

Where Two or Three Are Gathered  
Season of Creation ~ *Let Justice and Peace Flow*  
and Thanksgiving Sunday  
September 1 to October 8, 2023

Prepared by Lorraine Reinhardt, British Columbia Synod

The following information comes largely from the website for the Season of Creation [seasonofcreation.org/resources](http://seasonofcreation.org/resources). You will find worship resources in the Season of Creation 2023 Celebration Guide.pdf. Other resources include Sundays and Seasons.

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment. It is an annual ecumenical season where we pray and act together as a Christian family for our common home.

The symbol for this Season of Creation is a *Mighty River*. "Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19

The prophet Amos cries out "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" Amos 5: 24. And so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity. Just like tributaries come together to form a mighty river, as the people of God, we must work together on behalf of all Creation, as part of that mighty river of peace and justice.

**Ideas to celebrate the season of creation**

~ *Hold your worship service outside.* To celebrate God's creation fully, it is good, where practical, to take our worship outside a building and to worship in the context of God's creation. Depending on your style of worship and the weather, consider an informal service or brief Eucharist.

~ *Offering.* Ask children and adults to gather symbols from nature and take them to the holy table. These symbols can represent the "fruit of the earth and work of human hands" alongside the bread and wine, and serve as a reminder of the voices of all creation that joins in the feast.

~ *Include a moment of silence* to listen to, and wordlessly join in with the song of creation's worship. Or play sounds of water or a river in the place of singing as you come to the table.

~ *In place of the sermon,* divide into groups for a short Bible study.

~ *Organize a creation walk or pilgrimage.* Organize a contemplative walk outside by a local river to meditate on the gift of God's creation and our response to be in deeper communion with all life. Invite your group to study ecologically themed Scriptures, or pray with ecologically themed prayers while walking. Your pilgrimage could also culminate in a prayer service.

~ *Incorporate the symbol of a mighty river in your worship space.* You can find helpful ideas for activities and crafts with the symbol of a mighty river for your Season of Creation preparation journey which you are welcome to use and adapt as you see fit - you can find them in details

at the end of the Celebration Guide (mentioned above). These ideas on how to incorporate the mighty river symbol are also invitations to engage your faith community and reflect on how the symbol this year inspires unity and action for justice and peace.

*~ Prepare a bowl of water and frond for sprinkling the congregation.*

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The following order of worship is one possible way to proceed. You may choose to use all of these suggestions or only some of them. You may also choose a different order that suits your community. Some possibilities are Service of the Word ELW p. 210, or Morning Prayer ELW p. 298. Hymn suggestions are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and All Creation Sings (ACS).

## Order of Service

### Gathering

*Call to Worship OR Thanksgiving at the Font ACS p. 59*

Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43: 19)

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

*Gathering Song*

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)

*Kyrie*

*Four Direction Prayer (Adapted from Diocese of Western North Carolina - Anglican Indigenous Ministries)*

Let us turn our hearts to the West  
From there the Thunders bring us cleansing rain,  
**Creator God, heal us and our relatives.**

Let us turn our hearts to the North  
Winter comes to us from there and calls us to rest,  
**Creator God, restore our strength.**

Let us turn our hearts to the East  
The morning Sun begins each day there,  
**Creator God awaken us and help us to walk with a renewed life.**

Let us turn our hearts to the South  
Where the warm winds come from to give us comfort and joy,

**Creator God soothe our aching souls.**

Let us turn our hearts to the Sky  
From there our Creator sees all around us,  
**Creator God help us to trust you to lead us.**

Let us turn our hearts to the Earth  
From there quiet wisdom comes to teach us,  
**Creator God hear us as we pray.**

*Prayer of the Day*

## **Word**

*First Lesson*

*Psalm*

*Second Lesson*

*Gospel Acclamation*

*Gospel*

*Sermon*

*Hymn of the Day*

*Creed*

*Prayers of Intercession*

*Peace*

At this point, you will choose to continue with the Thanksgiving, when there is no one to preside at the Meal; or the Meal, when there is an ordained pastor or an authorized lay minister to preside.

## **Thanksgiving**

*Offering*

*Canticle of Thanksgiving*

*Thanksgiving for the Word (ELW p. 220 or Psalm 84)*

*Lord's Prayer*

## **or Meal**

*Offering*

*Great Thanksgiving/Preface*

*Holy, holy*

*Lord's Prayer*

*Communion*

*Lamb of God*

*Prayer after Communion*

Everyone continues with the Sending.

## **Sending**

*Blessing of Water*

Blessed are you, Creator God, who in Christ, the living water of salvation, blessed and transformed us.

Grant that when we are sprinkled with this water we will be refreshed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May we draw water from the springs of salvation, and continue to walk together in the new life we received at Baptism.

