



Climate Conversations Season of Creation

St Mark's Creation Care Ministry

September 2024



Agenda

- **Land Acknowledgement:** Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all the Coast Salish tribes.
- Opening Prayer
- Framework
- Discussion
- Actions
- Sharing and Q&A
- Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer

Triune God, Creator of all

We praise you for your goodness, visible in all the diversity that you have created, making us a cosmic family living in a common home. Through the Earth you created, we experience love and nourishment, home and protection.

We confess that we do not relate to the Earth as a Mothering gift from you, our Creator. Our selfishness, greed, neglect, and abuse have caused the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, human suffering as well as the suffering of all our fellow creatures. We confess that we have failed to listen to the groans of the Earth, the groans of all creatures, and the groans of the Spirit of hope and justice that lives within us.

May your Creator Spirit help us in our weakness, so that we may know the redeeming power of Christ and the hope found in him. May the groans of the Spirit birth in us a willingness to serve you faithfully, so that we may hear and heal Creation, to hope and act together with her, so that the first fruits of hope may blossom.

Loving and Creator God, we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord. Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image. Amen



Source: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12M3weSD4D2mvjCil3Mxen3JQZ5Razz3/view>

Season of Creation Primer

- Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home
- The season's "Celebration" began on September 1, the Feast of Creation, and ends on October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi
- As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common call to care for Creation



2024 Theme

- The theme this year is “To hope and act with Creation”
 - “The first fruits of hope” is inspired by Romans 8:19-25
- Amid the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, many are beginning to despair and suffer from eco-anxiety
- We are called to lift the hope inspired by our faith, the hope of the resurrection
- This is a hope embodied in concrete actions of prayer and preaching, service and solidarity



Romans 8:19-25

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.



Hope

- Hope is not merely optimism. It is not a utopian illusion. It is not waiting for a magical miracle.
- Hope is trust that our action makes sense, even if the results of this action are not immediately seen
- Hope doesn't act alone. Paul the apostle explains the close relationship of hope as a growth process: “endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Romans 5:4).
- Patience and endurance are close associates of hope. These are qualities that lead to hope.



Season of Creation in the Liturgy

- Scriptures
- Songs / Hymns
- Prayers
- Preaching
- Weekdays: Morning & evening prayer

A blossoming tree is the symbol for the Season of Creation **SEASON OF CREATION 2024** A Celebration Guide for Episcopal Parishes

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Season of Creation Activities

- Organize a contemplative walk outside to reflect on the gift of God's creation and our response to be in deeper communion with all life. Study ecologically-themed Scriptures while walking.
- Organize a pilgrimage to a significant ecological site or a site that witnesses ecological or social injustice.
- Coordinate local education and sustainability activities
 - Emphasize the adoption of sustainable lifestyles



Season of Creation Activities2

- **Creation Care Pilgrimage:** A way to connect with and learn more about the ecology in or near your community. (Diocese of Olympia youth pilgrimage in 2019, Olympic Discovery Trail).
- **Green and Growing Club:** [“The Green and Growing Club: Engaging Families in Creation Care Practices”](#) is a formation opportunity that involves sending families resources so that they can learn about and care for creation at home.
- **Toolkit:** The [“Greening Congregations Toolkit”](#) includes information about becoming a “greening congregation” as well as ideas for incorporating creation care into worship, education, buildings and grounds, community engagement, and advocacy.
- **Nature Trekking, Journaling, Sketching, and Wondering:** [“Celebrate Creation with Wondering Questions”](#) provides ideas and tips for exploring the outdoors in ways that honor about all that God has created - pauses for journaling or sketching.
- **Prayer Calendar and Bingo:** [Prayer Calendar & Bingo Sheet for Creation Season](#), The prayer calendar and bingo board can be tailored to your community’s ecology and interests.
- **Stations of Creation:** This practice invites participants into prayers and readings at a series of stations that focus on creation.



Source: Virginia Theological Seminary, Lifelong Learning, Building Faith, <https://buildfaith.org/season-of-creation-formation-resources/>

Discussion & Breakout Session

Questions:

- What aspect of the Season of Creation is most impactful for you?
- What gives you hope?
- What activities should St Mark's organize, and what ?



Communicate about Activities

- Share your experience
 - Take photos of your community in action
 - Social media and blogs - Post images and stories
 - Write a blog post about your community's Season of Creation celebration
- Engage with the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT)
 - Raise awareness
 - <https://fossilfuel treaty.org/>



Children's Activities (for Adults Too...)

- Creation Celebration
- Go outside and take notice of three things you love in nature. Every time you are outside, look for these things again and look for something else too. Pay attention each day to what gifts from God that you really appreciate.
- Look at a leaf and see the pattern on it; the bark of a tree; a flower with at least two colors; a flock of birds; find two different kinds of insects and see how they differ; find a stone and hold it in your hand to feel the warmth of the sun.
- Choose a book that celebrates something in nature (see "Resources" for suggestions); read it with someone and talk about what you love in nature, or something new you learned in the book. Then pray together.
- Biodiversity challenge: Write down all the animals, birds and insects you see during the week.



