

Where Two or Three are Gathered: Worship for Small Assemblies
September 4-October 9, 2022

SEASON OF CREATION

Each September, the Season of Creation Advisory Committee, invites us to “join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.” Together we enter “a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together” (seasonofcreation.org).

The inception of the Season of Creation (SOC) as a liturgical practice can be traced to Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios’ 1989 declaration of September 1st as The Day of Prayer for Creation. In the years that followed, ecumenical partners, including the Lutheran World Federation, worked to develop a sustained time of creation-centred intercessory prayer. The resulting Season of Creation extends from September 1st to October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi; in Canada the season is often lengthened to include the Sunday closest to Thanksgiving.

This year’s theme for the Season of Creation, “Listen to the Voice of Creation,” is a response to the Psalmist’s cry, “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge ... *their voice is not heard*; yet their voice goes out through all the Earth, and their words to the end of the world” (19:1-4). This theme asks us to take a stance of conscious listening to the human and non-human beings with whom we share our home.

For many of us, this posture of listening necessitates a shift of heart and mind; it requires us to not only acknowledge the voices of other cultures and communities, but to acknowledge non-human beings as having subjectivity, dignity, and mutuality (sharing in action, feeling, and relationship). We are being asked to affirm what the dominant strains of Christianity have often denied: the goodness and vital contribution of each member of God’s creation, human and non-human. The Psalmist makes this affirmation, Jesus makes this affirmation (remember ‘consider the lilies’?), many of our saints and mystics make this affirmation, and Indigenous cultures today call on settler-colonial cultures to remember this affirmation. From such an affirmation, we can begin to see that we have much to learn from ‘all creatures great and small’ and from our human siblings who intimately bear witness to creation’s groaning.

As we listen to creation, the SOC Advisory Committee prompts us to “lament the individuals, communities, species, and ecosystems who are lost, and those who are threatened by habitat loss and climate change”; we are reminded to “centre the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor,” who are disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental degradation. The SOC Committee also asks us to remember that these same populations are often on the front lines of activism working for change, and that many of these movements are led by women who put their lives in danger for the sake of our common home. In our prayer and contemplation, we are to discern what action we are called to take, “so that our lives in words and deeds proclaim good news for all the Earth.” (For more information, and ideas for action see seasonsofcreation.org).

In the context of the ELCIC, both our church and secular calendar help to facilitate this time of contemplation and prayerful action. The fall brings us saint days for Hildegard of Bingen (Sept 17) and Francis of Assisi (October 4). Both saints are renowned for their teachings on creation and spirituality. In our secular calendar, we celebrate Thanksgiving and observe The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Framing the latter with the Season of Creation is a reminder that residential schools were one of the policies that helped to facilitate the transfer of land and resources to the Canadian government, at great cost to Indigenous nations and to the detriment of the varied ecological communities that comprise what is called Canada.

As we begin together this time of prayer, may we remember that, as St. Augustine said Creation “is the divine page that you must listen to,” and as Luther said, “God has written [the gospel] not only in books, but in trees and other creatures.” Let us listen to creation, let us listen to the histories that got us here, let us prayerfully consider what science is saying about where we are, and let us listen to the hopes and dreams of our children. Each of these are gifts, and in response we both lament and give thanks in the hope of transformation.

Many blessings on your community as you join all creation in this time of prayer,

Rebekah Ludolph
July 2022

Options for Worship during the Season of Creation

Note: in the information below, there are links that take you directly to specific material within this document and online.

WORSHIP SPACE

If possible, consider gathering outside for worship during this season. Depending on your location and the size of your group, remember to think carefully about sound and what amplification you may need if you are gathering outside. If you cannot gather outside, what elements of creation can you bring *inside*?

The SOC program for this year invites congregations to create their own burning bush as a centrepiece. You could do this ahead of worship, or you could incorporate it into worship. Perhaps use the sermon time on September 4th as a time of collective creation. Instructions can be found in the [2022 Celebration Guide](#).

MUSIC

I have provided suggestions for gathering hymns and hymns of the day in the weekly resources section; these songs are all from the ELW.