*The sprinkling of the congregation*

Christ is the living water cleansing, refreshing, making all things new.

Christ is the living bread; food for the hungry, strength for the pilgrim and the labourer.

*Blessing*

May we be blessed to open our hearts to receive “the living waters of God’s justice and peace” within us:

**Amen.**

May we be blessed to share “the living waters of God’s justice and peace” with our suffering brothers and sisters and all creatures around us:

**Amen.**

May we be blessed to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of “the living waters of God’s justice and peace” may become a mighty river all over the Earth:

**Amen.**

And may God bless us on this journey, + Creator, Redeemer, and Holy Spirit.

**Amen.** (Fr Joshtrom Kureethadam, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development)

*Sending Song*

*Dismissal* Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad, for Christ is resurrection, reconciliation for all the human race and the whole of creation. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Resources in ELW and ACS**

**Lessons and Prayer of the Day** can be found in ELW p. 46-49. We are currently in Year A. The ELCIC usually uses the semi-continuous readings and psalms. You may, of course, choose the other lessons.

**Prayers of the People** - ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers of intercession. Different themed prayers can be found on p. 72-87  
OR in ACS p.46-55

## **Hymn Suggestions for Season of Creation**

You may decide to use the same Gathering Hymn, or Communion Hymn, or Sending Hymn for all the Sundays in the Season of Creation. The following suggestions are in numerical order but not otherwise ranked.

ELW 684 Creating God, Your Fingers Trace  
ELW 690 We Raise Our Hands to You O Lord  
ELW 698 How Long, O God  
ELW 699 In Deepest Night  
ELW 701 Once We Sang and Danced  
ELW 702 You, Dear Lord  
ELW 704 When Pain of the World Surrounds Us  
ELW 717 Let Justice Flow Like Streams  
ELW 736 God the Sculptor of the Mountain  
ELW 739 Touch the Earth Lightly  
ACS 973 The Word Who Sang the Light Into Creation  
ACS 1046 As Rivers Flow From a Distant Spring

## **Hymn Suggestions for Each Sunday**

### *September 3, 2023*

ELW 655 Son of God, Eternal Savior  
ELW 879 For the Beauty of the Earth  
ELW 798 Will You Come and Follow Me  
ACS 1044 Not For Tongues of Heaven's Angels  
ACS 973 The Word Who Sang the Light into Creation  
ACS 1000 God's Work, Our Hands

### *September 10, 2023*

ELW 731 Earth and All Stars  
ELW 603 God, When Human Bonds Are Broken  
ELW 716 Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace  
ELW 864 Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven  
ELW 836 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee  
ACS 979 Making Their Way

ACS 1087 Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines  
ACS 927 Christ is the Life

*September 17, 2023*

ELW 452 Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death  
ELW 605 Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive  
ELW 716 Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace  
ELW 721 Goodness is Stronger Than Evil  
ACS 1025 If We Live, We Live to the Lord  
ACS 1049 Before the Waters Nourished Earth

*September 24, 2023*

ELW 688 Lord of Light  
ELW 583 Take My Life, That I May Be  
ELW 358 Great God, Your Love Has Called Us  
ELW 669 Rise Up, O Saints of God!  
ELW 588 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy  
ACS 990 We Will Go with God

*October 1, 2023*

ELW 531 The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing  
ELW 526 God is Here  
ELW 517 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word  
ELW 538 The Lord Now Sends Us Forth  
ACS 1032 Lift Up Your Heads  
ACS 1084 God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

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*Thanksgiving Sunday October 8, 2023*

Lessons and Prayer of the Day are found in ELW p. 61.

Additions to the worship space could include food for the food bank, or other food programme in your community; a Horn of Plenty; cloth in various fall colours; other harvest symbols.

Hymn Suggestions

ELW 694 Sing to the Lord of Harvest  
ELW 879 For the Beauty of the Earth  
ELW 840 Now Thank We All Our God  
ELW 679 For the Fruit of All Creation

ELW 829 Have You Thanked the Lord?  
ELW 880 O God Beyond All Praising  
ELW 881 Let All Things Now Living  
ACS 1064 Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom  
ACS 1071 In Sacred Manner  
ACS 1063 God of the Fertile Fields

*Opening Dialogue* — Lorraine Reinhardt (optional)

God of our morning, noon and night,

**We bless you.**

God of sowing and harvest, God of plenty and of want,

**We bless you.**

God of the earth, God of the universe,

**We bless you.**

God of the dry land, God of the waters that cover the earth,

**We bless you.**

God of abundance, God of those in need,

**We bless you.**

Come to us now, O God. Teach us through your Word, inspire us in song and prayer to see you  
and hear you in all of life.

**Amen.**