RYAN THE RHINO
The story of Creation

The story of Creation

A Sunday School Resource on Caring for Creation

Source (42 pages):

https://anneneuberger.com/wp-content/uploads/Gods-Creation-Waits_Revised_June_2024.pdf

Source: (66 pages)

<https://www.areenandicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CARING-FOR-CREATION-RYAN-THE-RHINO.pdf>

Global Insights for Activities

- Weekly videos with reflections
 - <https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/creation-2024/>
 - Eco-Congregation of Scotland
- Step Outside resources
 - <https://arocha.org.uk/step-outside-this-season-of-creation-resource/>
 - <https://arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Season-of-Creation.pdf>
 - Prayer walk
 - Connect with nature
 - Feast together, plant a tree...
- Calendar
 - <https://seasonofcreation.com/calendar/>
 - September 1 – Day of Creation
 - Four Sundays – four domains of creation - Forest, Land, Ocean and River Sundays
 - St Francis of Assisi Day - Blessing Animals
 - Special Sunday
 - Final Sunday of the Season

BROCHURE FOR VIDEO RESOURCES 2024



Dear friends, this brochure gives descriptions and links for the video resources from EcoCongregation for the Season of Creation 2024 (1.9. 2024 to 4.10 and Sundays)

Prayer walk guide

Pause for a while and pray. Use all your senses to draw close to the Creator as an act of worship, prayer and praise.

LISTEN TO BIRDSONG

Stop and listen. Can you hear birdsong? Most birdsong ceases by the autumn, but the robin is one species that continues to sing, all year. Pray for A Rocha UK's Partners in Action who are taking practical action to boost local populations of vulnerable species. For more information about our 'Begin 25' project, visit arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25/

SIT

Find a spot to sit down. As you look around at God's creation, what can you see? What can you hear? Use this space to pray for our leaders, both locally and nationally, as they make decisions that affect the natural world. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Pray that they will recognise the urgent need to protect and restore nature and to put policies in place that will safeguard and renew nature in the UK.

NOTICE RUBBISH

Look on the ground, in hedgerows, or on verges, or peer into a litter bin. If you can't see any rubbish, give thanks for the people who have taken it away! If you do see any, dispose of it if you can do that safely. Pray for those you know who champion recycling, or are trying to live with less plastic and less waste. Consider what you would do to make the world a better and more Godly place.

LOOK AT A LEAF

Pick up a leaf that has fallen to the ground. Hold it in your hand. Turn it over, and notice its structure, veins, and tiny details. Many trees drop their leaves in the seasons change. Give thanks to the Lord that He knows the seasons of our lives and that no detail is a surprise to Him.

FIND A TREE

Put your hand on the trunk. Look up and see how tall the tree is. Thank God that he is bigger than the tree, and connect any worries or concerns about wildlife and the climate crisis to God, knowing that he is all-powerful.

WATCH AN INSECT

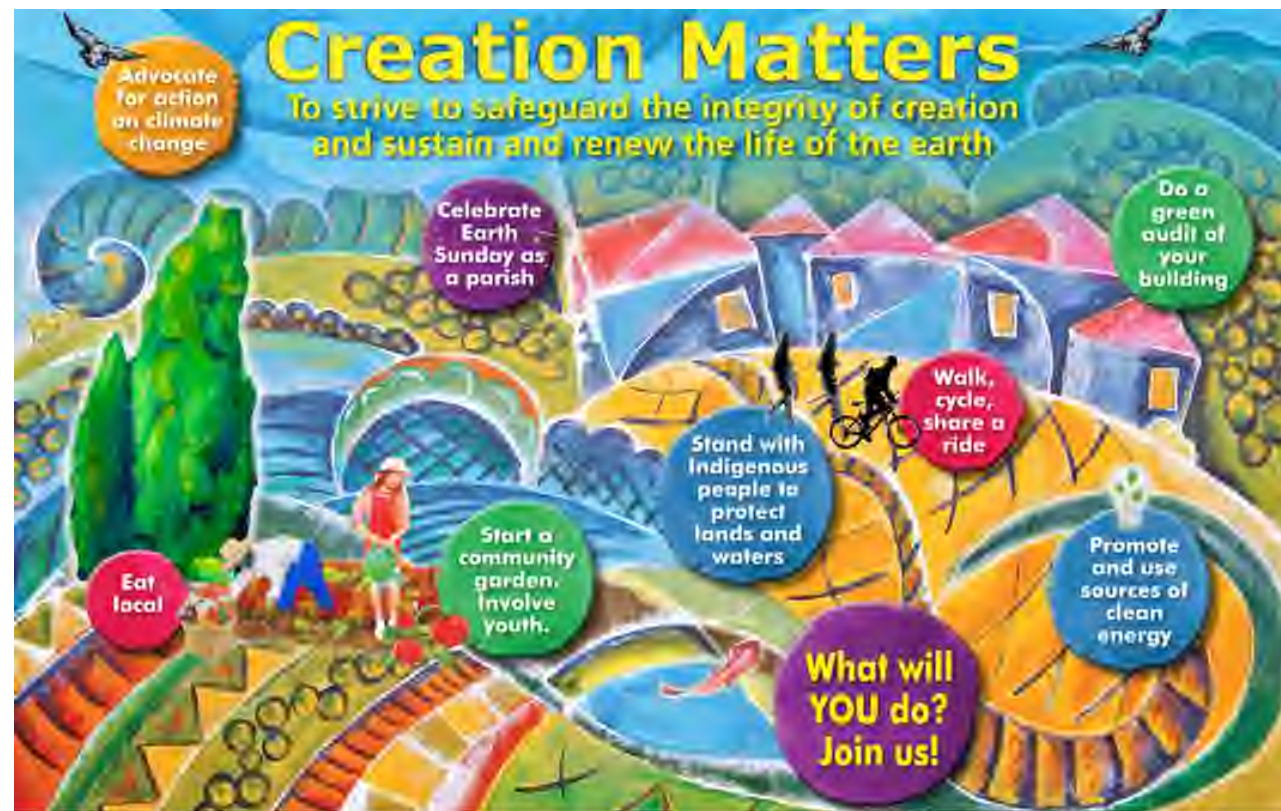
Find an insect or another animal and watch it move with purpose and direction. Pray for the Eco Churches in England and Wales. Pray that they will have energy, purpose and direction as they care for God's earth as part of their everyday mission.