If you have access to *All Creation Sings*, there is a larger variety of songs appropriate for the Season of Creation. One of my favourites is [For the Wholeness of the Earth](#) ACS 1067.

Some other non-ELW songs include:

[Ask the Animals](#) (a song I wrote for Trillium Lutheran Church's family program last year)
[Deep Peace](#) from Peace Lutheran Toronto

ORDER FOR A SERVICE OF THE WORD

[Land Acknowledgement](#) (optional)

[Thanksgiving for Baptism](#) ELW p97

[Creation Confession](#)

Gathering Song

Greeting (traditional or by [Hildegard of Bingen](#))

Prayer of the Day

Children's Message (if applicable)

[Readings](#) and Psalm

Gospel Acclamation ELW 175 (optional)

[Sermon](#) or Contemplative Practice

Hymn of the Day

Creed (traditional or [Profession of Faith](#) for Season of Creation)

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing of the Peace (traditional or from [Seasons of Creation curriculum](#))

[Thanksgiving for the Word](#)

Lord's Prayer (traditional or from [Seasons of Creation Curriculum](#))

[Blessing](#)

Sending Song

[Dismissal](#)

ORDER FOR HOLY COMMUNION

[Land Acknowledgement](#) (optional)

Thanksgiving for Baptism (ELW p97)

[Creation Confession](#)

Gathering Song

Greeting (traditional or by [Hildegard of Bingen](#))

Prayer of the Day

Children's Message (if applicable)

[Readings](#) and Psalm

Gospel Acclamation ELW 175 (optional)

[Sermon](#) or Contemplative Practice

Hymn of the Day

Creed (traditional, [Profession of Faith](#) for Season of Creation, or omit)

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing of the Peace (traditional or from [Season of Creation curriculum](#))

[Meal](#)

Blessing (traditional or from [Seasons of Creation Curriculum](#))

Sending Song

[Dismissal](#)

QUICK LINKS TO WEEKLY RESOURCES

[September 4](#)

[September 11](#)

[September 18](#)

[September 25](#)

[October 2](#)

[October 9](#)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If a land acknowledgement is not a part of your community's practice, the Season of Creation is a great time to experiment with what might work for your gathering.

Rather than a static statement about whose land you are gathering on, a living land acknowledgement is an opportunity to make a connection between the liturgical focus of the day and our personal and collective work towards justice for/with Indigenous peoples. Consider asking different members of your community offer the acknowledgement each week.

One framework that can help facilitate this is:

1. Welcome those gathered; introduce yourself and your role for the day.
2. If this is a new practice for your community, explain why you are doing a land acknowledgement.
3. Briefly state what you know of your ancestry: where your ancestors were, and if you are a settler person, where/whose land they settled on.
4. Situate your community and its relationship to the land; the traditional territory you gather on, any treaties that apply to the land you gather on, and enduring Indigenous presence.
5. Make a connection between the day's theological/liturgical focus and our responsibility to address the ways in which settler culture benefits from of a system that takes advantage of Indigenous peoples and lands. If applicable, you might point to actions being taken by your community or relationships that have developed in response to this sense of responsibility. Remember to describe this work as 'in progress.'

Example for Gathering Sunday:

Welcome to worship today! It is so wonderful to be back together for this Gathering Sunday! My name is Rebekah Ludolph, and I am a member of Trillium Lutheran Church.

Through the Season of Creation, we are practicing acknowledging our personal and collective relationships to the land on which we gather and the land that has sustained us through our lives. I am a settler person who has lived most of my life where we are gathered today. My ancestors came from Germany and Scotland to this region in the 1850s and were able to purchase land on the Haldimand Tract, despite a treaty agreement protecting this land for the use and livelihood of the Haudenosaunee.

Today, as we prepare ourselves to return to school and work, we recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples in this land. We acknowledge that the land on which we live and work is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Neutral People, and that the Haldimand tract was promised to the Haudenosaunee, as their home for which rent is owing. We remember to carry this knowledge in our hearts and minds as we begin a new year of learning; we recommit ourselves to unlearning the stories and practices that deny Indigenous peoples their basic rights.

