

# ***LET THE WHOLE CREATION CRY***

A Worship & Preaching Resource for Season of Creation Year B

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Northern Illinois Synod (ELCA)  
**Creation Care Committee**



# Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

Last year I was more excited for our synod's Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) than ever before. I look forward to that event each year. But last year I was coming bearing gifts. I had a flash drive to present to each congregation. That drive contained a copy of *Let All Things Now Living: A Worship and Preaching Resource for Season of Creation Year A*. In addition, there were files with numerous other resources to utilize for Season of Creation. Our team was looking forward to putting a copy of this drive into each of your hands and telling you a little about the joys of making Season of Creation part of congregational life.

If you are from Northern Illinois Synod, you know about the timing of CRE. It was scheduled for the first week of March, at the very beginning of the Corona Virus outbreak, and was the first event to be cancelled due to the pandemic. "No problem," we thought, "we'll just disseminate the drives at the synod assembly." That, of course, was cancelled as well. And so, there I sat with over 150 jump drives and no good way to deliver them. And here it is, more than a year later, this year's CRE behind us as a virtual event, and I still have all those jump drives. We did make the resource available via download (it's still available at [www.nisynod.org/creation](http://www.nisynod.org/creation)) and have promised to deliver the drives when we are able to gather in person again.

And now a year later, which is the reason I write this letter, we have a companion resource for year B – *Let the Whole Creation Cry: A Worship and Preaching Resource for Season of Creation Year B*. The resources we developed this year will be added to those drives and we will present those to you when we are able to meet in person again. That said, the CRE and synod assembly are both happening virtually this year. Thus, I invite you to download this year's resources at the same link I referenced above.

*Let the Whole Creation Cry* was created by a group of leaders from the Northern Illinois Synod who gathered at a working retreat in January (this year virtually). We all agree that living within and among the rest of Creation<sup>1</sup> with justice, peace, and harmony is an integral part of our life of faith. We see other parts of Creation, both living and non-living, as our neighbors to be served. When Jesus said, "those who wish to be great must be servant of all," we complete that sentence with, "all of Creation" (see the gospel lesson for Humanity Sunday).

We are committed to fostering these convictions in our own communities of faith and encouraging other congregations to do so as well. We see no more appropriate way to do so than to bring our praise for the Creator, our love of Creation, and our joys, hopes, and concerns for the Earth, into the primary function of our congregations – worship. The Church has been doing this for centuries, though in a brief and rote manner, as we begin the Creed with, "I believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth." Season of Creation allows us an opportunity to expand this foundational belief, at least for a four-week period of the year.

As a preacher and worship planner, I see *Let the Whole Creation Cry* as a wonderful gift. I have been celebrating Season of Creation with my congregations since I picked up a copy of *Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*<sup>2</sup> in 2011. I had been putting together Creation focused worship services for years before that. As long as I have done this, I have had to do a lot of work in collecting and creating liturgy. Though there are a number of resources that can be tapped into on-line, I found many of them did not fit well into the liturgical flow and pattern of our Lutheran liturgy. Thus, I was doing a tremendous amount of adapting and writing. In addition, though I had the commentary put together by Habel, Rhoads and Santmire, I did not have colleagues around me with whom I could discuss and struggle with the texts, nor was there many

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<sup>1</sup> We capitalize the terms Creation and Earth to denote the level of respect we are affording the other-than-human world, thereby treating these entities as subjects rather than objects. This is especially important when considering how Creation and Earth are a subject, or character, in the biblical narrative and, thus, in our liturgy and preaching.

<sup>2</sup> *Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*. Norman C. Habel, David Rhoads, and Paul Santmire, Editors. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011)

preaching resources available on-line. *Let the Whole Creation Cry* provides you an opportunity to be in conversation with our team and plenty of aides that will streamline your worship planning.

The collaborative team that authored *Let the Whole Creation Cry: A Worship and Preaching Resource for Season of Creation Year B* was put together by the Northern Illinois Synod Creation Care Committee and is in direct response to a resolution that they put forth and was passed at the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly in 2018. This resolution encourages all congregations of the synod to celebrate “Season of Creation” as a regular part of their liturgical year. In addition, the resolution directs the synod to provide resources to congregations to aid in conducting the Season of Creation. To accomplish that, a group of NIS leaders were gathered virtually (you can find the participants at the end of this resource) in January to produce the document you have before you. I served as the coordinator for the week while Rev. Dr. Leah Schade of Lexington Theological Seminary was our guest theologian. We look forward to completing our work next year by creating a resource for year C.

I do hope that you will read on and find all the wonderful things this resource contains. It is a true work of collaboration by a very compassionate and talented group of people. But more than anything, I hope that you will celebrate the Season of Creation in your context and that you will find this resource helpful in doing so. Indeed, God so loved the cosmos<sup>3</sup> that the Son was sent... If God so loves the cosmos, we ought to be imaging God in our actions as well.

Yours in Christ,

**Rev. Jeff Schlesinger**

Pastor, Heart of Illinois Lutheran Parish  
Season of Creation Retreat Coordinator

## What is Season of Creation?

The Season of Creation is an optional season that can be inserted into many different parts of the church year. Developed by three ecotheologians, Season of Creation was first imagined by Norman Habel in Australia and then further developed in cooperation with David Rhoads and H. Paul Santmire of the United States. Churches that use the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) follow the life of Jesus through the seasons of the church year. During ordinary time the focus is on the Spirit’s action in the Church. But there is not a specific time to focus on God the Creator. As Habel et al say, “Now it is time to turn our attention to God’s relationship with all creation and with our relationship with creation (and with God through creation.)”<sup>4</sup> They go on to say, “[The Season of Creation] brings the celebration of Earth fully into the orbit of Christian worship as a natural and integral part of the church year.”<sup>5</sup>

As the Season of Creation was developed in the early 2000’s, a lectionary of pericopes was created for each year of the three-year cycle of the RCL. Following is the lectionary presented in this resource for Season of Creation year B:

Week	Theme	1 <sup>st</sup> Lesson	Psalm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lesson	Gospel
SOC 1(B)	Planet Earth Sunday	Genesis 1:1-25	Psalm 33:1-9	Romans 1:18-25*	John 1:1-14
SOC 2(B)	Humanity Sunday	Genesis 1:26-26	Psalm 8	Philippians 2:1-11*	Mark 10:41-45
SOC 3(B)	Sky Sunday	Jeremiah 4:23-28	Psalm 19:1-6	Philippians 2:12-18*	Matthew 15:33-39
SOC 4(B)	Mountain & Hill Sunday	Isaiah 65:17-25	Psalm 48:1-11	Romans 8:28-39	Mark 3:13-19*

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word in John 3:16 is actually cosmos (κοσμος) rather than “world” as we so often translate it.

<sup>4</sup> Habel et al, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 5. (For a nice list of reasons why to have a Season of Creation read the section **Why a Season of Creation?** pp. 5-7.)



Close inspection of the table above will reveal differences from the lectionary presented in *Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*. The first differences are in the names of a couple of the Sundays. We added the descriptor “Planet” to the first Sunday in order to better distinguish it from Land Sunday which was part of Season of Creation year A. The second change is done for contextual reasons. Since this resource was composed from the perspective of Northern Illinois clergy and prepared for use by other Northern Illinois clergy, the team felt it was best to expand the title of the fourth Sunday to Mountain and Hill Sunday. The dramatic elevation change of mountains does not exist in Northern Illinois, but there are not a lack of high places from which one might want get a “mountain top view.” So in order to bring the sense of this Sunday’s theme to our own backyards, we changed the title.

The second difference is marked by asterisks. There are lessons outlined in *Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary* for which the team recommends alternatives. This recommendation was made with careful discernment and following agreed upon guidelines.<sup>6</sup> In the end, the team felt that since the SOC lectionary is topical, if they were thoughtful and responsible, it was within their purview to suggest these alternatives.<sup>7</sup>

## When Should a Congregation Celebrate Season of Creation?

There is no right or wrong answer to when a congregation might begin and end the four-week Season of Creation. It isn’t even necessary to be consistent from one year to the next.

Perhaps the most common time that congregations celebrate Season of Creation is during September. By doing this, the four weeks of September can serve as the four Sundays of the season and everything can be concluded by celebrating St. Francis of Assisi Day the first Sunday of October.<sup>8</sup>

But one is certainly not bound to these dates. The Season of Creation can appropriately be celebrated during the Easter season. A congregation could consider adapting it to use as a Lenten series. Some congregations have spread the weeks of the season throughout the church year (i.e. celebrating on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday for four consecutive months). At least one Northern Illinois Synod dubbed July their “Season of Creation Month,” while another congregation in the synod did all three years of seasons in one summer at their midweek services.

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<sup>6</sup> The team of pastors that created this resource developed the following protocol in regards to the pericopes of the Season of Creation lectionary:

### **Pericope Protocol**

We are thankful for the scholars who have put together the lectionary for Season of Creation (SOC). Because it was constructed with themes in mind and not with sequential and seasonal structure as more traditional lectionaries such as the RCL and the Narrative Lectionary, we will do the following as we create our resource for the SOC:

- Suggest alternative texts for preachers and worship leaders to consider for each given Sunday
- Assign alternative texts for those Sundays when the following criteria are met:
  - There is no explicit reference of the day’s theme within the text, and
  - We are unable to discern a solid connection between the pericope put forth by the authors of *Season of Creation* and the theme of the day or the other assigned texts for the day, and
  - There is consensus among the retreat group to assign an alternative text for the day.

Ironically, none of the changes we are suggesting for this year fall into the above stated categories. The first three changes are simple expansions of the pericope to be more inclusive of the scriptural context surrounding them. The final suggestion, the gospel for Mountain and Hill Sunday, was done from a sense of textual integrity. The suggested pericope, Mark 16:14-18, is part of the alternate endings of Mark. Scholarly consensus is that these verses, as well as all those that follow Mark 16:8, are not penned by the author of Mark nor were part of the original text. Though we see plenty of scholarly advantage in studying these later additions to the gospel, none of the members of the team felt comfortable elevating them to the status of the gospel reading for worship. Thus we chose a pericope we thought appropriate for the day.

<sup>7</sup> And the team also hopes that Habel, Rhoads and Santimire will not feel offended by its boldness but rather feel that it is building upon and expanding the work of these three well respected scholars.

<sup>8</sup> St. Francis of Assisi Day is actually October 4. In addition, these dates work well as September 1 is “Creation Day” as decreed in 1999 by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I of Constantinople. He said it as a time to offer “prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of creation and as a petition for its protections and salvation.” (Habel et al, p. 7.)

