THE FEAST OF CREATION IN CHRIST – SEPTEMBER 1

Coming in just one month, the 2026 Lectionary introduces the **Feast of Creation in Christ (Creation Sunday)**, Po be observed on **1 September** or on any of the following Sundays. This festival has been approved by the Church of England and now awaits endorsement by the Province of South East Asia for inclusion in a future Provincial lectionary.

The Feast enriches the Church's liturgical year by complementing seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Holy Week, highlighting thanksgiving for God's gift of creation and celebrating its restoration through Jesus Christ.

Key Concepts & Definitions

The **Feast of Creation in Christ** celebrates the mystery of the Triune God revealed in the work of creation and redemption: God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth; Jesus Christ, the eternal Word through whom and for whom all things were made; and the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who sustains and renews the whole creation.

This festival proclaims “that the created order belongs to God alone, and is continually upheld by His providence and love, and is destined for its fulfilment in Christ.”

By placing creation within the Church's liturgical year, the Feast deepens the Church's worship (*lex orandi*), strengthens her faith (*lex credendi*), and shapes her life (*lex vivendi*), affirming that creation is not merely the backdrop to salvation but an integral part of God's eternal purpose.

The celebration invites the faithful to give thanks for the goodness of creation, to rejoice in its reconciliation through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to anticipate its final renewal when all things are brought into unity under His lordship.

Grounded in Holy Scripture, the festival confesses that "through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3), and that "all things have been created through him and for him... and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things... so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:15–20).

Christian Care for the Environment

Christian care for the environment is rooted not merely in ethical responsibility

but in the hope of Christ's resurrection and the promise of the new creation.

The Feast of Creation in Christ places creation care within the larger narrative of God's saving work, proclaiming that the risen Christ is reconciling and renewing all things.

In this way, care for creation becomes an act of worship, thanksgiving, and faithful stewardship rather than one driven by guilt, anxiety, or obligation.

The Church is therefore called to participate joyfully in God's ongoing work of renewal, bearing witness to the coming Kingdom in which the whole creation will share in Christ's redemption.

The **Assisi Seminar Report – *Feast of Creation*** draws attention to the enduring relationship between ***lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi***—the principle that the Church's worship shapes its faith, and its faith shapes its way of life.

The report observes that the historical neglect of creation within the "Church's ethical life (*lex vivendi*) reflects an earlier lack of attention to creation in both its worship (*lex orandi*) and theology (*lex credendi*)." Interestingly, the contemporary ecological crisis has reversed this pattern. Many churches first responded through ethical action and environmental advocacy, which subsequently prompted renewed theological reflection and, more recently, the incorporation of creation into the Church's liturgical life.

The Feast of Creation in Christ represents an important step in restoring this proper theological order, integrating worship, doctrine, and Christian living into a coherent response to God's gift of creation.

This festival calls the Church to delight in creation as God's gracious gift rather than regard it as a human possession.

It invites repentance for the ways humanity has misused and exploited the created order entrusted to our care. It also calls the faithful to stand in solidarity with communities most affected by ecological degradation and climate-related challenges, bearing witness to Christ's compassion and justice.

Encouragingly, an increasing number of Christian churches and movements are recovering a more robust theology of creation, recognising that faithful discipleship includes the care of God's world as an integral expression of worship, stewardship, and hope in the renewal of all creation.

Ecumenical Milestone

The **Feast of Creation in Christ** represents a significant ecumenical milestone, reflecting a growing movement of the Holy Spirit as churches across many traditions recover the place of creation within the Church's worship and witness.

Following the **Assisi Dialogue** (March 2024), participating churches proposed the establishment of the Feast as a new liturgical observance in their official calendars, both to deepen the Church's celebration of creation and to commemorate the **1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325–2025)**.

Inspired by St Francis of Assisi's **Canticle of the Creatures**,/ Song of creation (Mattins) the initiative calls the Church to recover two inseparable dimensions of Christian worship: to glorify the Creator and to contemplate the goodness of all that God has made.

By celebrating the Feast of Creation in Christ, the Church joins a growing ecumenical witness that proclaims “creation as God's gift, redeemed in Christ, sustained by the Holy Spirit, and destined for its fulfilment in the new creation.