A CREATION THANKSGIVING FOR CHILDREN IN WORSHIP by Rebekah Ludolph

(make the sign of the cross):

We give thanks to God the Creator, the Teacher, and the Spirit that gives life to everything:

(touch the ground)

Mother Earth, where we come from and who gives us everything we need

(make arms into circle above head)

Brother Sun who provides all the energy needed for life

(curve body into a crescent moon shape)

Sister Moon who guides us with her cycles.

(sway body and arms back and forth)

The four winds who bring the seasons,

(make waves with your arms)

And Water who binds us all together:

(slowly open arms up wide)

the plants, the animals, the birds, the fish, the bacteria, the fungi, and all the other people,

(place arms palms up in front)

those that come before

(place arms palms up behind)

and those that come after.

We thank you Gracious God that you are with us always.

We ask that today we might walk in your way,

(walk on the spot)

And delight in all of Creation

(Spin with arms out)

We love you and we trust you,

Amen

THANKSGIVING AND CONFESSION

Consider beginning worship each week with a Thanksgiving for Baptism (ELW p97) followed by the confession adapted from *Sundays and Seasons 2022* found below. Ordinarily, we would only do one or the other, but I invite you to begin with the Thanksgiving for Baptism in order to affirm that reconciling with the Earth and all Creation is a part of our baptismal calling, and that in baptism we are set free from sin and guilt for the sake of being accountable to this calling. You might gather around a water source (if you have one near where you are gathering outdoors), around the font, or place a bowl of water in the centre of your group. Invite individuals to touch the water and place the sign of the cross on their head and/or invite children to use branches to sprinkle those gathered with water.

Dear friends, remembering the gift of new life in baptism, together let us acknowledge our failure to love this world as God does.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

God of mercy and forgiveness,
we confess that sin still has a hold on us.

We have harmed your good creation.

We have failed to do justice,

love kindness,

and walk humbly with you.

Turn us in a new direction.

Show us the path that leads to life.

Be our refuge and strength on the journey,

through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.
Amen.

Beloved of God:
our sins are forgiven, and we are made whole.
God points the way to new life in Christ,
who meets us on the road.
Let us journey now in God's abiding love
through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

ALTERNATIVE GREETING

We gather in the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all creatures!

Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

READINGS FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION

The readings listed below are from the semicontinuous lectionary, as that is what is suggested by the Seasons of Creation material for this year. If this is not your community's practice, all lectionary readings can be found [here](#).

You might also try an alternative call and response before the readings such as: Word of Life for All Creation, Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Sometimes it can be difficult to make connections between the day's reading and creation; see [Preaching for God's World](#) or *Sundays and Seasons* for some ideas.

With this year's SOC theme of 'listening', a contemplative exercise would also be an appropriate substitute for a sermon.

Here are some ideas for contemplative exercises you could expand and adapt for your gathering. While you could use screens to project this material, I would encourage you to lead it outdoors with a leader guiding the meditation.

[Pray As You Go's Season of Creation Contemplative Prayers](#) (Jesuit Content)

[Remembering the Creator](#) from Richard Wagamese (provide intro to Wagamese as an Ojibwe writer who has shared his teachings).

[Laying Hands on Mother Earth](#) from Steven Charleston (member of the Choctaw Nation and an Episcopal bishop).

PROFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in God, who creates all things,
 who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
 who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
 We believe in God as the source of all life,
 who baptises this planet with living water.
 We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
 the malnourished one, the climate refugee,
 who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
 And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
 who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
 who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
 We believe in everlasting life in God.
 And we believe in the hope that one day
 God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

(Gurukul Theological college, India / adapted by Keld B. Hansen 2009, included in SOC Curriculum 2022)

ALTERNATIVE LORD'S PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
 Source of all that is and that shall be,
 Father and Mother of us all,
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:
 The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
 The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
 Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
 Your beloved community of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
 With the bread we need for today, feed us.
 In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
 In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
 From trials too great to endure, spare us.
 From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
 For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.
Amen.

(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa for the 2022 Season of Creation Curriculum. This version of the Lord's prayer was influenced by Maori theologians)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

If we are in Christ, we are becoming a new creation.

We see God around us. We see God within us. We give thanks to our Creator.