## Using This Resource

If you have looked ahead in this resource, you will find five major sections: a liturgy for the season and then a set of resources for each of the four Sundays of Season of Creation year A.

### Liturgy

The liturgy<sup>9</sup> is intended to follow the typical order and flow used by ELCA Lutherans who rely on the ELW as their main worship guide. Prayers of the Day are also included in this resource, but they are printed alongside the hymn suggestions in the materials for the individual Sundays. This year we've included a second liturgy – “A Service of Lessons, Carols, and Reflections” – which can be used as an introduction or conclusion to the season as well as a onetime service at other times of the year.

### Sunday Resources

Individual materials for each Sunday of year B have been developed. You are free to use and alter any and all of them as you see fit. There are four main sections for each Sunday: The Lessons, Seeds from the Texts, Fruits for Preaching, Hymn Suggestions and Other Suggestions.

#### Lessons

The lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted. The introductory sentence in italics offers context and/or a lens through which to consider the text. The Psalms utilize the ELW translation.

#### Seeds from the Text

This section offers quotes and thoughts of the members of the team as they discussed the pericopes. The hope is that these “seeds” might get you thinking and will “sprout” a sermon for you. There is not a name assigned to these items, but they are actual quotes or paraphrases of real comments made by team members. Should you find it appropriate to use these seeds verbatim or paraphrased in your sermon and wish to give credit, please feel free to use something like, “A colleague said...” or “A friend of mine told me...”

#### Fruits for Preaching

This section contains illustrations, inspirations, and other outside resources that might be used within a sermon. Every effort has been made to offer a solid reference in case you find it necessary to cite, to dig deeper, or to verify.

#### Hymn Suggestions and More

The final page for each Sunday contains a chart with suggested hymns and a Prayer of the Day for the given Sunday. The code for the hymn resources appears below. In addition, there are suggestions offered for Children's messages, service projects, field trips and activities, and whatever ideas the team thought would enhance the given Sunday.

#### Hymn Resource Key

ELW – Evangelical Lutheran Worship  
ACS – All Creation Sings  
WOV – With One Voice  
LBW – Lutheran Book of Worship  
W&P – Worship and Praise

} ELCA Resources

Other resources are referenced individually as they are utilized.

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<sup>9</sup> A copy of the liturgy as a Microsoft Word document has been included on the disk to make it more convenient to copy and paste the material.

## Seasonal Liturgy - Season of Creation (B)

### Litany/Call to Worship

We enter the song of Creation!

**Earth cradles our ancestors, birthing new life.**

We enter the prayer of Creation!

**Sky brings darkness and light, holds storms and the stars.**

We enter the praise of Creation!

**Mountains peaked with snow, hills swaying with grasses.**

We enter the silence of Creation!

**Humanity between the ground and the heavens.**

We come here, humbly, as one earthly family to worship our Creator: the giver of form, the maker of space.

**Amen.**

### Thanksgiving For Baptism

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks*

Blessed are you, O God, maker and sustainer of all things. Your song washed over the waters at Creation. You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys to refresh and satisfy all living things. Glory to you Lord, for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams, *(use rivers and streams important in your community)*. Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us - all life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety. Hagar and her son are saved by the waters of your well. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. In the wilderness you nourished your people with water from the rock, and you brought them through the river Jordan to the Promised Land. Through your waters Naaman was washed clean of his leprosy, and at the well the Samaritan woman received living water.

By the baptism of his death and resurrection, your Son Jesus has carried us to safety and freedom. The floods shall not overwhelm us, and the deep shall not swallow us up, for Christ has brought us over to the land of promise. He sends us to make disciples, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Gracious God pour out your Holy Spirit; wash away sin in this cleansing water; clothe the baptized with Christ; claim us as your children, no longer slave and free, all of us, one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who calls forth Creation, evokes praise from Creation, and stirs life in Creation.

**Amen.**

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

*Silence if kept for reflection.*

God of righteousness and justice,

**you have made the Earth and all that is in it, but we have failed to honor your good work. We do not recognize your presence among us, and our hardened hearts do not hear Creation's cry. We have made your good land a desolation, and we dishonor your image in our neighbors. Forgive us, in your steadfast love, O God, for trampling your vineyards and polluting your sky. On your holy mountain, call us again to be stewards of your Earth and to join all Creation in songs of praise. Amen.**

Rejoice, for the Incarnate Word has come to you. Laying aside all heavenly glory, the servant of all is obedient unto death to make of you and all the Earth a new Creation. Rejoice, for Christ, from whom nothing can separate you, ✚ forgives you all your sins. Rejoice, for the One whose name is majestic in all the Earth raises you up to newness of life.

**Amen.**

## **Hymn of Praise**

We offer three suggestions for hymn of praise for the season, listed in our order of preference. There are numerous songs with in our Lutheran hymnals which can be found within the suggested hymn lists for each Sunday.

1. "Let All Creation Praise Our God"

*Text: Herman Stuempfle, Tune: Ellacombe*

Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr, *Awake Our Hearts to Praise! Hymns, Songs, and Carols* (GIA Publications, Inc, 2000), 5. A pdf with musical notation is available at [OneLicense.net](https://www.onelicense.net) with a subscription.

verse 2:

Let all creation praise our God- the ocean's restless tide,  
the towering peaks that pierce the sky, all rivers swift and wide,  
the deserts burning in the sun, the forests deep in shade-  
let all the earth in chorus sing, "These wonders God has made!"

This song is also composed using a very common meter and can be sung to numerous tunes found in the hymnody of the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship, With One Voice*, and other hymn resources.

2. "Let the Whole Creation Cry" – ELW 876
3. "Earth and All Kin" – by Rev. Dr. Leah Schade (to the tune of "Earth and All Stars" – ELW 731, music by David N. Johnson; copyright – Augsburg Publishing Company)  
<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/09/hymn-earth-and-all-kin/> (Permission granted by author to print the words in bulletin or for projection as long as it is being used for worship or another function of the congregation.)

## **Propers**

### **Planet Earth Sunday**

#### **Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, in wisdom you made this amazing Creation. From the warmth of this living Earth to the cold depths of the oceans, all Creation sings your praise. Help us to tread lightly in this world, to revel in the beauty and complexity of nature, and to join in the song of all Creation in praise and thanksgiving to you. All this we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Lessons**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Genesis 1:1-25

Psalms 33:1-9

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Romans 1:18-25

Gospel – John 1:1-14

### **Humanity Sunday**

#### **Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, you show your love for Creation through the humility of incarnation, death, and resurrection. Lead us to follow your example as we fulfill your call to humanity by humbly putting others first, seeking to serve rather than be served. Guide our servanthood toward the rocks and rivers, birds and beasts, skies and seas, and all of our fellow creatures, both great and small. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Lessons**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Genesis 1:26-28

Psalms 8

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Philippians 2:1-11

Gospel – Mark 10:41-45

### **Sky Sunday**

#### **Prayer of the Day**

O gracious God of Earth and all stars, give us hearts humble enough to be grateful for the beauty of the sky which provides and protects, with oxygen and ozone, with clouds and rain. Breathe in us the will to dedicate our lives to its care. In the name of the Spirit whose winds brought forth Creation, we pray. **Amen.**

#### **Lessons**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Jeremiah 4:23-28

Psalms 19:1-6

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Philippians 2:12-18

Gospel – Mark 15:33-39

### **Mountain & Hill Sunday**

#### **Prayer of the Day**

Creator God, you are made known on your holy mountain where you call us to see the world with new hope and perspective. Transform and renew us with authority to declare your vision for the Earth and to repair the damage done to your good Creation. **Amen.**

#### **Lessons**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Isaiah 65:17-25

Psalms 48:1-11

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Romans 8:28-39

Gospel – Mark 3:13-19

## **Offering Prayer**

Loving Creator,

**you brought us forth from the very Earth itself. We share with others what you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, and compel us to use them not only to serve our human neighbors, but also to serve our sister sky, our brother mountain, our mother Earth, and all our family in Creation. We pray this in the name of the Word that dwells among us. Amen.**

## **Preface**

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, O Lord, our God: For you spoke all things into being, giving humanity the special responsibility to care for the Earth as partner with you in the continuing process of Creation. In response to our ongoing brokenness with the Earth and all our companions in nature, you sent your Son, Jesus, to restore a right relationship, opening the way for harmony to once again be experienced between humanity and Creation, and to be for us the fullness of your love as we reorient our lives to our proper caretaker role in the world. And so with all the angels and archangels, our ancestors and descendants, and our companions in nature, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## **Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy One, you indeed are creator and sustainer of all that lives and breathes.

You plant trees and lift up mountains.

You provide water and fill oceans.

The foundations of our planet rest firmly in your hands.

Blessed are you for the immeasurable beauty of Creation.

Blessed are you for the innumerable creatures that have called this Earth home.

Blessed are you for remembering all that has been lost and for dreaming all that is to come.

We thank you for placing all things into our care.

We thank you for the awesome responsibility of tending the garden of Earth.

We thank you for trusting our ability to steward this Creation, even as you know our very failings.

Chiefly, we are bound to thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, who in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, 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.

In accordance with our faith, we proclaim:

**Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.**

This bread and cup are your gift,

from the very Earth we are called to protect,

from the very Earth we have failed in protecting,

from the very Earth you are restoring in the resurrection of Jesus.

The broken body and blood of Jesus are signs of our brokenness that is only healed by your love.

Holy Spirit, as you bless this meal and those who partake in it,

we long for the completion of all things:

the new Earth and new Heaven that is to come.

Remind us of the mantle we share in caring for and renewing the Earth which you fully inhabit with us. Send us as stewards of renewal in a broken Earth.

Unite the hopes and dreams of all creatures:  
from those that soar on your lofty winds,  
to those that climb the highest mountains,  
to those that dive to the ocean depths,  
that we experience this fullness of healing offered through Jesus.

With all who inhabit the Earth,  
with all flora that beautify the Earth,  
with all fauna that journey this Earth,  
with all that yearns for our good care of this Earth,  
we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen**

### **Communion Blessing**

The bread of the Earth and the fruit of the vine strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray. Creator God, we give thanks for this meal of the body and blood of Jesus. Send us from this feast to love the Earth, the sky, the mountains, and all humanity. Give us strength to repair the damage we have caused and courage to advocate for all of God's Creation. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

### **Benediction**

The God of all Creation:

of flowers and trees, of butterflies and bees, of squirrels and mountain lions,  
bless you, keep you, and strengthen you  
for the work of loving all Creation.

