

The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew

OUR LITURGY UNFOLDED: THE SEASON OF CREATION OCTOBER 10th TO NOVEMBER 21st

Just what IS the Season of Creation? Are we the only place that celebrates this season?

We have been celebrating the Season of Creation for 24 years! If you do a Google search, you will see that many parishes throughout the world celebrate the season of creation in one of several formats and at various times during the Church Year. Our Season of Creation helps us focus on restoring our unity with God and with each other. It is a vision of human beings of all races, backgrounds and walks of life in local communities and among the nations of the earth, living together in love and peace with justice for all. Canon Casson reminded us that “As disciples of Christ, we are called through our Baptismal Covenant, to be instruments for the healing of our broken world. This work of healing begins with our own personal selves, and extends into our homes, neighborhoods, communities and into the whole world. During the Season of Creation, we explore some aspect of life on this planet as it currently is, present a vision of that aspect of life when it is healed, and explore ways that we as individual Christians and as a congregation may be God’s hands for reconciliation; building on our own new commitments to personal prayer and work in some concrete way for the healing of the planet and its peoples.” During the Season of Creation, much of the text in our liturgies is contemporary and reflective of SsAM’s view on the use of inclusive (or expansive) language. You will also notice that the readings are from many different sources including the Bible and many contemporary writers.

October 10	In the Beginning	David Christopher
October 17	Our Living Planet	Brighton Kaoma, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network
October 24	Our Common Humanity	Rabbi Douglas Krantz, SsAM Rabbi-in-Residence
October 31	Our World at Peace	The Hon. Lisa Blunt Rochester Member of Congress, Delaware (invited)
November 1	The Saints Among Us	The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown Bishop, Episcopal Church in Delaware
November 18	Our Role as Stewards	Saundra Ross Johnson, Sr. Warden
November 21	The Reign of Christ	The Rev. Canon Lloyd S. Casson



We start with “In the beginning” when all was a void, so you will notice how stark the sanctuary

is. There are no altar flowers and the participants are dressed in black cassocks. Our intention is to embrace the theory of evolution as observable, scientific fact, while at the same time embracing the faith that a loving personal God is the instigator and at the center of an ongoing creative process who actively interacts within human history.

You will notice a shift in week 2 of the Season which shows Mother Earth as a tropical garden as we celebrate and embrace the whole of God's creation and the bible's vision of the earth in which all of God's creatures - human and other forms - live out our destinies in a peaceful and harmonious environment, sharing equitably the rich and sustaining resources of the planet. Our Globe banner is prominently featured in the sanctuary.



Week 3 considers The Human Family at a time when our planet is smothering under a pall of death-war, hatred, violence and murder, abuse, greed, and injustice. In the face of this, we are reminded that we need to hear again the Word of God proclaiming the goodness of creation. You will notice our SsAM banner, which was designed and constructed for our 10th anniversary in 2006.

Week 4 focuses on world peace and our need to experience the healing and reconciling power of God through Jesus Christ and to be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, moving us to accept our roles as peacemakers in God's creation. The origami cranes made by members of the congregation are hung above the chancel as a symbol of peace and the peace doves.

Week 5 celebrates All Saints Day when we turn our attention to the "saints among us" beginning with a grand procession of images of many well known - and some not so well known - saints. Our *Weekly Vision* includes our list of memorials provided by you as you remember the saints in your lives.

On the Sixth Sunday-Stewardship Sunday- we seek the commitment of our members to contribute our personal finances, prayers and energy for our shared ministries of worship, education, and service toward healing the division and brokenness in ourselves, our local communities and in the world.

On the Seventh and final Sunday, the Feast of the Reign of Christ (traditionally known as Christ the King Sunday), we praise the Cosmic Christ "through whom God was pleased to reconcile to God's self all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."

The Season of Creation

VOLUNTARY

GREETING

INTROIT (example from Week 1)

In the beginning, the word was,
was with God, was God.
Through him all things came to be,
without him was nothing.
In him was life, lighting every life,
a light dark could not swallow.
He came: The world he made did not know him,
his homeland refused him;
But all who received him
he empowered as children of God.
The word came flesh, and lived with us,
and we have seen the glory
Of the Son himself, coming from the Father,
full of unending love.
As the procession enters the church, all who are able,
stand.

PROCESSIONAL

SsAM Drumming Circle

The earth belongs to God and all that is in it.
The world and all who dwell therein.
Let everything that has breath praise God.
Hallelujah!