Let us show the caring nature God has instilled within us by greeting each other as a sign of God's justice of peace, love, forgiveness and grace. The peace of the Creator be with you in all Things.

And also with you.

You are invited to care and share peace with your neighbor, and speak a word of peace to the land in which you gather, and the creatures who share this common home.

(adapted from Celebrating Creation: Honoring Indigenous People, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, ELCA for SOC Curriculum 2022)

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD *(adapted from "Autumn," Sundays and Seasons 2022)*

Creator God,
loving Redeemer, steadfast Comforter,
as vegetation matures in forests and fields,
your living Word undergirds all that lives.

We praise your eternal Word.

We praise your eternal Word.

In the words of the scriptures you offer us Christ:
our refuge, our savior, our friend,
accompanying us throughout our years
and renewing us in love.

We praise Jesus, your Word.

We praise Jesus, your Word.

We pray for power from your abiding Spirit.
Strengthen us to stand firm in faith,
in devotion to your Word,
and in service to all Creation.

We pray for the Spirit of your Word.

We pray for the Spirit of your Word.

To you be honor and praise and glory,
today and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,

Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation.

(adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme for the SOC Curriculum 2022)

DISMISSAL *(from Sundays and Seasons 2022)*

Go in peace, with Christ beside you.

Thanks be to God.

MEAL

OFFERATORY HYMN: For the Fruit of All Creation ELW 679

OFFERING PRAYER *(from Sundays and Seasons 2022)*

Gracious God,
in your great love you richly provide for our needs.
Make of these gifts a banquet of blessing,
and make us ready to serve all creation;
through Jesus Christ, who sets a table for all.
Amen.

DIALOGUE AND PREFACE *(from [Season of Creation 2020](#) curriculum)*

The Creator be with you and all creation.

And also with you.

Open your hearts.

We open them to our Creator.

Let us give thanks to our Creator.

It is right to join creation in thanking God.

It is right to give you thanks, loving Creator.
Your Word is the impulse for all things to be,
for space, stars and stardust to appear,
for Earth to emerge from the deep,
for life to be born of Earth and
for humans to be born of Earth and the Spirit.

You chose to be born a human being,
to become a part of Earth,
to suffer, die and rise from death
to redeem humankind, renew creation,
and affirm all born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your presence is the living impulse in all things,
the Christ deep among us,
filling Earth—land, sea and air;
filling every element and place;
filling the grain and the grape
we share with you this day.

Therefore, with angels and archangels,
ancient voices in the forest,
high voices from the sky,
deep voices from the sea
and the whole company of creation,
we proclaim your presence among us:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY ELW 191

TABLE BLESSING

Holy God,
our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,
 you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.
You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,
 and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.
You sent your Son to eat with sinners
 and to become food for the world.
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.
Remembering, therefore,
 his life given for us
 and his rising from the grave,
 we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.
By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:
 strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,
 and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table.
Come, taste and see.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of the abundant table,
you have refreshed our hearts in this meal
with bread for the journey.
Give us your grace on the road
that we might serve our neighbors with joy;
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

WEEKLY RESOURCES

SEPTEMBER 4

September 1st is the Day of Prayer for Creation. The following service is an adaptation of the prayer service that ecumenical partners around the world will be using to pray at this time. Participants will need to have the words to the responses. If it does not suit your community, feel free to select elements that work for you, and place them in a more traditional service of the word.

GATHERING

*** Consider going through the following Greeting based on a psalm --- and adding the plants and geography from where you live; you might also revise the gender binary language based on who is gathered

Greeting in the name of our God who is good:

Whose love endures forever.

Greetings to you, sun and moon, you stars of the northern sky:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Sunrise and sunset, night and day:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, mountains and valleys, grassland and scree,

Glacier, avalanche, mist and snow:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you Kauri and pine, rata and kowhai, mosses and ferns, Baobab, fynbos, yellowwood and aloe:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you dolphins and kahai, sea lion and crab, coral, anemone, pipi and shrimp:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you rabbits and cattle, moths and dogs, kiwi and sparrow, and tui and hawk:

Elephant, lions, rhinos, and giraffes, ostrich, sheep, cattle

Scorpion and dung beetle:

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, women and men,

Elders and children,

Diverse cultures of this rainbow land:

Typists and teachers, cleaners, and clerks,

Learners, job seekers, TV and Sports' stars,

All who care, who live and who pray,

Who laugh and learn, who rest and who play.