In the name of the ✝ Triune God. **Amen**

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Care for Creation.

**Thanks be to God.**

## A Service of Lessons, Carols, and Reflections

*This service captures all the themes of Season of Creation Year B and is designed to be used introduce or conclude the Season of Creation. It incorporates pieces of liturgy from above and can easily be altered for a communion service.*

### Call to Worship

We enter the song of Creation!

**Earth cradles our ancestors, birthing new life.**

We enter the prayer of Creation!

**Sky brings darkness and light, holds storms and the stars.**

We enter the praise of Creation!

**Mountains peaked with snow, hills swaying with grasses.**

We enter the silence of Creation!

**Humanity between the ground and the heavens.**

We come here, humbly, as one earthly family to worship our Creator: the giver of form, the maker of space.

**Amen.**

### Thanksgiving For Baptism

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks*

Blessed are you, O God, maker and sustainer of all things. Your song washed over the waters at Creation. You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys to refresh and satisfy all living things. Glory to you Lord, for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams, *(use rivers and streams important in your community)*. Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us - all life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety. Hagar and her son are saved by the waters of your well. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. In the wilderness you nourished your people with water from the rock, and you brought them through the river Jordan to the Promised Land. Through your waters Naaman was washed clean of his leprosy, and at the well the Samaritan woman received living water.

By the baptism of his death and resurrection, your Son Jesus has carried us to safety and freedom. The floods shall not overwhelm us, and the deep shall not swallow us up, for Christ has brought us over to the land of promise. He sends us to make disciples, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Gracious God pour out your Holy Spirit; wash away sin in this cleansing water; clothe the baptized with Christ; claim us as your children, no longer slave and free, all of us, one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



## **Lessons, Carols, and Reflections**

### **Mountain and Hills**

- Reading – Isaiah 65:17-25 (suggestion – have nine different voices read the verses)
- Song – “Arise, Your Light Has Come” – ELW 314 (v. 1&4)
- Reflection
  - Either narrate a slide show or create a video showing images of mountains and high places in which you repeat Psalm 46:10a – Be still, and know that I am God – pausing after each recitation and dropping a word off the end with each successive recitation
  - The images could be collected ahead of time from members of your worshipping community
  - See an example of this in the resources folder online or on your jump drive.
- Mountain and Hill Sunday Prayer of the Day

Creator God, you are made known on your holy mountain where you call us to see the world with new hope and perspective. Transform and renew us with authority to declare your vision for the Earth and to repair the damage done to your good Creation. **Amen.**

### **Sky**

- Reading – Psalm 19:1-6
- Song – “God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens” – ELW 771 (v. 1)
- Reflection
  - Lead worshippers through a meditation in which they are the sky, pausing after each image:

You are the sky...

...watch as your winds blow the grasses and tree limbs to and fro, and as they kick up the waves at the seashore.

...look at the dragonfly and the dove, the monarch and the mockingbird, as they use you as their aerial highway.

...feel yourself as the dolphins and whales, the mice and the elephants, and yes the human beings, inhale your precious oxygen.

...observe your clouds as they nourish a thirsty Earth.

...gaze from high overhead at the mountains and seas, the desserts and forests, and all of the Earth, whose heat you contain and regulate.

...when God made you, God said you are good. You are good and important for all the Earth.
- Sky Sunday Prayer of the Day

O gracious God of Earth and all stars, give us hearts humble enough to be grateful for the beauty of the sky which provides and protects, with oxygen and ozone, with clouds and rain. Breathe in us the will to dedicate our lives to its care. In the name of the Spirit whose winds brought forth Creation, we pray. **Amen.**

## Humanity

- Reading – Philippians 2:1-11
- Song – “Let the Whole Creation Cry” ELW 876 (v. 3)
- Reflection
  - Lead worshippers through a prayer exercise:
    - Think of an “other.” Specifically think of another person. Picture that person in your mind.
      - Now say a short prayer for that person. *Allow 10-15 seconds for worshippers to pray.*
      - Now you’re invited to name that person out loud so that the assembly might join in your prayers. *Allow a short period for people to say names.*
    - Think of an “other.” Specifically think of another creature. Big or small, picture that creature in your head. Observe its habits and its surroundings.
      - Now say a short prayer for that creature. *Allow 10-15 seconds for worshippers to pray.*
      - Now you’re invited to name that creature out loud so that the assembly might join in your prayers. *Allow a short period for people to say names.*
    - Think of an “other.” This time think of another part of Creation. Something that may not be alive in the same way as you or I. Picture that thing in your head. Consider how it is essential to other creatures and features of its environment.
      - Now say a short prayer for that good part of Creation. *Allow 10-15 seconds for worshippers to pray.*
      - Now you’re invited to name this other out loud so that the assembly might join in your prayers. *Allow a short period for people to say names.*
    - Jesus stepped off his heavenly throne, walking and living and serving all of these others. Let us bow our knees, along with all these others, proclaiming that “Jesus is Lord.”
- Humanity Sunday Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, you show your love for Creation through the humility of incarnation, death, and resurrection. Lead us to follow your example as we fulfill your call to humanity by humbly putting others first, seeking to serve rather than be served. Guide our servanthood toward the rocks and rivers, birds and beasts, skies and seas, and all of our fellow creatures, both great and small. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Planet Earth

- Reading – John 1:1-5, 14
- Song – “Touch the Earth Lightly” v. 1
- Reflection
  - Three views of the Earth:
    - When you look up at the stars at night, the brightest ones are not stars at all, but rather planets. If you’ve seen Venus or Mars in the night sky, you know exactly what I’m talking about. Have you ever thought about what the Earth might look like from Mars? It too would appear to be a bright star. Of course, like we perceive planets of our solar system from our viewpoint, it is the light of the sun reflecting off a planet that makes it look like a star. But Earth is no ordinary shining little planet. This is the one planet in our solar system that is suited to life – at least the diversity of life that surrounds us.
    - But let’s zoom in a bit. Place yourself on the surface of the moon. Most of us have seen moon view images of the Earth. It looks like a globe floating in the sky. I always want to reach out and see if I can spin the Earth. It is from here on the moon that we

can see the outlines of the oceans and the continents. What an amazing spinning sphere this is as it remains in orbit around the sun.

- And now let's zoom in one more time. This time, consider the Earth from an airplane as you fly across the country from Chicago to LA. Looking down you can easily make out various environments. Of course, on takeoff, you have a fantastic bird's eye view of the city and then the farmland of Northern Illinois. As the plane crosses the country, the farmlands give way to grasslands, then mountains, and even deserts. Scattered throughout the various landscapes you see rivers and streams meandering in and out of the land, and lakes scattered throughout. Then, as you circle in for a landing, you see the coast with water as far as the eye can see. What a fascinated and varied place this Earth is.
- It is often said that a house becomes a home when it is filled with love. This shiny little planet, this globe floating in space, this diverse and life filled planet, this place is our home. It was made a home by the love that God poured in it as God created it, as the Word became flesh and dwelt in it, and as the Spirit calls us to love this place and its inhabitants.
- Earth Sunday Prayer of the Day  
Gracious God, in wisdom you made this amazing Creation. From the warmth of this living Earth to the cold depths of the oceans, all Creation sings your praise. Help us to tread lightly in this world, to revel in the beauty and complexity of nature, and to join in the song of all Creation in praise and thanksgiving to you. All this we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## Offering

### Offering Prayer

Loving Creator,

**you brought us forth from the very Earth itself. We share with others what you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, and compel us to use them not only to serve our human neighbors, but also to serve our sister sky, our brother mountain, our mother Earth, and all our family in Creation. We pray this in the name of the Word that dwells among us. Amen.**

### Benediction

The God of all Creation:

of flowers and trees, of butterflies and bees, of squirrels and mountain lions,  
bless you, keep you, and strengthen you  
for the work of loving all Creation.

In the name of the ✝ Triune God. **Amen**

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Care for Creation.

**Thanks be to God.**

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

## Genesis 1:1-25

*This portion of the Creation story demonstrates God's love for and interconnectedness with the whole Creation, before humanity existed. And God declared it all Good.*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the Earth, <sup>2</sup>the Earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the Earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on Earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The Earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them



be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the Earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the Earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the dome of the sky." <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the Earth." <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And God said, "Let the Earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the Earth of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup>God made the wild animals of the Earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Planet Earth Sunday  
Season of Creation 1  
Year B

Genesis 1:1-25

Psalms 33

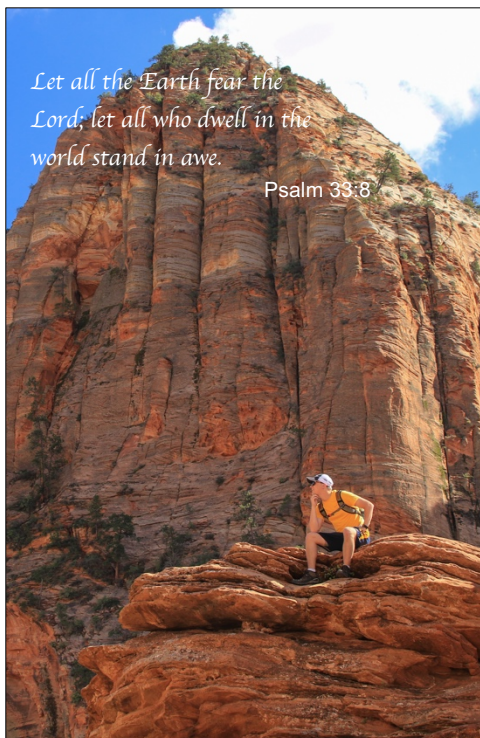
Romans 1:18-23

John 1:1-14

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

## Psalm 33:1-9

- <sup>1</sup> Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; praise is fitting for the upright.
- <sup>2</sup> **Praise the Lord with the lyre; make music for God with a ten-stringed harp.**
- <sup>3</sup> Sing for the Lord a new song; play your instrument skillfully with joyful sounds.
- <sup>4</sup> **For your word, O Lord, is right, and faithful are all your works.**
- <sup>5</sup> You love righteousness and justice; your steadfast love fills the whole Earth.
- <sup>6</sup> **By your word were the heavens made, by the breath of your mouth all the hosts of heaven.**
- <sup>7</sup> You gather up the waters of the ocean as in a water-skin and store up the depths of the sea.
- <sup>8</sup> **Let all the Earth fear the Lord; let all who dwell in the world stand in awe.**
- <sup>9</sup> For God spoke, and it came to pass; God commanded, and it stood fast.



