

## THE SEASON OF CREATION

A system of scripture readings proposed for ecumenical use  
[revision date: June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022]

The Season of Creation is an annual celebration of prayer and action to protect creation. September 1st was proclaimed as a day of prayer for creation (World Day of Prayer for Creation, or Creation Day) by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Eastern Orthodox churches in 1989, and it was embraced by the other major Christian European churches in 2001, and by Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church in 2015. Many Christian churches started celebrating the “Season of Creation” (also known as Creation Time) between that date and October 4th, which is the date of the feast many Western traditions observe for St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis is widely associated with nature, and for Catholics and many Anglicans is the patron saint of those who promote Creation care. Liturgical celebration of a Season of Creation need not be restricted to those dates, of course. Some churches find October to be a better month, while yet others find the planting season in the spring to be more appropriate where they live, thus the tradition of Rogation Days, practiced in the church as early as the fifth century. Whenever you celebrate it, there are many resources on various church websites. A package provided by the Uniting Church in Australia has been found helpful by some, though some of its segments are too location specific to be widely applicable around the world, and some important scripture passages are not included in it.

The following cycle of Scripture readings for a five week Season of Creation has been tested out by Rev. Dr. Ian Ritchie at Trinity Parish in the Anglican Diocese of Ontario,

now for more than four years. The gospel passages suggested continue the practice found in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) of using primarily Matthew’s gospel in year A, Mark’s gospel in year B, and Luke’s gospel in year C, while John’s gospel is used at pivotal times of the year, especially Christmas, Easter, and other Holy days.

It is hoped that this set of readings, by increasing the number and diversity of passages from the Holy Scriptures church goers will hear, will expand the church’s heed for God’s Word written on themes that are underrepresented in the RCL, yet remain foundational to our faith. At the same time, we hope that those preachers who desire to celebrate a Season of Creation yet feel uncomfortable preaching it based on exegesis of the RCL passages for September will find themselves liberated to do honest exegesis of the Biblical text in their sermon preparation for this season.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

Rev. Dr. Ian Ritchie,

Note: An \* indicates these verse(s) appear nowhere in the 3 yr. cycle of the RCL.

The † symbol indicates these verses do not occur anywhere in the 3 year *Season of Creation* cycle provided by the Uniting Church in Australia.

## SEASON OF CREATION YEAR A

[The following schedule was used at Trinity Parish in 2020]

DATE	OT	PSALM	Epistle	Gospel
<b>CREATION 1</b>	<b>Job 38:1-18</b> (God answered Job out of the whirlwind.)	<b>Psalm 19</b> (BAS pg. 725)	<b>Romans 1:16-25</b>	<b>Matthew 4:1-11</b>
<b>CREATION 2</b> <i>C.P. #662 The Trees of the Field</i>	<b>Is. 55:6-13:</b> “For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the <b>trees</b> of the fields shall clap their hands.”	<b>Psalm 150</b> (BAS pg. 909)	<b>Romans 8:18-27</b> “...For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;...”	<b>Matthew 5:13-20</b> “You are the salt of the earth...I came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.”
<b>CREATION 3</b> Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hosea 2:18-20</b> (God’s covenant with the creatures)	<b>Psalm 104:1-13</b> (BAS pg. 843)	<b>Romans 13:8-14</b> “Love fulfills the Law”	<b>Matthew 6:25-33</b>
<b>CREATION 4</b> Sept. 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hosea 4:1-3</b> therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field...even the fish of the sea are dying.”	<b>Psalm 104:25-37</b> BAS translation of vs.27 is idiosyncratic, and is not supported by the grammar of the original Hebrew. Read from NRSV, ESV or NIV, or any other Bible.	<b>Colossians 1:15-20</b> † The great Christological hymn, probably one of the earliest hymns of the church.	<b>Matthew 24:45-51</b> (the parable of the faithful and wise steward).
<b>CREATION 5</b> Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup> (St. Francis of Assisi)	<b>Job 12:7-10</b> But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.	<b>Psalm 148</b> (BAS pg. 907)	<b>1 John 3:14-18</b> Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.	<b>Matthew 18:1-4</b> Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
<b>CREATION 6</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b> (cf.. BAS pg. 396)	<b>Joel 2:21-27</b> <sup>22</sup> Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit;	<b>Psalm 126</b> (BAS pg. 885)	<b>1 Timothy 2:1-7</b>	<b>Luke 17:11-19</b> (The ten lepers)

## SEASON OF CREATION YEAR B

(Used at Trinity Parish in year B 2018, 2021)