Give to our God your thanks and praise.

(A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa page 457, Lynn Pedersen 2016, Inspired by Ps 148 & Song of Creation, New Zealand Prayer Book)

PSALMODY (*Psalms 19*)

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of God's hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

THANKSGIVING FOR THE EARTH

Remember the fruits of the earth, for sowing and for harvest.
Remember the dew of the air.
Remember the downcoming of the rains and the waters and the rivers.
Remember the plants and the blooms of every year.
Remember the safety of humans and of animals and of me, your sinful servant.

For the rain, the wind of the sky, seed, plants, the fruit of the trees and also the vineyards, and
for every tree in the entire world,

We are grateful

For the Holy Trinity who brings us to perfection in safety and peace, forgives us our sins, brings
us up according to their measure that we may grow and prosper through your grace, who

makes the face of the earth to rejoice, waters her furrows, lets her grain be abundantly multiplied and makes ready her seed-time and harvest,

We give You thanks

(adapted from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Pre-Anaphora, and Anaphora of Basil)

GATHERING SONG: Let All Things Now Living ELW 881

LITANY OF LAMENT AND REPENTANCE

Three candles are lit to represent the voices of Indigenous people, women and biodiversity

God of our vibrant world,

You have given humans the responsibility to care for each other. Indigenous people have historical, spiritual, and personal ties to these lands on which we inhabit. But many of us have failed to recognise the presence of God in these traditions, and their voices have been silenced. We are thankful to Indigenous Nations for their continuing care and presence on the Earth. We all value the resilience and strength shown through the generations and today.

We turn to the Spirit who dismantles borders and celebrates life-giving community.

Help us make a place where everyone is welcome and help us to acknowledge your grace at work in the ways of one another. Together, may we learn the spiritual richness of our relationships in the web of life.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

O God of the whole of creation.

You have created land and trees, animals and all living creatures on the earth. We are destroying the forests through poisons and logging, so that the voices of the birds, insects and forest dwellers are silenced

You created the wonders of the ocean, the fish, shells, reefs, whales, waves, corals. The oceans are warming and as they drown in plastic, their voices are being stilled.

We turn to you in sorrow and repentance.

Please help us to care for the oceans, the land and the forest, and to recognise that it is your blessing for us. Creation is speaking to us, but their voices have been silenced by the roar of our greed

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Mothering Earth, our Sister, you sustain and govern us. We have silenced the voices of your people, especially the voices of women - protectors of the Earth who have been killed by land grabbers, mining companies and oil companies. Many are the voices of our sisters who have been silenced by flooding, hurricanes and drought as the earth's warming brings destruction. May we listen to the voices of our mothers and sisters and learn to treasure and protect the web of life.

We turn to you in sorrow and repentance.

Please, Creator God, forgive us for the human activities which have overpowered the weather and caused destruction of our environment.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

(Adapted from a Prayer of Lament written by members of the four Religious Orders in the Anglican Church of Melanesia. Melanesian Brotherhood, Society of St Francis, Community of the Sisters of the Church, Community of the Sisters of Melanesia)

A time of silence is kept as people go forward to extinguish candles in memory of communities that are being wiped out by environmental degradation and creatures that are becoming extinct, and for the voices of women, indigenous people and creation that have been silenced.

HYMN: Senzeni Na (What Have We Done) is the recommended song here; you can find a recording [here](#) OR you can sing ELW 704 When Pain of the World Surrounds Us

WORD

The Lectionary readings for today are:

Jeremiah 18:1-11

Psalms 138:1-6 13-18

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14: 25- 33

OR Consider reading the story of the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-12) and creating a burning bush during the sermon time (see [SOC Celebration Guide](#)).