## Romans 1:18-25

*God is revealed in the wonders of Creation. However, when humankind in our arrogance does not honor God, we experience the consequence of God's wrath when we give our hearts to works of our own hands.*

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>Ever since the Creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; <sup>21</sup>for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they became fools; <sup>23</sup>and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

## John 1:1-14

*The interconnectedness of God with Creation at the beginning continues with the incarnation of the Word made flesh.*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Planet Earth Sunday  
Season of Creation 1  
Year B

Genesis 1:1-25

Psalm 33

Romans 1:18-23

John 1:1-14



# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

## Seeds from the texts

### *“Quotes” and Comments*

Count the number of times God says, “It is good,” in Genesis 1. It happens after each act of Creation. So, what happened? Where did we go wrong? Is Creation still good? What value do we assign to the “goodness” of Creation? Are we not assigning enough value/worth to the planet Earth?

I love the fact that the reading stops at verse 25 before human beings come along. What would this world be like if God had stopped there? It was “good” before humanity burst into Creation.

“Earth is full of steadfast love,” says the psalmist. Think on this for a moment. There are natural disasters that are part of the birth pangs of Creation, how is God’s steadfast love experienced in these moments? There are natural disasters that are magnified due to climate change and other human causes. How is God’s steadfast love experienced in these moments? How do we talk about God’s punishment being experienced in natural disaster? If the Earth is full of steadfast love, how are our actions that hurt the Earth an affront to God?

In Psalm 33:8 we see the Earth “fearing God” and all that dwell on the Earth in “awe.” But do we replace “God” with “ourselves” in this verse? “Let all fear humanity. Stand in awe of humanity.” Should the Earth fear humanity? What does it look like to stand in awe of God, not in awe of humanity?

God may be invisible, yet God is visible through all that God has created. Humanity is guilty of not only turning a blind eye to the evidence of God in all that is created, but also for the failure of protecting what God has made.

Hurting the environment is a sin, a sin against Creation and a sin against the creator. Acknowledging this sin leads to repentance; repentance leads to newness of life; newness of life is found in the partnership of humanity with God in restoring Creation to its full glory.

In John’s prologue we see God fully within Creation. God is fully one with Creation, God will not abandon Creation.

John uses a lot of light imagery. Compare this to a “light-bulb moment” or an “a-ha moment.” In Genesis, God creates light so all of Creation can be seen. In



## Planet Earth Sunday Season of Creation 1 Year B

Genesis 1:1-25

Psalms 33

Romans 1:18-23

John 1:1-14

John, Jesus is the Light of God, reorienting us to what God wants us to see. Season of Creation is designed to help us see God more clearly in Creation, and to see more clearly our call to protect and preserve God’s good Creation.

“**All things** came into being through the Word ...” Reflect a moment on that phrase “all things”? What does that phrase include? Have we ever really pondered that all things really means all things?

The phrase “lived among us” could also be translated as “tented among us” or “tabernacled among us.” What does it say to think of Jesus setting up camp on Earth and hanging out with us like a neighbor in a campground?

Some additional or alternate texts to use for Earth Sunday:

- **1 Corinthians 12:12-31** - Paul’s parts of the body metaphor can be a nice illustration of the interconnectedness of Creation as described in Genesis 1.
- **Romans 8:18-21** – though this text has some troubling imagery through feminizing Creation, it does portray a unity of Creation.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

The Cosmic Calendar was popularized by Carl Sagan in his 1977 work *The Dragons of Eden*. Sagan uses a typical 12-month calendar to demonstrate the relative relationship of all Creation. If the Big Bang happened on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this hypothetical calendar, the appearance of humanity does not occur until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 11:24 PM. This demonstrates just how recent humanity fits into the entire scope of Creation. Yet, we as people tend to focus on our portion of Creation as if it is all that matters. How do we pause and reflect on the entirety of Creation and God's involvement with all that came before humanity and let that reflection guide us into a healthier relationship with Creation?

One place to go and see the passage of time is the Grand Canyon. The strata of rocks peel back the layers of time. Geologists who study the rocks know when each layer was formed and can tell what was happening around the world at that time based on what the rocks tell them.

Marvel Comics superhero "Spiderman" and his alter-ego, Peter Parker, have long lived by the mantra, "With great power comes great responsibility." What power do we yield over Creation and what great responsibility should we yield over Creation?

As our nation wrestles with environmental policies and laws, what responsibility do corporations have in adjusting their practices to protect the environment. The website, "exxonknew.org" tells the story of how the oil giant Exxon was

aware of climate change years before they admitted knowing it.

The Washington Times reported in December, 2019, that a New York Supreme Court Justice ruled in favor of Exxon, clearing the corporation of wrong doing of misleading investors. The justice wrote: "Nothing in this opinion is intended to absolve Exxon Mobil from responsibility for contributing to climate change through the emission of greenhouse gases in the production of its fossil fuel products." And the Justice also wrote: "Exxon Mobil does not dispute either that its operations produce greenhouse gases or that greenhouse gases contribute to climate change," Justice Ostrager said. "But Exxon-Mobil is in the business of producing energy, and this is a securities fraud case, not a climate change case."

While some felt this was a defeat for climate change activists, the ruling seems to indicate Exxon was cleared only in defrauding investors and is not completely absolved of its responsibility to the environmental damage caused by its production of resources. How do we in our parishes advocate for businesses and corporations to do better in protecting the environment?

We are all made up of atoms that were once formed in a star which exploded and sent the material hurtling through space. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, shared these same atoms with us.

Reading the prologue of John's Gospel, you really get the sense that God is fully

**Planet Earth Sunday**  
**Season of Creation 1**  
*Year B*

**Genesis 1:1-25**

**Psalms 33**

**Romans 1:18-23**

**John 1:1-14**

### **Fruits for Preaching** *Stories, Anecdotes and Citations*

interconnected with Creation. A modern-day heresy regarding God's interconnectivity with Creation is at the heart of the culturally popular "Left Behind" series. In that series, God and Jesus come across as aliens waiting to take "believers" away to some spaceship heaven, leaving "unbelievers" or "unsaved" behind as a consequence of their actions. But in this heresy, the Earth has no choice and is left behind by its creator who whisks away the chosen and allows those left behind to abuse the Earth because it won't matter. John's gospel, however, debunks this heresy. John tells us something very different about the indwelling of God in Creation and the redemption of the entire Creation. When we realize the full interconnectedness God has with Creation, our own eco-theology shifts away from "we get to abuse the Earth because God created stuff for just us," to, "we get to care for the Earth and all it provides so that all may benefit from what God dwells within."

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

Consider this Sunday as an opportunity to tell your eco-biography. That is, tell your story of why caring for the Earth is so important. What moments in your life sparked your faith and allowed you to see the “goodness” of Creation, and the need to care for it? Use the expression “eco-theology” to tie your sense of ecology with your understanding of God.

John’s prologue sets up a dynamic of God’s Messiah that contrasts with the myths of the Roman Caesars and the Greco-Roman gods. The myths around the gods were played out in their cosmic battle on a hapless earth playground that they didn’t ultimately care about. The myths about the Roman Caesars were they were sons of these Greco-Roman gods. John flips these myths on their heads, instead of Jesus coming to Lord over the Earth, Jesus comes to serve as the Son of God, to draw us into a more complete relationship with one another, with God, and with all Creation.

The themes of Creation throughout scripture demonstrate there are consequences for human actions and violence against Creation. In our modern age, we experience this through climate change and increasing destruction from natural disasters. Yet, scripture is also clear that God yearns for and opens the way for redemption for all of Creation, not just humanity. How do we live into this redemption? How does living faithfully in this redemption open the path for us to choose new ways of interacting with our

environment? What methods of reduce, reuse, and recycle, demonstrate redemptive living?

One positive side effect of the quarantine caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is that pollution is down. From auto exhaust emissions being lower to cleaner waterways, a lot of positive has happened. Has Covid-19 been Earth’s way to force a cleansing? Is this Earth getting back at humanity for decades of abuse? If we can’t say it is Earth causing it, can we talk about positive benefits and push for how to continue to live with those positive benefits after the pandemic is over?

On January 6, 2021, the Alaska Public Media published an article that announced the Arctic refuge lease is a bust. The major oil companies opted not to drill in the arctic. This is seen as a set-back for those who for years have fought to open leasing for oil drilling in that region. This is considered a victory for environmental champions who have fought to keep these wilderness areas untouched from humanity’s damaging drilling impacts. While the leases of portions of this area were sold, none will be for drilling and the sale brought in far less money than was expected when the leases were first offered. How does a moment like this give us pause to think that perhaps corporations are looking out for the better interests of the environment.

Author JRR Tolkien developed fantastic mythologies for his middle earth which were played out through popular works like the *Hobbit* and the *Lord of the*

*Rings* trilogy. At the time of his death, Tolkien was working on *The Silmarillion* which opens with a legendarium called “Ainulindalë”. This is a song created by beings that prefigure Creation in Tolkien’s myths. If you haven’t read his works, take a moment to look up and compare how Tolkien used scriptural themes of Creation in developing his fictional myth of Creation.

Have you ever paused because a bird, a squirrel, an insect, or a leaf blowing in the wind just catches your attention in a way that has you in complete awe for a moment? This is a moment that lets us into the window of awe at God for Creation. How do we stretch those brief moments into a heart for environmental awareness and advocacy?

Consider setting up tents in the church yard. Invite members to sleep overnight in the tents ahead of the worship service. Talk about the sounds you hear while camping overnight. How are they different in a city/suburb/small town versus rural/forest/open prairie setting? How does camping bring us closer to Creation?