Quiet and individual prayer helps us to prepare. Our service begins in a familiar manner with an organ voluntary and greeting by a member of the congregation. From this point on during the Season of Creation we often will move away from the familiar. For example, on the first Sunday, we sit during the Introit as powerful words are sung by the choir. The processional begins with haunting rhythms by our Drumming Circle followed by the opening dialogue of praise that reflects the Season. On other Sundays, expect to sing a hymn that reflects the theme or hear more from the Drumming Circle.

On the fifth Sunday, we begin with a **Litany of Saints** instead of a processional hymn:

One: Adam and Eve, from whom we spring;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Abraham, Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel and Leah; forbears of our faith;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ruth; Isaiah, Jeremiah; Amos, Hosea; Judges, Prophets and sages of old;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: John the Baptizer, forerunner of Christ;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Andrew and Matthew, patrons of this parish, Mary Magdalen, Joanna, and all the disciples and Apostles of the Lord;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Stephen, first martyr, stoned in Jerusalem;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Columba of Iona, bearer of the good news to Celtic Britain;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Francis and Clare of Assisi, servants of the poor, and of all creatures;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Martin Luther King, Jr, of Georgia, drum major for freedom;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Mother Teresa of Calcutta, guardian of the unwanted;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Gertrude Stein of Auschwitz, pillar of strength;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Janini Luwum of Uganda, prophets for justice;

All: Stand here beside us!

One: Kateri Tekwakwitha, angel of peace among the Iroquois;

All: Stand here beside us!

COLLECT FOR PURITY (all in unison)

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

KYRIE ELEISON

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

FIRST READING

PSALM

SECOND

GRADUAL HYMN

THE HOLY GOSPEL

GRADUAL HYMN (continued)

SERMON

The **Collect for Purity**, based on Psalm 51, prepares us for entering the presence of God and is quite familiar. This ancient prayer, dating from 804 AD, sets the tone as we pray to God for what we do and our power and ability to do it. **AMEN** is an ancient word which means “so be it.”

You will note that during the Season of Creation, we do not sing the Gloria (an ancient song of praise), but include an equally ancient **Kyrie Eleison**, in which we ask for God’s mercy.

The biblical roots of the Kyrie Eleison first appeared in 1 Chronicles 16:34, ...give thanks to the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endures for ever...

The prayer is simultaneously a petition and a prayer of thanksgiving; an acknowledgment of what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will continue to do.

The **Salutation** (the Lord be with you) is based on the greeting of Boaz and the response of his reapers (Ruth 2:4).

The **Collect**, which collects our thoughts, reflects the theme of the day, such as: *Loving Creator, God, out of your womb has gushed forth the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The **readings** during the Season of Creation are drawn from many sources. You will hear scripture from the Bible such as the well known Creation Story in Genesis; from religious leaders including St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis; from Verna Dozier and Mary Oliver. You will notice a request for silent meditation after the readings, the sermon and the creed or affirmation. This is time for you to reflect and pray about what you have heard.

Between the readings and the Gospel, we sing a **Gradual Hymn**, which is used to accompany and highlight the Gospel reading. As in the other church seasons, we have a **Gospel Procession**, in which we enact the coming of the Good News to the midst of the people. We stand, as we are able, and face the Celebrant who is proclaiming the **Gospel** as an indication of the importance we place on Jesus’ words and actions.

During the Season of Creation, our preacher, often a lay person who is an activist, shares their thoughts about the theme of the day and being a steward of the earth and its people during the **Sermon**.

THE CREED or LITURGICAL AFFIRMATION

THREE CHRISTIAN VOWS OF REFUGE

I take refuge in God,
compassionate and merciful,
Source of all that was, and is, and will be,
Whose name is beyond naming,
Who yet is so present with us
That we call out to the One whose offspring we are
in names of affection,
The names we give our parents.
I take refuge in Jesus Christ,
compassionate and merciful,
In whom we have known God's word and wisdom,
Present and incarnate.
In Jesus, who comes among us as attentive as a servant,
Whose mindfulness heals,
Whose teaching is the way of life,
Who welcomes us to eat and drink with him
And calls us brothers and sisters.
His compassion is our refuge,
Even his compassion in death.
For we remember:
Under imperial authority
In a captured province
He suffered humiliation and agony
And death on the cross.
That cross has become our sign,
For his death was not the end,
But a new mark of his healing Grace.
Death could not keep him from us,
His compassion and his teaching
Have no boundaries.
In Him we find ourselves alive.
He is our refuge for all time.
I take refuge in the Holy Spirit,
compassionate and merciful;
Who is present in the source of all our being,
In Jesus the Christ, the incarnation of God's mercy,
And in the community of all who at table
Together are the Body of Christ,
Where God's mercy and compassion reign,
Where the way of life is practiced,
And Presence and the present are one.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

During the Season of Creation, we vary the source of our statement of belief such as this affirmation by The Rev. Canon Mark Harris of St. Peter's, Lewes, Delaware.