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: Touch the Earth Lightly ELW 739

PROFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in God, who creates all things,
 who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
 who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life,
 who baptises this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,

the malnourished one, the climate refugee,
 who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
 And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
 who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
 who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
 We believe in everlasting life in God.
 And we believe in the hope that one day
 God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

(Gurukul Theological college, India / adapted by Keld B. Hansen 2009, from SOC Curriculum 2022)

OFFERING *(from SOC Curriculum 2022)*

You may want to have an offering, perhaps to collect money for a particular project or ministry that contributes to ecological restoration, or an aspect of climate justice that is significant in your location. You may want to listen to birdsong or showcase local plants or animals from your area as a way to raise awareness by listening to the voices from your local ecology praising God and calling us to care.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER *(from SOC Curriculum 2022)*

Loving God, even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she places her young near Your altar. You are attentive to all you have made.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, help us provide refuge to every animal and plant with whom we live. Help us be attentive to all you have made.

God, in whom all creation subsists,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, when Jesus cried out and gave up his Spirit, the earth shook and the rocks split.

You are known by the whole of creation that listens to you.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, help us hear and know you just as the earth and rocks do. Help us to learn from the way in which we see creation recognise your glorious beauty.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, you are present in your creation and seek to heal her wounds. You can be found walking in the garden. Open our eyes to see you, the gardener.

God, who is present with your creation,

Help us be present too.

Loving God, we often abandon your creation and cause its wounds. Help us to follow in your footsteps and learn to walk in the garden like you.

God, who is present with your creation,

Help us be present too.

Loving God, who hears every voice, knows each cry of injustice, and is attentive to the suffering of the earth: teach us to listen. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may listen to the world you have created and not close ourselves off from it. Reveal to us the ways in which we have failed to hear your voice in how we treat the earth.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Amen

LORD’S PRAYER:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your beloved community of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Amen.

(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa for the 2022 Season of Creation Curriculum. This version of the Lord’s prayer was influenced by Maori theologians)

SHARING OF THE PEACE *(from SOC Curriculum 2022)*

If we are in Christ, we are becoming a new creation.

We see God around us. We see God within us. We give thanks to our Creator.

Let us show the caring nature you have instilled within us by greeting each other as a sign of God's justice of peace, love, forgiveness and grace. The peace of our Creator be with you in all Things.

And also with you.

You are invited to care and share peace with your neighbor, and speak a word of peace to the land in which you gather, and the creatures who share this common home.

(adapted from Celebrating Creation: Honoring Indigenous People, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, ELCA)

BENEDICTION

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation.

(adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

SEPTEMBER 11

For many communities, this Sunday is “Gathering Sunday” when folks return from summer vacation and return to their Sunday morning routine. If there are children or teachers among you, consider including a “backpack blessing” during the time of the children’s message.

Suggested Gathering Song if you are doing a backpack blessing: Earth and All Stars ELW 731

Prayer of the Day *(adapted from Sundays and Seasons 2022 for a service with a backpack blessing)*

God our ever-patient teacher, you lead back to yourself all those who go astray. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may reject whatever is contrary to your way of peace and may follow all things that sustain your good creation. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

READINGS

Jeremiah 4:11-22, 22-18

Psalms 14

1 Timothy 12-17

Luke 15:1-10

BACKPACK BLESSING by Rebekah Ludolph

You are all heading back to school to learn new things, so I would like to tell a story about a time when I learned something. *(Tell a story about a time you learned something from spending time in creation or with a particular plant or animal.)*

Have you ever learned something from a plant or animal or from spending time outside?

This fall Christians all around the world are thinking about what it means to listen to creation, so that we can learn how to better love and respect the plants, animals, and people with whom we share this earth. It is kind of like we are going to school too!

Let us say a blessing on your time of learning this year.

Dear God,
as we get ready to start another year in school,
we ask your blessing on these backpacks,
and especially on these children who will wear them.
As they do the very important work of being students,
bless them with:

eagerness to learn, that their world may grow large;
respect for teachers and students,
that they may form healthy relationships;
love for nature,

that they may become caretakers of your creation;
happiness when learning is easy
and persistence when it is hard;
and faith in Jesus as their best teacher and closest friend.

We ask that you protect these, your own children.

Watch over them and keep them safe
as they travel to and from school.