“To stand on the surface of the Moon and look at the Earth high overhead is certainly a unique experience. Although very beautiful, it is very remote, an oasis or an island. But it is the only island that we know of that is suitable for man. The importance of protecting and saving that home has never been felt more strongly. Protection is required; however, not from foreign aggressors or natural calamity, but from its own population.” - Neil Armstrong



# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Planet Earth Sunday

Planet Earth Sunday Hymn Suggestions	Gathering	Song of Day	Offering/Communion	Sending
Commonwealth is God's Commandment - ACS 1036		X		
God of the Fertile Fields - ACS 1063			X	
Earth is Full of Wit and Wisdom - ACS 1064				X
For the Wholeness of the Earth - ACS 1067			X	
Feed Us with Hunger Toward Justice - ACS 968			X	
On What Has Now Been Sown - ELW 550				X
Lord, Your Hands Have Formed - ELW 554	X			
Creator God, Your Fingers Trace - ELW 684			X	
Earth and All Stars - ELW 731	X			
God Created Heaven and Earth - ELW 738		X		
Touch the Earth Lightly - ELW 739		X		
This is My Father's World - ELW 824	X			
How Great Thou Art - ELW 856				X
Let the Whole Creation Cry - ELW 876	X			
For the Beauty of the Earth - ELW 879		X		
Let All Things Now Living - ELW 881				X
Creator, We Thank You For All You Have Made – by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette – 3 Creator ( <a href="http://www.carolynshymns.com/">www.carolynshymns.com/</a> )	X			

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, in wisdom you made this amazing Creation. From the warmth of this living Earth to the cold depths of the oceans, all Creation sings your praise. Help us to tread lightly in this world, to revel in the beauty and complexity of nature, and to join in the song of all Creation in praise and thanksgiving to you. All this we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## Get Up & Go

*Places in and around the NIS to visit in relation to Earth Sunday*

Visit parks such as Starved Rock & Castle Rock where there are vistas or travel to roadside overlooks like those near Galena or along the Mississippi valley. Look out over the vast expanse of the Earth and ponder its diversity. Read Psalm 33 as you enjoy the view.

## Ideas for Children's Sermons

- Talk about Earth Day (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was 2020)
- Look at a bucket of soil and touch it, talk about it
- Talk about composting (maybe show a composting worm bin or other bin)
- Have children draw around their foot and talk about carbon footprints
- Talk about the Indigenous People who formerly inhabited your area
- Show the children a globe and talk about the parts of our Earth

Some **books** to share with the young and young at heart:

- *The Earth Book* by Todd Parr
- *Jesus the Word* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones
- *When God was a Little Girl* by David R. Weiss
- *When God Made Light* by Matthew Paul Turner

## Other Ideas

- *For the Beauty of the Earth* by Leah Schade (include info here) is a Lenten devotional but can easily be adapted to use during Season of Creation. At the end of the book she includes a list of 50 ways to celebrate Earth Day (it was written during the 50th anniversary of Earth Day).
- Lead a book study on *No one is too Small to Make a Difference* by Greta Thunberg (include info here).
- Use a drone or Google Earth to capture video or pictures of the area around your congregation. Consider the diversity of the ecosystems and how they all fit together as well as how they all may be in travail.
- Do some calculations of the carbon footprint created by the congregation and/or individuals. Check out [www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com) as a possible vehicle through which donations can be made to offset your carbon footprint.
- Ask people to loan the globes they may have in their homes to use during Earth Sunday. Decorate the sanctuary or narthex with these as well as other models or images of the Earth.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Humanity Sunday

### Genesis 1:26-28

*The author of the first chapter of Genesis depicts a beginning in which humanity does not arrive until all of the other creatures and aspects of Creation have been set in their place.*

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”

<sup>27</sup>God created humanity in  
God’s own image,  
in the divine image  
God created them,  
male and female  
God created them.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.” (CEB)

### Psalms 8

<sup>1</sup> O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!—

<sup>2</sup>**you whose glory is  
chanted above the  
heavens out of the  
mouths of infants and  
children; you have set up  
a fortress against your  
enemies, to silence the  
foe and avenger.**

<sup>3</sup> When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

<sup>4</sup>**what are mere mortals  
that you should be  
mindful of them, human  
beings that you  
should care for them?**

<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them.

<sup>6</sup>**You have made them  
rule over the works of  
your hands; you have  
put all things under  
their feet:**

<sup>7</sup> all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup>**the birds of the air, the  
fish of the sea, and  
whatever passes along  
the paths of the sea.**

<sup>9</sup> O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

### Philippians 2:1-11

*In this beautiful Christ hymn, we see humans joining all creatures – those in the heavens, on the Earth, and even under the Earth – in proclaiming the name of the Incarnate One.*

<sup>1</sup>If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the

Humanity Sunday  
Season of Creation 2  
Year B

Genesis 1:26-28

Psalms 8

Philippians 2:1-11

Mark 10:41-45

name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### Mark 10:41-45

*After James and John seek the glory of sitting on Jesus’ right and left hand, Jesus teaches that “great” humans are those who serve all.*

<sup>41</sup>When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. <sup>42</sup>So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.

<sup>43</sup>But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Humanity Sunday

### Seeds from the texts “Quotes” and Comments

Genesis 1 has often been translated with masculine language for God. Some translations, like the Common English Bible (CEB), have more inclusive language. (The CEB is used in this resource for this passage for both this reason and the translation of the word for dominion – “take charge.”)

The *Enuma Elish* (the Babylonian creation myth), like other creation stories from cultures outside Israel, is a creation story that includes much violence. Both creation stories in the Bible are peaceful.

Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 must be held in tension. We must discern how these stories may lead to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is theological value in both. There is not one story of Creation.

Contrast Genesis 1:26-28 - having dominion over Creation - with Genesis 2:15 - God gently bringing humanity into the garden, not to dominate, but to be servant to it.

“Dominion” is a troubling term. Misinterpreted throughout history, God is not encouraging us to violently control the Earth. Instead, we are encouraged to be caretakers and stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

This passage has been misused to justify abusing our planet.

We are all created in God’s image, so there is inherent dignity in every person.

As Carol Newsome points out, in Genesis 2:15 we see God creating a relationship between Earth and Earthling, not of human over Earth, but human within and beside Earth. “The image that Genesis has of the original human relationship to the environment is one that involves interaction but of a very modest sort. The forest of Eden is imagined as what we would call a

*God created humanity in God’s own image...*



permaculture, where human attention is part of the ecosystem, but of a nature rather like ‘light pruning and raking.’” (Carol A. Newsome, “Common Ground: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 2-3,” in *The Earth Story in Genesis. From Earth Bible* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 64-5.)

The Psalmist calls us to humility posing the question, “Compared to the vast greatness of God’s goodness, who are we?”

Who exactly are the enemies of whom the Psalmist speaks? Are they human enemies, i.e. foreign nations, or are they Creation’s enemies, i.e. death, plague, drought, chaos? In *The Book of Psalms*, Robert Alter says the enemy might be the “primordial sea monster” as found in Canaanite myth. [Alter, Robert, *The Book of Psalms* (W.W. Norton and Company, Inc, 2007), 23.]

Philippians is a letter that is written to a community that is somewhat healthy. Paul’s tone is more supportive and encouraging instead of correcting.

Paul writes while in the midst of imprisonment. Despite his incarceration and suffering, he expresses joy and rejoicing throughout this letter and encourages the believers at Philippi. Paul’s words can be a source of

**Humanity Sunday  
Season of Creation 2  
Year B**

**Genesis 1:26-28  
Psalm 8  
Philippians 2:1-11  
Mark 10:41-45**

*Pictures available  
to use for bulletin  
covers and  
PowerPoints in a  
separate file on  
this disk.*



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Humanity Sunday

encouragement for us as well, especially as we are beset by so many challenges and the mounting deaths of species and humans alike.

The first four verses of the second lesson feature a new interpretation of what it means to have dominion over the Earth - humbling ourselves and caring for others and Creation.

There is still hope - we can be better. We just need “any” of these things in the beginning verses of Philippians 2 to get us started.

Philippians 2:6-11 is a creed describing who Jesus is and what he has done for us - coming to us in human form to die for us.

There is a contrast in directional movement of this creed between vv. 6-8 (downward) and 9-11 (upward). What does

the downward movement of humility look like for humanity today when the tendency of many is to seek exaltation, having one's name above all names, having every knee bend to them, and confess their loyalty? How do the contrasting theological concepts of transcendence and immanence come into play here that might inform our eco-ethics?

Paul offers the vision here that “Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.” Is every tongue limited to every human being or is it inclusive of all creatures?

The gospel offers insight of what Jesus thinks it means to have dominion - to serve others. The verses preceding this pericope show the disciples understanding of dominion when they ask Jesus to do whatever they ask. Jesus essentially says that they are

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asking the wrong question. If they wish to be great, they must ask, “How can I serve you?”

James and John represent the desire to acquire power by being in close proximity of those who are powerful. But Jesus turns their desire on its head. Jesus' assertion that leaders must be servants of the people is a political statement that flies directly in the face of the Roman Emperor and traditional notions of power. By countering those social norms, Jesus is making the case that if one truly aspires to greatness, it must be a greatness of the collective, of the community, and serving within that community. In other words, God's power does not come from above, but from below.

“Son of Man” is an apocalyptic term implying the second coming of Jesus instead of simply stating that he is human.

Slave language - we must be careful when we use the slave language that is found in scripture. It is problematic, and many of us have different emotional responses to slave or servant language, and we all have different assumptions of what slavery is.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Humanity Sunday

Creation wasn't really seven 24-hour days. This is a story of myth that artistically portrays how God created the world and how we are entrusted to care for it.

Science and Religion answer different questions. Science describes how; religion answers why. We can accept scientific knowledge of how the world was created and still find theological value in the Creation story in the Bible.

We are held accountable to the future generations but also to the past. We can uphold the good traditions and habits of our indigenous, religious, and personal ancestors.

From *The Cosmic Calendar* by Carl Sagan: If the entire history of the universe were broken down into a calendar year, then humans have only been on this Earth for about ten seconds.  
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmic\\_Calendar](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmic_Calendar)

Bret Harte's story *The Luck of Roaring Camp* describes how a mining camp full of rough men were transformed when they had to raise a baby after the child's mother died.  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6373/6373-h/6373-h.htm>

Abusers can call for unity without accountability. Our unity is in having the same love of Christ. Everyone moving towards that mindset can bring about the unity and common ground we desire.

"We all do better when we all do better." – US Senator Paul Wellstone (MN) in a speech to the Sheet Metal Workers Union

A quote about serving others instead of being served: "Ask not what your country can do

for you, ask what you can do for your country." - John F. Kennedy in inaugural speech, January 20, 1961.

Our purpose is not to seek our own personal power but to be humble servants helping others - other humans and other parts of nature.

What might be the ramifications for churches seeking to serve within an environmental context given Jesus' words in Mark 10? It means doing the "dirty work" of cleaning up, getting in the muck, restoring habitats, and, yes, getting involved in politics and policy work – because that is where the church can remind those in power what their role truly is: serving.