Sometimes we will use the familiar Liturgical Affirmation from the New Zealand Prayer Book ("You, O God are supreme and holy, You create our world and give us life...") or the Baptismal Covenant (Do you believe in God the Father? R: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth...)

In the **Prayers of the People**, we pray together for the Church, world leaders, ourselves, the ill and the departed. Instead of basing the prayers in the lectionary as we do in other seasons, the prayers focus on the themes of the Season of Creation. The Prayers also provide time for you to add your own prayers either silently or aloud.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Let us confess our sins to God.

God of mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PEACE

THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY

ANTHEM

HYMN

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues: O Fathomless Source, out of you springs forth the Universe in its ever flowing vastness: We render to you infinite thanks and praise for our Mother, the Earth. For sky, mountains and hills and all that grows and roams upon them and flies above them; for oceans, seas and streams and all that moves within them; and for humankind, giving us life and breath, with the eyes to behold your loving hand at work in all of creation. All that you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and give voice to all creation as we shout with joy;

During the Season of Creation, we kneel and pray the Confession in which we ask God's forgiveness for things done and left undone. This is followed by the Absolution (by the Celebrant) which is a declaration of our forgiveness.

The announcements are not officially part of the liturgy, but are offered with information about how we can live active lives of faith through the many ministries at SsAM.

STEWARDSHIP (PLEDGE) SUNDAY

On this Sunday, we all say the prayer "Act of Commitment" and then turn in our completed pledge cards for the upcoming year.

ACT OF COMMITMENT

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us we pray, as you will, and always to your honor and glory, and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

The **Sursum corda** (The Lord be with you) is an exchange between the Celebrant and the people and echoes ancient Jewish prayers.

The Great Thanksgiving, a prayer that recalls God's creative and redemptive acts culminating in Jesus' death and resurrection, includes the Words of Institution which are a mixture of the various New Testament accounts of the Last Supper.

The congregation shares in the songs of the angels and the whole company of heaven during the **Sanctus**. It is similar to the song sung by the creatures who surround the heavenly throne in Revelation (4:8). There is a solemn bow made by the Celebrant and Eucharistic Ministers/Liturgical Assistant.

SANCTUS

The Celebrant continues:

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all. Your Word has never been silent: Though we turned against you and one another, and abused your creation, you did not abandon us. Of your grace, you came as one of us in Jesus.

Through Jesus, your Christ, you have freed us from sin, bringing us into your life, reconciling us to you, and restoring us to the glory you intend for us. We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said; "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me." And so, remembering now Christ's suffering and death, resurrection and ascension, and awaiting Christ's coming in glory, we present to you these gifts of bread and wine, which your earth has formed and human hands have made. *Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon them*, that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Giver of Life, draw us all together in this sacrament, making us bearers of your justice and peace among the peoples of the earth, and the faithful conscience of your whole creation. In the fullness of time gather us with all who have found favor with you in ages past, into the joy of our true eternal home. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Celebrant and Congregation:

Blessed are you now and for ever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (contemporary)

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

FRACTION ANTHEM

COMMUNION HYMNS

SENDING FORTH OF THE EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

POST COMMUNION PRAYER (*said by all*)

BLESSING

The act of recalling Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension is called **anamnesis** (a remembering). To remember is to make Jesus' offering real and present today.

The **epiclesis** is the conclusion of consecration when the Holy Spirit's sanctifying presence is invoked – changing the bread and wine into sacramental food and us into faithful participants. You will notice that the Celebrant and Eucharist Ministers/Liturgical Assistant make the sign of the cross at this part of The Great Thanksgiving.

The Lord's Prayer, a prayer of community, is the only recorded prayer Jesus taught his disciples. Based on Matthew 6:9-13, it brings us back to the basics.

The Breaking of the Bread (fraction) signifies Jesus' body broken on the cross.

The Gifts of God for the People of God - is an invitation and indication to come forward to receive Holy Communion.

The **Communion Hymns** reflect our coming together as a community and to join in one Spirit, one Body in Christ.

After communion, the **Eucharistic Visitors** come forward to receive the Consecrated Bread and Wine to take to members unable to attend the liturgy. Since they cannot come to church, we take church to them.

The post communion prayer is not only a thanksgiving for making us part of Christ's body and feeding us, but also proclaims our readiness to go out into the world to love and to serve.

The **Blessing** has been a part of the service since the 4th century and takes different forms, depending on the church season.

The Celebrant **dismisses** us, sending us out to the world to do the work we are called to do.