As they learn, help them also to discover
the different gifts that you have given each one of them
to be used in your work in the world.

As they hear the many voices that will fill their days,
help them to listen most carefully for your voice,
the one that tells them you will love them always,
no matter what.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

(Final prayer from Seasons of Creation 2022)

HYMN OF THE DAY: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing ELW 807

SEPTEMBER 18

Saturday, September 17th is the Feast Day of Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen who died in 1179. You might consider using one of her paintings as a contemplative art piece during worship or using some of her music as contemplative background music while people enter for worship.

GREETING:

We gather in the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all creatures!

Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

GATHERING HYMN: Take my Life that I May Be ELW 583

PRAYER OF THE DAY: *(Adapted from Sundays and Seasons 2022)*

God among us, we gather in the name of Christ to learn to love for the sake of All Creation. Turn our minds to your wisdom that, like your servant Hildegard, we might discern your life-giving presence in each of your creatures. Turn our hearts to the grace revealed in Jesus that we might have the courage to act for the good of them all. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

READINGS:

Jeremiah 8:18-91

Psalm 79:1-9

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Introduce Hildegard of Bingen; perhaps show one of her images of creation or read the children's book *The Secret World of Hildegard*.

HYMN OF THE DAY: God of the Sparrow ELW 740 (this is perhaps a strange song for the day, but today's Gospel is a tricky one; it invites us to ask 'How do we become part of God's dream', just as this hymn does)

SEPTEMBER 25

September 30th is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Framing this observance within the Season of Creation is a reminder that Residential schools were one of the policies that helped to facilitate the transfer of land and resources to the Canadian government, at great cost to Indigenous nations and to the detriment of the varied ecological communities that comprise what is called Canada. The LWF focus for the Season of Creation urges us to make the connection between ongoing colonial histories and the current environmental crisis. Following Pope Francis' recent apology, we are reminded that as Christians we are called to repent (act to change our ways) following confession. As a reminder of our role in this ongoing work, consider integrating an adaptation of the following Litany for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation into worship for today.

LITANY FOR NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION *(adapted from the Litany by Ron Flaming, Truth and Reconciliation Action Group Waterloo North Mennonite Church)*

In gratitude to God who makes all things new,
we receive a call to the Ministry of Reconciliation
as a paradigm for healing broken relationships.

Today we turn our hearts to acknowledge:

Our role in the pain and violence experienced by Indigenous peoples in this place we call home.
We settler peoples have reaped the benefits of the land
by pushing aside Indigenous peoples in order to seize their land.

Today we lament:

The attempted erasure of Indigenous peoples by Canada through the Indian Act, which
criminalized the practice of traditions and cultures and mandated the seizure and indoctrination
of children in residential schools.

**Today we acknowledge we have no appropriate words,
so we stand respectfully in silent lament:**

for the children who died while in custody of residential schools, died of active abuse,
died of lonely hearts and separation from family.

Pause in silence

**Today we acknowledge we have no appropriate words,
so we stand in silent respect:**

for the families and communities who mourn,
mourn their children who did not come home from residential schools, mourn the disruption of
family and way of life,
mourn the exploitation and desecration of their traditional lands.

Pause in silence

In gratitude to God who demonstrated the way of reconciliation with us,
**We commit to walking together in a new way,
acknowledging the true history of Indigenous Peoples and supporting their land rights. We ask
for the grace to humbly listen and learn as we move forward
on the path of true reconciliation.**

GATHERING SONG: Jesu, Jesu Fill Us With Your Love ELW 708

**Use refrain only sung as a short repetitive song.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Adapted from Sundays and Seasons 2022*)

O God, rich in mercy, you look with compassion on this troubled world. Feed us with your grace, that we may have the courage to face the pain in our communities and in our world. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

READINGS

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

Psalms 91:1-6, 14-16

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

HYMN OF THE DAY: Light Dawns on a Weary World ELW 726

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Many children will be observing [Orange Shirt Day](#) this week. You might take the time to have the children share with your gathering about how they participate in this tradition.

Note: Within the **intercessory prayers**, include prayers for residential school survivors, missing and murdered Indigenous women, and the ongoing search for graves at residential schools. Consider researching the residential school closest to your location and including specifics in the prayers; this [map](#) can help.