Christopher Douglas Huriwai writes that for the Maori people of New Zealand, humility is reflected not just in their foundational stories, but in their very language. They see themselves not as "above" the land, but nurtured by the land as a child is nurtured by their mother. The word *whenua* means both land and placenta! This is why after a birth, the placenta is buried in ancestral land in a sacred ceremony. "Through this practice, an unbreakable bond is established between the child and the land, establishing the child's place in the world and proving the fertile ground from which the child's *pepaha* (identity) is enabled to emerge." [Christopher Douglas Huriwai, "Ko Au te Whenua, Ko te Whenua Ko Au: I am the Land and the Land is Me," in *Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*, ed. Hannah Malcolm (SCM Press, 2020), 14.] Imagine if, in our humble

### Fruits for Preaching

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worship of the humble Christ, we might regard Earth with such reverence – especially ensuring that both Earth and women are protected in their sacred tasks of birthing.

A fiduciary relationship is a relationship of trust. A ruler has a fiduciary responsibility to her subjects. How better to build up trust than by following Jesus' recipe to serve all?

Like James and John, we, too, inside and outside the church, jockey for power. Sometimes that even happens in the church kitchen! How many church fights have broken out around dishes or coffee? Becoming a servant to all is harder than we think. We, too, can be petty and disregard care for our planet.

Who are the young people in your family, church, or community that are active in environmental issues? How can you support them in their climate and environmental activism? In what ways can you help amplify their voice and highlight their leadership? Consider setting up a scholarship to recognize and support the education of young environmental leaders in your community.

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I remember being comforted by the woods that neighbored my house when I was little. I would go there to cry whenever I needed time alone. At seven years old I was crushed and confused when heavy equipment tore down my natural sanctuary to make way for new buildings. When I went to my mother seeking a way to save the trees, she explained that it didn't belong to us, so we could do nothing to stop it, even though it was a holy place for me. *We all have witnessed the removal or destruction of natural areas or animals that we hold dear. What are your environmental losses that you grieve?*

According to an 1,800-year-old Jewish commentary on the

Hebrew Bible, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai describes a group of people traveling on a boat. One of them takes a drill and begins to bore a hole. The others ask, 'Why are you doing this?' The person replies, 'Why are you concerned? Am I not drilling under my own place?' The rest reply, 'But you will flood the boat for all of us!' . . . The person drilling is dangerous, but the rest of us ignoring the threat they pose is equally dangerous. If the boat sinks, the fault is both the driller's and those who stood idly by" (Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 4:6, quoted in Eco Bible, Vol. 1, xxi). Consider reenacting this story with children and drawing implications for how we should behave when it comes to God's Creation and each other.



### Humanity Sunday Hymn Suggestions

	Gathering	Song of Day	Offering/Communion	Sending
All Are Welcome - ELW 641	X		X	
Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth - ELW 735		X	X	
Sent Forth With God's Blessing - ELW 547				X
Rise, Shine, You People - ELW 665	X		X	X
In Christ There Is No East or West - ELW 650		X		X
Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love - ELW 708		X	X	X
Here I Am Lord - ELW 574	X			X
Great Is Thy Faithfulness - ELW 753	X			X
Light Dawns on a Weary World - ELW 726	X	X	X	X
My Life Flows On in Endless Song - ELW 763		X	X	X
Canticle of the Turning - ELW 723	X	X	X	
T'was in the Moon of Wintertime - ELW 284		X	X	
God's Work, Our Hands - ACS 1000		X		X
Commonwealth Is God's Commandment - ACS 1036	X	X		
O God Who Gives Us Life - ACS 1086		X	X	

### Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, you show your love for Creation through the humility of incarnation, death, and resurrection. Lead us to follow your example as we fulfill your call to humanity by humbly putting others first, seeking to serve rather than be served. Guide our servanthood toward the rocks and rivers, birds and beasts, skies and seas, and all of our fellow creatures, both great and small. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Humanity Sunday

### Study and Discussion:

- Research the Doctrine of Discovery and consider actions in the ELCA to repudiate it: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/elca/>
- Look at maps and see how many Native American names are used for counties and cities. Research some of those names to learn more about the people who originally called this land home.
- Study and sing *Twas In The Moon of Wintertime* (ELW 284), based on “The Huron Carol,” North America’s oldest Christmas carol. Written in the native language of the Huron/Wendat tribe, it was put to a French melody by a missionary to indigenous people of what is now Canada. How is the description of Christ’s birth different from the way you tell it or imagine it?
- Zoos always have descriptions about animals outside of their cages which tell what food they eat, what their natural habitat is, how far they roam. Consider where your food comes from, where your people lived, and your family migration stories. What would your description be?
- Host a potluck where everyone brings food representing their own ancestry. Is everyone Swedish? Invite neighbors of different ethnicities to join you with their own dish to pass or seek authentic recipes from around the world to share. What stories are there surrounding each dish? What ingredients are used and why?
- Host a discussion on the ELCA social statement: *Caring for Creation: Vision Hope, and Justice*. <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation> Consider how to live out our call to care for Creation through advocacy <https://www.elca.org/Resources/Advocacy>

### Action and Advocacy:

- The Northern IL Synod has companion synod relationships with churches in India and Tanzania. Consider joining Northern IL congregations in these partnerships or revitalize relationships your congregation already has.
- Fight poverty by getting to the root of it, caring for people, water, animals and agriculture through ELCA Good Gifts. <https://goodgifts.elca.org/>
- Consider your town or a neighboring city. What neighborhoods have environmental issues (lack of greenspace, lead in drinking water, landfills, polluting factories, etc.)? Do you see a connection between economics and the location of the issues? How can you advocate with people or churches in these neighborhoods for better services? Where are there Food Deserts near you? Is there a micro-pantry you can consistently donate canned and boxed food to?
- Worship outside, in God’s cathedral – on the Earth, under the sky, on a hill! Remember where we came from, how we are related, and how much we need one another.
- The Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, became famous for her environmental activism. What young people in your family, church or community are active in environmental issues that you could follow and support?
- Find out if you can place bird feeders outside of nursing home windows. Take responsibility for filling them with seed and suet.

### A Reading List:

- *Shoemaker Martin*, by Leo Tolstoy
- *The Peace Book*, by Todd Parr
- *Is There Really a Human Race*, by Jamie Lee Curtis
- *God Created*, by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones
- *Granny’s Backyard*, by Judy Dixon and Helen Dixon
- *This is the Earth That God Made*, by Lynn Downey and Benrei Huang
- *The Christian Kids Gardening Guide*, by Rebecca Park Totilo
- *Earth Prayers: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations from Around the World*, by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon
- *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Creation (A) – Sky Sunday

### Jeremiah 4:23-28

*Israel is facing the consequences of their role in defiling the Earth. Jeremiah calls the nation to wake up, look around, and take notice of how the land and sky are witnessing against them.*

<sup>23</sup>I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.

<sup>24</sup>I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.

<sup>25</sup>I looked, and lo, there was no one at all, and all the birds of the air had fled.

<sup>26</sup>I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

<sup>27</sup>For thus says the Lord: The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.

<sup>28</sup>Because of this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above grow black; for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back.

### Psalms 19:1-6

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

<sup>2</sup> **One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

<sup>3</sup> Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

<sup>4</sup> **their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**

<sup>5</sup> It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

<sup>6</sup> **It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.**



### Philippians 2:12-18

*Paul reminds us that God is at work in us. When we live out God's purpose, we shine like the stars in the sky.*

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup>Do all things without murmuring and arguing, <sup>15</sup>so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. <sup>16</sup>It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup>But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— <sup>18</sup>and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

**Sky Sunday**  
**Season of Creation 3**  
**Year B**

**Jeremiah 4:23-28**

**Psalms 19:1-6**

**Philippians 2:12-18**

**Mark 15:33-39**





## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Creation (A) – Sky Sunday

### Mark 15:33-39

*On the cross, Jesus took upon himself not only our suffering but the suffering of Creation as well. The darkness of the sky at Jesus' crucifixion shows us how all Creation mourns at the death of its Savior.*

<sup>33</sup>When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

<sup>34</sup>At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>35</sup>When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." <sup>36</sup>And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." <sup>37</sup>Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"



*"...darkness came over the whole land."*

*Pictures available to use for bulletin covers and PowerPoints in a separate file on this disk.*

### Seeds from the texts "Quotes" and Comments

The prophet Jeremiah has a devastating vision for our world in chapter 4. The Earth and the sky testify against Israel for their unrighteousness. The sky wears the cloak of mourning – the heavens have no light (v23), the heavens above grow black (v28). Evidence of a devastated world exists today – skies darkened by smoke from wildfires, coal plants, and smog-choked cities; land depleted of resources, earthquakes caused by fracking, birds gone extinct. These verses offer painful condemnation and frightening consequences; a lament naming injustice, allowing us to sit vigil; acknowledging the loss, honoring the dead. We honor our human loved ones by doing

good things in their memory, making charitable donations, making commitments to causes they served when alive. How can we honor what has gone extinct? What is no more?

Yet, God says, "I will not make a full end." (v27) During the 2020-2021 global pandemic, pollution was abated in some areas - when sheltering-in-place, the reduction of car traffic and carbon emissions was noticeable. What grace does God offer us in our state of abuse toward Creation? What opportunity do we have now, to change our ways to protect and restore what we still can; to repent and return to God, seeking forgiveness and righteousness?

The Psalmist personifies the heavens as telling the glory of God, witnessing to us without

### Sky Sunday Season of Creation 3 Year B

Jeremiah 4:23-28

Psalms 19:1-6

Philippians 2:12-18

Mark 15:33-39

words; declaring knowledge without voice. Ponder what the skies have told you. Can't see any stars on a clear night? Maybe they're telling us there's light pollution. On the streets of a city and can't get a breath of fresh air? Maybe the skies are telling us the air is dirty from vehicle exhaust. Record-breaking hurricanes? Maybe global temperatures are making weather patterns volatile. What do you see? What are the heavens telling us? What makes the heavens tell the glory of God?

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Creation (A) – Sky Sunday

Philippians 2:14-18 connects the condemnation of Jeremiah's words to the glory of the skies described in the Psalm, reminding us of our agency. The letter encourages children of God to be "glad and rejoice" (v17), even when suffering for their faith. By avoiding murmuring and arguing (v14), we can be united in caring for Creation, avoiding what delays and divides us. Holding fast to the word of life (v16), we shine like stars (v15) in bright contrast to the abusive powers and status quo which kills. While stars appear to move in the sky, they are actually fixed points of

navigation. How can we be navigators of ethics and justice for the world God created?

This passage in Mark takes us to the Good Friday story when Jesus dies on the cross. The darkened sky (v33) again testifies against the people for what they have done, mourning with all of Creation in agony with Christ. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (v34) *Could Creation be crying out in the same words as it suffers before our eyes?* Upon hearing Jesus' accusation, bystanders watch to see if Elijah will swoop down from the

sky to save him, offering comfort in sour wine (v35-36), which is too little, too late. *How often are we the bystanders, waiting to see if we will be rescued, without using our will today to tend to what God has given us?* With Jesus' last breath, the Spirit of God, let loose at his baptism, is drawn back up to the heavens, reunited in the sky. In verse 39, the centurion recognizes that "Truly this man was God's son!"