SPOT THE FUNGI

See if you can spot any mushrooms (but don't touch any of them). Hang back to grow on decaying matter and provide vital nutrients to plants. Give thanks for this cycle of life and how it reminds us that through Jesus' death and resurrection we have the hope of life beyond death.

Activities from Global Congregations

- Anglican Church of Canada
 - <https://www.anglican.ca/publicwitness/season-of-creation/>
 - *“This winsome and colourful poster features various action ideas”*
- Kerry
 - Map your parish grounds for biodiversity.
<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mapping-your-church-grounds-for-biodiversity.pdf>
 - *Get The Faith Community Pollinator Plan & Gardening for Biodiversity*
<https://pollinators.ie/faith-communities/> and [Gardening for Biodiversity](#)
 - Download detailed information for the above steps from the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference at
<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/laudato-si/returning-to-nature/>



Raising Awareness

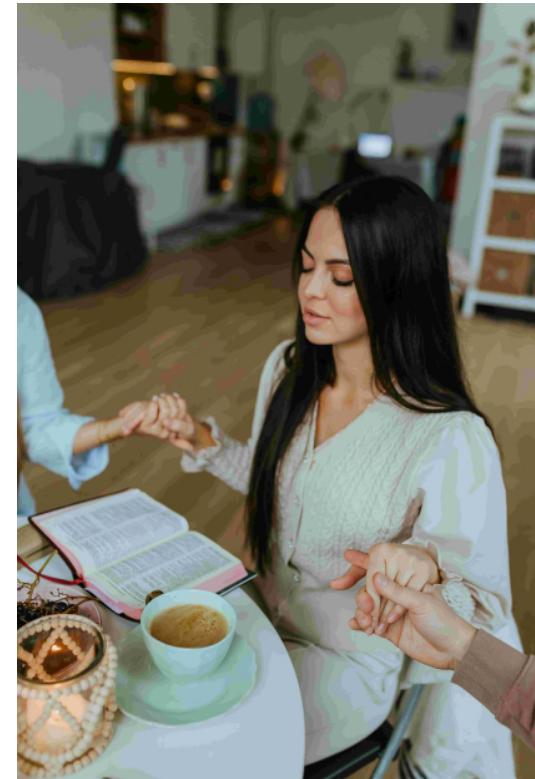
- “Raise awareness about the FFNPT”
- Participate in the Season of Creation Global Day of action on 21 September
 - 21 September is the global day of action for individuals, communities, organizations and government to endorse the FFNPT Treaty. All signatures will be used to influence decision-makers at COP29, scheduled for November 2024.
- Spread the news on social media & follow the Season of Creation campaign



Guidelines: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GO3KmRf-2csAjkhEYVTEOz2_cWCqHB1/view

Prayer

- Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Season of Creation
- A vigil for climate change
- Daily reflections



Season of Creation Ecumenical Prayer Resource: <https://seasonofcreation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-SOC-Ecumenical-Prayer-Service.pdf>
Vigil: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/creationtide/creationtide-resources>

Sharing, Discussion and Q&A

Questions

- How can you use the global resources, such as activities or videos on your own?
- How can we involve more people in the congregation?
- What steps should the Creation Care Ministry take for the future, related to the Season of Creation?



Make a Difference

A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand. – Dorothy Sayers

Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. – St Augustine

Men will become poor because they will not have a love for trees. If you don't love trees, you don't love God. – St. Nikephoros of Chios (1750-1821),

Closing Prayer

God of truth and justice,
Fill us with your spirit of compassion so we may
live and act with and in solidarity with Creation.
Guide us in paths of righteousness that help us
to tread softly on the land and sail gently on the
sea.
Give us wisdom and courage to recognise our
role in the evil of systemic exploitation and
extraction and to speak truth to power.
Give us strength of heart and arm to be agents
of the ecological conversion the world so
desperately needs.
Amen