OCTOBER 2

This Sunday is the closest Sunday to the Feast of St. Francis. If you are meeting outside you might invite folks to bring their pets, or if you are meeting inside you could invite folks to bring photos of their pets. Consider using the following litany instead of the usual Thanksgiving/Confession.

LITANY OF REPENTANCE AND LONGING FOR THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS *(from Sundays and Seasons 2022)*

In the beginning, the Spirit moved over the deep;
new life daily unfolding at God's call.

Darkness and light: Good.

Skies, lands, and seas: Good.

The earth and all that fills it—plants and rocks,
the finned, the feathered, the furry: Good.

At the last, humankind in God's image: Very good.

Yet we have failed to draw from that goodness
in care for God's creation.

**Forgive us, God, for the ways we have
exploited earth and its creatures.**

We have misunderstood our calling
to be protectors of God's creation.

**Forgive us, God, for the ways we
have exploited earth and its creatures.**

We long for new relationships with God's creation
that has been entrusted to us.

**Help us, God, to make a new community
with all that lives alongside us.**

May the merciful God who calls us
to tend earth and all its creatures,
deepen our knowledge of creation's interweaving,
so that our lives are shaped in wholeness and peace
with all living things; in Jesus' name.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG: As Rain from the Clouds ELW 508

GREETING AND PRAYER

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

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Holy God, we thank you for the gift of life. Recalling Francis who celebrated your love for all creation, today we embrace our connectedness to all: to wind, sea, and sky; to earthworm, giraffe, and chicken; to fish and puppy, to cats of the jungle and in our homes. Deepen our care for all that lives; in the name of Jesus, our teacher, saviour, and friend.

Amen.

READINGS:

Lamentations 1:1-6

Psalm 137

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Provide an introduction to who St. Francis was. Invite all folks with pets to bring their pets/photos forward. You might have them introduce their animal. Offer the following blessing from Sundays and Seasons 2022:

Gracious God,

in your love you created us in your image

and made us stewards of the animals

that live in the skies, the earth, and the sea.

Bless us in our care for our pet/s (animal/s).

Help us recognize your power and wisdom

in the variety of creatures that live in our world,

and hear our prayer for all that suffer overwork, hunger, and ill-treatment.

Protect your creatures and guard them from all evil, now and forever.

Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lord Let My Heart be Good Soil ELW 512

OCTOBER 9

This Sunday is often celebrated as a Thanksgiving service. Consider beginning with this Litany of Thanksgiving based on Psalm 100 by Bishop Hope Ward (for more information see [UMC Justice](#)).

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

**We give thanks for this good earth, your gift to us and our home,
and we pray for wisdom and gentleness to care for your creation, O God.**

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into God's presence with singing.

**We gather with grateful hearts, remembering your mercy and strength,
your justice and your compassion, your goodness and your grace.**

Know that the Lord is God.

May we live what we know of you and strive for what you seek, O God.

We are God's people, and the sheep of God's pasture.

**In humility we pray for the entire human family,
remembering those in need, and all who are alone, dishonored or excluded.**

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving and God's courts with praise.

Move us through thanksgiving and praise to action.

Use us to heal wherever there is violence and harm.

Give thanks to God, bless God's name.

May we embrace your just purpose, O God, and offer ourselves in prophetic witness.

For the Lord is good;

We pray for your goodness to flow outward, flooding this world with love.

God's steadfast love endures forever,

We pray for your loving purpose in every life this day and into the days to come.

And God's faithfulness to all generations.

GATHERING HYMN: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty ELW 859

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Adapted from Sundays and Seasons 2022*)

Almighty and Merciful God, your bountiful goodness fills all creation. Keep us safe from all that may hurt us, that whole and well in body and spirit, we may with grateful hearts accomplish all that you would have us do, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

You might ask children to share what they are grateful for and talk about the role of thanksgiving in our liturgical practices.

READINGS

Jeremiah 29:1,4-7

Psalm 66:1-12

2 Timothy 2: 8-15

Luke 17:11-19

HYMN OF THE DAY: God, Whose Firm is All Creation ELW 734