**Sky Sunday**  
**Season of Creation 3**  
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**Jeremiah 4:23-28**

**Psalm 19:1-6**

**Philippians 2:12-18**

**Mark 15:33-39**

Consider preaching this sermon from an other-than-human perspective, perhaps that of a bird watching what has happened to her sky, or as sky herself. See the sermon "I am Ruah: A Sermon on Climate Disruption Preached from the Perspective of the Holy Spirit: in *Creation-Crisis Preaching*. (Leah D. Shade, *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*. Chalice Press, 2015, 178-185.)

When skies darken with thunderous clouds, my dogs are terribly frightened. So, I started

going with them into the closet to get away from the loud noises and bright flashing lightening that they feared. Now, they are so comforted by this safe and quiet place, they go to the closet whenever they need a calm refuge, no matter the skies.

Daniel Wolpert asserts that Christianity calls us to fearlessly engage our wounds, following in the way of Christ. Further, the crucifixion is the ultimate act of divine suffering and healing that can heal the world: "The central Christian story, the story of Jesus, is a story of entering the suffering of the world. God takes on this suffering for the purpose of transformation . . . [T]he crucifixion tells us that we cannot get to this place of eternity by avoiding the suffering of the world. The desire to run from suffering is

### **Fruits for Preaching** *Stories, Anecdotes and Citations*

the activity of the ego, which is always trying to avoid distress and fortify itself against death. In contrast, Jesus shows us that it is only by engaging the suffering of the world and entering the reality of suffering that we can emerge whole." (Daniel Wolpert, *Creation's Wisdom: Spiritual Practice and Climate Change*. Orbis Books, 2020, 146.)

When my dad died, the hospice chaplain came in to see my mom and me. She told us about a Norwegian custom. The tradition tells us to open a window when a loved one dies, so that their spirit can return to where it came from. When she left, I stood up and opened the

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Creation (A) – Sky Sunday

window. Not only did my dad's breath let loose in the world, the warmth of the June air flowed into the hospice room. His breath became mine. My breath became the wind. God breathes with us as we hold fast to the word of life. We are grounded to this good Earth by a gravitational pull that tells us God's love will never let us go. We are rooted in the promise of resurrection that we are witnesses to each and every day. *Trees are natural respirators in the sky, for the air we breathe. How can the sacredness of the breath of trees be honored, as it is let loose in the world?*

I remember being on a trip to the Boundary Waters as a youth. We laid back to stare at the stars, but instead of being in awe of God's Creation, I remember counting the satellites. In the face of the universe, we were more impressed by human accomplishments than God's. On the other hand, as an adult, I remember advising a young man to educate himself on the constellations to impress a girl. He took meticulous notes and was later seen pointing at the sky with the favored young woman at his side. Afterward he confided in me, "It worked!"

**Sky Sunday**  
**Season of Creation 3**  
*Year B*

**Jeremiah 4:23-28**

**Psalms 19:1-6**

**Philippians 2:12-18**

**Mark 15:33-39**

### Ideas for Children's Sermons

- Wonder at the amazing sky as you share pictures of sunrises, sunsets, cloud formations, the moon, and the stars.
- Discuss the idea of light pollution using sea turtles as an example of one animal that is hurt when there is too much light at night.
- Discuss how the sky is closely connected to our rivers and lakes through the clouds and water cycle.
- Illustrate acid rain in this manner - Bring two glasses of clear clean water. In one pour a packet of Kool Aid or other powdered drink that will change the color of the water. In the other pour some powdered cleaner such as Ajax. Ask them which glass they would like to drink from. Explain that when we send smoke from our factories and our cars into the air, the tiny stuff in there mixes in the rain drops and falls to the Earth.

### Children's Books

- *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss - chronicles the plight of the environment and the Lorax, who "speaks for the trees" and confronts the Once-ler, who causes environmental destruction.
- *When God made Light* by Matthew Paul Turner - "Let there be light!" that's what God said. And light began shining and then started to spread."
- *Rufus and the Scary Storm: Book about Being Brave* by Lucy Bell
- *Follow the Star: All the way to Bethlehem* by Alan Parry – contains fun activities to help children follow the star and find baby Jesus.
- *Turtle, Turtle, Watch Out!* by April Sayre - a fascinating look at the danger sea turtles face and the role that humans have in helping with wildlife and ocean conservation.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Creation (A) – Sky Sunday

Sky Sunday Hymn Suggestions	Gathering	Song of Day	Offering/Communion	Sending
Morning Has Broken - ELW 556	X			
Many and Great - ELW 837	X	X		
God who Stretched the Spangled Heavens - ELW 771	X	X		X
Bright and Glorious Is the Sky - ELW 301		X		
Let the Whole Creation Cry - ELW 876	X			X
God Created Heaven and Earth - ELW 738		X	X	
Before the Waters Nourished Earth - ACS 1049	X	X	X	
Sometimes Our Only Song Is Weeping - ACS 1050		X	X	
The Heavens Tell of Your Creative Glory - ACS 1070		X		X
In Sacred Manner - ACS 1071		X		
When a Star Is Shining - ACS 915		X		
In Deepest Night - ELW 699		X	X	
Watch, O Lord – ACS 996			X	X
Oh, Sing to God Above - ELW 555	X			X
God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven - ELW 564	X			X
When Twilight Comes - ELW 566	X	X		

### Prayer of the Day

O gracious God of Earth and all stars, give us hearts humble enough to be grateful for the beauty of the sky which provides and protects, with oxygen and ozone, with clouds and rain. Breathe in us the will to dedicate our lives to its care. In the name of the Spirit whose winds brought forth creation, we pray. **Amen.**

### Get Up & Go

*Places in and around the NIS to visit in relation to Sky Sunday*

- Take a trip to the Adler Planetarium in Chicago.
- Seek out places that are free of light pollution so that you can view the night skies in all their glory. Two places accessible to members of the Northern Illinois Synod (though neither is actually in the boundaries of the synod) are Middle Fork River Forest Preserve in Champaign County, IL (a Dark Sky Park) and Siloam Springs State Park in Clayton, IL.

### Other Ideas

- Invite people to write a Psalm of Lament from the viewpoint of the sky and then follow this up by inviting them to write a Psalm of Praise from the viewpoint of the sky
- Have a discussion about light pollution. Consider the lights in and around your church. Consider Tucson, Arizona, which has laws prohibiting street lights.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

### Isaiah 65:17-25

*This passage from Isaiah tells of God's mountain top vision of a new Earth and a new Heaven, showing us what is possible in God's dream for all Creation.*

- <sup>17</sup> For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
- <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.
- <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.
- <sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
- <sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
- <sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
- <sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD — and their descendants as well.
- <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.
- <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent — its food shall be dust!
- They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain,  
says the LORD.

### Psalms 48:1-11

- <sup>1</sup> Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, on the Lord's holy mountain.
- <sup>2</sup> **Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is Mount Zion, the summit of the north and city of the great king.**
- <sup>3</sup> God is in the citadels of Jerusalem; revealed to be the sure refuge of the city.
- <sup>4</sup> **Behold, the kings assembled and marched forward together.**
- <sup>5</sup> As they looked, they were astounded; dismayed, they fled in terror.
- <sup>6</sup> **Trembling seized them there; they writhed like a woman in childbirth;**
- <sup>7</sup> with an east wind you shattered them like the ships of Tarshish.
- <sup>8</sup> **As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God—may God establish it forever!**
- <sup>9</sup> In the midst of your temple, O God, we meditate on your steadfast love.
- <sup>10</sup> **Your praise, like your name, O God, reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is full of righteousness.**
- <sup>11</sup> Let Mount Zion be glad and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments.

### Mountain & Hill Sunday Season of Creation 4

Year B

Isaiah 65:17-25

Psalms 48:1-11

Romans 8:28-39

Mark 3:13-19



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

### Romans 8:28-39

*Paul reminds us that all things work together for good for those who love Christ and that nothing will separate us from God's love.*

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him

who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Mark 3:13-19

*On the mountain, Jesus calls and sends the twelve with authority to proclaim his message and cast out the demonic.*

<sup>13</sup>He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup>And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, <sup>15</sup>and to have authority to cast out demons. <sup>16</sup>So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); <sup>17</sup>James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); <sup>18</sup>and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, <sup>19</sup>and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Then he went home.

**Mountain & Hill Sunday  
Season of Creation 4  
Year B**

**Isaiah 65:17-25**

**Psalms 48:1-11**

**Romans 8:28-39**

**Mark 3:13-19**



*They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain.*

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

This passage in Isaiah is replete with hopefulness and a vision of what is possible when humans live in harmony with Creation. God's holy mountain is the site of what we might call "radical imagination" – a society where people are cared for from birth to their older years and enjoy both longevity and quality of life; where resources are equitably shared and everyone is satisfied with what they receive.

Psalms 48 invites us to God's holy mountain to take in the view, to remember the story of God's history with the people of Israel, and to be reminded that God does indeed care for us. It's the mountaintop experiences of faith that help to sustain us in the dark valleys of fear; in the emergency rooms waiting for medical care; in the deserts of poverty waiting for relief; and in the throes of the climate crisis praying for ourselves and all the creatures hoping to survive along with us. On the mountain top we are given perspective that we did not have before.

Paul's words about all things working together for good for those who love God echo both Isaiah's and the psalmist's vision of what the human community can enjoy when it follows God's purposes. It would be good to remind listeners of the verses that immediately precede this passage – vv. 18-27. Those verses emphasize the hope that is generated

through faith, even when things are at their worst. This sets the stage for Paul's bold proclamation about God being with us through Christ's death and resurrection.

In addition to describing the twelve as *apostolos*, some of them are given new names to go with their new calling and commissioning. All of them are changed on this mountain and come down to a different life, but notably the three who become Jesus' closest disciples, the ones who are privy to his transfiguration and anguished prayer in the garden, are the ones given new names.

It is also significant that with the 12<sup>th</sup> apostles' naming – Judas Iscariot – the action of betrayal is also named. Early in his story Mark is alerting us to its climatic ending. *This too happens on the mountain.*

The twelve, echoing the twelve tribes of Israel, are the embodiment of God's people in a new age. What does the embodiment of God's people look like in this this age?