Anglican Contribution

A significant milestone in the reception of the **Feast of Creation in Christ** is its inclusion in the **Common Worship** lectionary resources of the Church of England. As a result, many Anglican and Protestant churches are preparing to celebrate the Feast for the first time this September, with a growing body of liturgical resources now available to support its observance.

The Anglican Communion has played an important role in advancing this ecumenical initiative. Commenting on the Feast, Archbishop Justin Welby affirmed: *"The Feast of Creation is an opportunity to celebrate the Triune God as Creator, reflecting on the mystery of Creation as the foundational event of salvation history... Creation Day has inspired us to come together in prayer and action—to safeguard, sustain and renew the life of the Earth. That is why, inspired by the Orthodox Church's leadership, the Anglican Communion enthusiastically supports this ecumenical process to explore adding the Feast of Creation to our liturgical calendars."*

To reinforce this ecumenical vision, Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios I declared: *"We invite through this our Patriarchal Message the entire Christian world, to offer... every year on this day prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation*

and as petitions for its protection and salvation."

This invitation has become a defining inspiration for the ecumenical celebration of the Feast of Creation.

It calls the whole Church to unite in worship and prayer, giving thanks to the Creator for the gift of creation while seeking God's grace for its protection, healing, and renewal.

Rooted in thanksgiving rather than fear, the Feast reminds Christians that care for creation is a shared vocation arising from faith in the Triune God and expressed through the Church's common worship.

Celebrating the Feast of Creation in Christ: Worship, Formation and Mission
The Feast of Creation in Christ may be a new and unfamiliar observance for some churches.

The following practical approaches can help congregations receive and celebrate this festival meaningfully:

I. Introduce and Observe the Feast in the Life of the Church

- Observe **1 September as the Feast of Creation in Christ**, or celebrate it on one of the following Sundays.

• Introduce the Feast through church bulletins, newsletters, announcements, or a short reflection during worship.

• Use this opportunity to join the worldwide Church in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and lordship as the **Firstborn of all creation** (Colossians 1:15), through whom all things are made and renewed.

II. Connect Theology with Creation Care

- Use the Feast as an opportunity to connect Christian doctrine with environmental stewardship within the local context.
- Ground teaching on **eco-theology in Christ**, recognising Him as both **Creator and Redeemer** of all creation.
- Emphasise that creation care is not simply an environmental concern but a response to God's love, purpose, and salvation plan for the whole created order.

III. Preach and Teach Creation-Centred Themes

Possible sermon themes include:

- **"The Earth is the Lord's"** (Psalm 24:1) – creation belongs to God and is entrusted to human care.
- **Christ the Creator and Redeemer** – Jesus' role in creation and the restoration of all things.
- **A Theology of Lament and Hope** – acknowledging environmental suffering such as deforestation, river pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate challenges while

proclaiming God's promise of renewal.

IV. Celebrate Through Music and Prayer

- Choose hymns and songs that celebrate God's majesty, wisdom, and goodness revealed in creation. Include prayers of thanksgiving for creation, confession for humanity's misuse of the earth, and intercession for communities affected by ecological challenges.
- Incorporate creation-themed readings, prayers, or liturgical symbols where appropriate.

V. Formation and Discipleship Through Encounter with Creation

Encourage younger generations and the wider congregation to participate in creation-based activities such as:

- Creation trails and prayer walks. Pilgrim walk, Outdoor worship or reflection in gardens, forests, or national parks.
- Activities that help participants recognise Christ's presence and sustaining grace within creation.

As we celebrate this Festival of Creation and New Creation, Church Fathers invite all churches to participate actively in worship, teaching, prayer, and practical acts of care for God's creation. This is not merely an annual observance but an opportunity to renew our faith in the risen Christ, through whom all things were created and in whom all things are being made new. Let our celebration inspire us to delight in God's good creation, repent of our misuse of it, and bear faithful witness by caring for the earth and standing alongside communities affected by ecological challenges. In doing so, we proclaim the hope of the resurrection and anticipate the fullness of God's new creation.

Written by Bishop Charles Samuel

REFERENCES

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