam* is related to *adamah*. The *adam* receives the commission to “till . . . and keep” the garden (2:15) prior to being divided into genders. Therefore, what the NRSVue translates as “man” throughout 2:7-23a is better translated as “human.” Further, the Hebrew *tzela* ‘ (translated as “rib” in NRSVue in 2:21-22) is probably better translated as “side” (picture one side of a rib cage rather than a single rib bone). Nowhere else in the Old Testament is *tzela* ‘ translated as referring to a single rib. These considerations allow our translations to speak more accurately to our common human origin in the earth and to avoid projecting male-dominant

imagery where it does not occur. Consequently, planners will want to carefully consider translations and emendations for the Genesis 2 text in particular.

Psalm 148 is the psalm most associated with dawn, the beginning of daylight hours. Monastic communities who devote their lives to prayer could have chosen to begin their day with a gentle psalm that quietly eased them out of bed to meet the sunrise. Instead, in the sunrise office of Lauds, Psalm 148 perceives the cosmos as ringing with exuberant praise, from the heights of the heavens (vv. 1-6) to the whole earth and the seas (vv. 7-14), with humans joining the hymn of creation last of all, like latecomers to a cosmic choir rehearsal. From early centuries, Christian communities have heard a call in Psalm 148 to begin each day by joining the diverse creation in praise. Are we now answering a similar call in this annual festival?

The inauguration of this festival occurs as we face humanity's greatest moment of ecological peril and as the earth faces its sixth mass extinction event (the first, however, caused by a single species). These texts are fertile ground for ethical and moral responses to this moment. Notice, too, that they portray the triune God at work powerfully, ecologically, not only now but from the beginning: a transcendent One speaking a generative Word; the Spirit brooding over water, becoming breath of life on earth, and inspiring creatures to discover unity in our creator. We face this moment remembering that we have been baptized into the life of this very Trinity.

It is helpful to situate this inaugural set of lections in the context of the other two years of the lectionary cycle. Rather than following the typical logic of Matthew in year A, Mark in year B, and Luke in year C, different themes are drawn out in each year of Creation in Christ. Year B (2027) highlights the ongoing fecundity of the creation: the lilies and birds of Matthew 6; the creativity of divine Wisdom in Proverbs 8; the flourishing watershed panorama of Psalm 104; and all things made alive in Christ in the vision of Colossians 1. In year C (2028), the texts foreground both the wildness and woundedness of creation: the divine speech at the wild edges of the cosmos in Job 38; God's mighty presence in wild nature in Psalm 29; creation's labor pains in Romans 8; and Jesus speaking to the windstorm in Luke 8. With the caveat that John 1 remains an optional gospel text in all three years, reviewing the lectionary themes for the entire cycle may help preachers begin this new festival with focus and an eye toward the paths ahead.

Benjamin M. Stewart is pastor to Emmanuel Lutheran, Two Harbors, Minnesota, and distinguished affiliate professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Ben is author of *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology* (Available from Augsburg Fortress).