### Seeds from the texts "Quotes" and Comments

#### Mountain & Hill Sunday Season of Creation 4 Year B

**Isaiah 65:17-25**

**Psalms 48:1-11**

**Romans 8:28-39**

**Mark 3:13-19**



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

### Fruits for Preaching

*Stories, Anecdotes and Citations*

Isaiah's vision of building houses and planting vineyards is a political vision that stands in contrast to the economic system of extraction at a time when one's labor was used by wealthy elites to feather their own nests while the poor lived in squalid conditions. Taxes and debt drove people to sell their land and enter into slavery. Women bore children only to watch them be bought and sold or succumb to disease and death. But in Isaiah's provocative vision, the predators no longer desire the flesh of the prey. God's holy mountain is a place of safety, refuge, and protection.

In his book, *Preaching to Teach*, Richard Voelz notes how womanist theologian Kelly Brown Douglas draws on Isaiah 65 for "a moral imagination [that] disrupts the notion that the world as it is reflects God's intentions. With a moral imagination one is able to live proleptically, that is, as if the new heaven and new earth were already here. This means one's life is not constrained by what is. It is oriented toward what will be." As she draws from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ministry and public speech, she ties in the apocalyptic dimension of Isaiah 65, where the wolf and lamb sit down over a shared meal. According to Brown Douglas, this is the vision that fuels black faith's moral imagination. She contends that the moral imagination, grounded in hopeful response to God's faithfulness to act, empowers

"black bodies to live as free black bodies, despite the forces that would deny that fact." [Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 225. Quoted in Richard Voelz, *Preaching to Teach: Inspire People to Think and Act* (Artistry of Preaching series), (Abingdon Press, 2019), 43-44.]

A sermon about Psalm 48 can point to the inspiration and hope that God's holy mountain inspires. The preacher will want to proclaim hope as "an absolutely fundamental theological category [because] anticipation of a new future grounded in faith in God conditions and motivates life," says John McClure. "The Christian life is one of hope, consciousness-raising, learning from and suffering with the oppressed (in order to come close to Christ), hope for and involvement in the work of social transformation, and joy in the present, rooted in faith's hope for and vision of the future." [John S. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (Chalice Press, 2001), 137.]

This passage is often read at funerals to comfort those who grieve. Debra Murphy writes that in Appalachia, which has seen so much death, destruction of mountains, and generational trauma, "climate trauma . . . leaves a trail of grief and broken-heartedness in its wake. It presents both the challenge and the grief of

turning private pain into collective mourning." [Debra Murphy, "Becoming Grievable in Appalachia: Climate Trauma and Palliative Care," in *Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*, edited by Hannah Malcolm (SCM Press, 2020), 192.]

Debra Murphy acknowledges that climate grief can lead to irredeemable despair which can happen both individually and collectively. Paul's words to the Roman church indicate that he

was similarly cognizant of the possibility that Christians, subject to persecution and being slaughtered like sheep. Yet he is unrelenting in his faith, even in the face of indisputable death

and suffering.

Murphy puts it this way: "Acknowledging the loss of what we love witnesses to another gift: our belonging to one another and to all of Creation. Bearing witness to this belonging, this deep connection, can take various forms. In the Christian tradition, there is a long history of keeping vigil over the dying, of not allowing them to be alone in their final days and hours. In such watchful waiting, we both grieve and hope." [Debra Murphy, "Becoming Grievable in Appalachia: Climate Trauma and Palliative Care," in *Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*, edited by Hannah Malcolm (SCM Press, 2020), 192.] What might it look like for your church to provide "palliative care" for God's Creation and communities who have suffered

**Mountain & Hill  
Sunday  
Season of Creation 4  
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**Isaiah 65:17-25**

**Psalm 48:1-11**

**Romans 8:28-39**

**Mark 3:13-19**



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

from extractive and polluting industries, climate devastation, loss of natural habitat, and species extinction?

Geography often plays the role of a character. Consider that Jesus has just left the sea and traveled with his chosen disciples up the mountain. Note the significance of leaving the place that symbolized the forces of chaos and going up to the place that echoes encounter with God's presence (cf. Abraham, Moses, and Elijah).

The mountain is the site of calling and commissioning. Note that Mark uses the term *apostolos* to describe the twelve – the “sent ones.” They are sent to “proclaim the message and to have authority to cast out demons” (v. 14-15). How might our preaching and ministry follow Jesus up the mountain and then be sent out to proclaim the gospel and cast out the demons that seek to destroy God's Creation?

What creates the mountain top experience? This question is

worth some careful thought. Consider these three as starting points: something aspirational in the climb, the aerial point of view, and the new vision/perspective offered by the mountain top experience. The experience eventually pushes us back down the mountain, but with new resources. This makes one wonder: is the mountain encounter for the experience or for something else?

Unless we are changed on the mountain in some fashion then nothing has happened. However, this change may create conflict in whether or not people are willing to accept the change in themselves and in those around them. How can this commissioning on the mountain help us embrace that change that we are often resistant to accepting?

We might wonder what it would be like for Jesus to deliver this commissioning at a site where one of these mountains has been cut away or blasted for

mining, leaving nothing but rock and rubble where trees and animals once made their homes. Imagine Jesus calling and sending a group of apostles from one of these desolate places.

Since this is the last Sunday of this Season of Creation, consider developing a commissioning service for the congregation. Ask people to fill out pledge cards for protecting God's Creation and invite them to dedicate their pledges on this Sunday, just as congregations do for a Stewardship Sunday.

This is also an opportunity for people to consider anew their own call story and share how they are fulfilling their commissioning to be sent ones in their daily life. The list of apostles does not end with Judas Iscariot, but continues throughout the ages even to include us today who have been called and sent by God on the holy mountain.

### Get Up & Go

*Places in and around the NIS to visit in relation to Mountain & Hill Sunday*

- Spend some time in the Mississippi Palisades Park near Savanna, IL
- Wander the paths at Starved Rock
- Go feel and see the mountains- go skiing or tubing
- Spend time at Dickson Valley Camp & Retreat Center near Millbrook, IL
- Go canoeing through canyons and see the mountains and hills around you.
- Go and visit Black Hawk Statue in Lowden State Park.
- Go hiking and when you reach the peak- ask yourself/those with you what do you see when you look down on God's Creation?
- Draw the furthest thing you can see at the bottom of a mountain. Climb it and draw what you can see the furthest from the top. Use a camera to do the same. What is different? Are there different sights, sounds, smells?
- Go to Castle Rock overlook on Route 2 and look out over the river
- Go to a hill/mountain you visited when you were young and see the difference
- Roll down a hill

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Creation (B) – Mountain & Hill Sunday

### Wilderness Sunday Hymn Suggestions

	Gathering	Song of Day	Offering/Communion	Sending
Go Tell it on the Mountain – ELW 290		X		X
God Bless America	X	X		
O beautiful for Spacious Skies – ELW 888		X		X
Jesus on the mountain peak – ELW 317		X		X
God the Sculptor of the Mountains – ELW 736		X		X
Be thou my vision – ELW 793	X	X	X	X
How firm a foundation – ELW 796	X	X		
Rock of Ages – ELW 623		X		X
Praise, Praise! You are my Rock – ELW 862	X	X		X
This is My Father's World – ELW 824	X	X		X
Lord, I Lift Your Name of High – ELW 857	X		X	X
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee – ELW 836	X	X		X
Come to the Mountain – W&P 32		X	X	X
Earth and All Stars – ELW 731	X	X		X
How Great Thou Art – ELW 856	X	X		X
For the Beauty of the Earth – ELW 879		X	X	X
Arise your Light has Come – ELW 314	X	X		

### Prayer of the Day

Creator God, you are made known on your holy mountain where you call us to see the world with new hope and perspective. Transform and renew us with authority to declare your vision for the Earth and to repair the damage done to your good Creation. **Amen.**

### Ideas for Children's Sermons

- Stones may look different but they are all stones. Lift up our differences and similarities.
- We don't have a lot of mountains in Illinois but where are places in nature near here that you have/can/encounter God?

### Discipleship Activities

*Ideas for Learning and Serving for Mountain & Hill Sunday*

- Land fills are often the biggest hills in this part of the country. Talk about what makes them. Take congregation and youth group excursions to check them out.
- Remember that going up the mountain transforms us. Spend some time sharing in small groups about those "high places" near and far that have personally inspired group members.
- We can look at the layers in cliff sides and see a geological history of that location. What will our layer of the geological record look like? What things has humanity done that will form that layer?
- Have you ever considered that mountains have been moved to make your life more convenient? You could probably find a quarry not far from you which is a perfect example of this. Look at the land and structures around you. What has come as a by-product of moving mountains? What are the positives and negatives of this?

## The Team

It was truly a blessing to work with such a talented group to put this resource together. Due to a computer system crash, the picture of the team has been lost in some far unrecoverable sector of a hard drive (though it was simply a screen shot of a Zoom screen as that is how we gathered this year). However, you see the names of these NIS eco-leaders listed below. When you come across them during synod events, please thank them for their work.

Our hope is to have at least one member from each of the conferences on the team. That has not come to fruition the first two years of this endeavor, but perhaps the third year is a charm. If you are reading this, chances are you are a perfect candidate to join next year's team. Check out the box below for how to do so.

On behalf of Leah, Robin, Michel, Robert, Jamie, Becky, Julie, Scott, and Carol, I pray that you and your congregation find this resource a blessing, that your worship life is enhanced by Season of Creation, and most importantly, that people are encouraged to live with and serve all of God's grand Creation.

Peace,  
Jeff Schlesinger

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## Be On Next Year's Team

We are seeking collaborative and creative people who would like to be part of the team to create a resource for year C of Season of Creation. Team members will be required to participate in a Zoom meeting in November or December, attend the retreat in January or early February, and pledge to conduct Season of Creation in their own congregation.

If you are interested, please drop a note via either email or snail mail to:

### **Season of Creation Retreat**

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## **Additional Resources**

1. Habel, Rhoads and Santmire, eds. *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.
2. <http://www.letallcreationpraise.org/season-of-creation>
3. <https://seasonofcreation.com>
4. <http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org>
5. <http://www.bibleandecology.org>
6. <http://www.webofcreation.org>

## **Helping the Cause**

If you found this resource helpful please forward comments and suggestions to [photo.pastor1965@gmail.com](mailto:photo.pastor1965@gmail.com). To help assure that resources might be developed for year C, please consider a free will offering to help the cause. Make checks payable to “First Lutheran Church” and put “Season of Creation Retreat” in the memo line. Mail them to First Lutheran Church, 240 Hardanger Gate, Lee, IL 60530.