<b>CREATION 1</b>	<b>Genesis 1:1-25</b>	<b>Psalm 50: 1-11</b>	<b>Hebrews 1:1-4</b>	<b>John 1:1-14</b>
<b>CREATION 2</b>	<b>Genesis 1:26 - 2:9</b> (2:10-2:14), <b>2:15</b>	<b>Psalm 8: 1-9</b> “what is man that thou art mindful of him?”	<b>Romans 14:12-22</b> ...the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.	<b>Mark 1:9-13:</b> Jesus in the wilderness “with the wild animals”.
<b>CREATION 3</b>	<b>Genesis 6:11-22</b> God tells Noah to build an ark.	<b>Psalm 36:1-12</b> Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals. (vs. 6)	<b>Colossians 1:15-20 †</b> vs. 17: “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together...	<b>Mark 7:14-23</b> nothing external can defile a person, only thoughts of the heart; murder, etc.
<b>CREATION 4</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:1-10 †</b> “The Peaceable Kingdom”, this Messianic passage has similar content to the Hosea 2 covenant with the creatures. The Hebrew of vs. 3’s “He shall <i>smell</i> in the fear the Lord” suggests a necessary discernment.	<b>Psalm 65:1-11</b> You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.	<b>2 Cor 9:10-15</b> He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness... <b>OR 2 Cor. 2:14-17</b> “Christ through us spreads the <i>fragrance</i> of the knowledge of him everywhere...” <i>can expand on Is. 11:3</i>	<b>Mark 8:1-13</b> The feeding of the four thousand; but, the Pharisees are angered by it.
<b>CREATION 5</b>	<b>2 Kings 20:12-21 * †</b> Hezekiah felt relief that the ruin the prophet foretold would not happen in his day, a common attitude up to the present day, hindering better Creation care.	<b>Psalm 51: 1-12</b> create in me a clean heart O God...	<b>Eph. 5:15-21</b> “making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.” –v.16 Note the sense of urgency here.	<b>Mark 4:21-25</b> “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand?”

## SEASON OF CREATION YEAR C

(used at Trinity Parish in year C 2019) **THEME: WISDOM.** A subtheme is the importance of trees.

<b>CREATION 1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Job 38:1-18</b></p> <p>God answered Job out of the whirlwind: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”</p> <p><i>(verses 12-18* are not in RCL).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prov. 3:13-21*</b></p> <p>The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; 21 My son, do not lose sight of these—keep sound wisdom and discretion,</p> <p><i>[Liturgists may want to format this as a Canticle for responsive reading.]</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1 Cor. 2:1-10</b></p> <p>“And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ... None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— [cf. RCL Epiphany 5 yr. A]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Luke 7:24-35*</b></p> <p>33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”</p> <p><b>Or: Luke 8:22-25*</b> Jesus calms the storm: “who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”</p>
<b>CREATION 2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1 Kings 4:29-34 *†</b></p> <p>And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psa. 51:1-10</b></p> <p>Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Col. 2:1-9*</b></p> <p>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ...Therefore, as you received</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Luke 11:29-32*</b></p> <p>When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than</p>

	<p>reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.</p> <p>[Placed here this passage informs the Gospel passage.]</p>		<p>Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,  <i>[cf. RCL yr. C after Pentecost Proper 12 (17) which includes only verses 6-15]</i></p>	<p>Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.</p>
<p><b>CREATION</b> <b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Deut. 20:19-20, 22:6-8*</b> “When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from 2 them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you? 20 Only the trees that you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.” <b>22:6-8*</b> 6 “If you come across a bird’s nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. You shall let the mother go, but the</p>	<p><b>Psa. 104:13-24*</b> The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees.</p>	<p><b>Rev. 12:13-17</b> And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. <sup>15</sup> The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had</p>	<p><b>Luke 12:54-56</b> He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?  <i>[cf. RCL yr. C Season after Pentecost Proper 15 (20)]</i></p>

	<p>young you may take for yourself, that it may go well with you, and that you may live long. 8 When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet (NLT: “railing”) for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it.”</p> <p><i>(That this is included in a criminal code speaks of responsibility of rulers to intervene to make sure that property owners take seriously their responsibility for the life of others: the “duty of care.”)</i></p>		<p>poured from his mouth. <sup>17</sup> Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>[Note that the earth itself comes to the aid of the woman here.]</i></p>	
<p><b>CREATION</b> <b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Lev. 19:23-25*</b></p> <p>“When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, then you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it must not be eaten. And in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. But in the fifth year you may eat of its fruit, to increase its yield for you: I am the LORD your God.”</p> <p><i>[informing the Gospel passage.]</i></p>	<p><b>Psa. 96:1-13</b></p> <p>“12 let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy”...</p>	<p><b>Revelation 18:1-11*</b></p> <p>“fallen, fallen is Babylon the great”: the destruction of the cargoes of the merchants of Babylon the Great, including the end of their trade in slaves.</p>	<p><b>Luke 13:1-9</b></p> <p>And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’</p> <p><i>[cf. RCL yr. C Lent 3] NB: OT Lev. 19:23 &amp; Lev. 25:21 refers to ban on eating young fruit in the first three years.</i></p>
<p><b>CREATION</b> <b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Ezek. 47:7-12*</b></p> <p><sup>12</sup>And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their</p>	<p><b>Psa. 147:1-11*</b></p> <p><sup>4</sup>He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. ....</p> <p>... He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the</p>	<p><b>Revelation 22:1-5</b></p> <p>“<sup>2</sup>The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”</p> <p><i>[also RCL yr. C Easter 6]</i></p>	<p><b>Luke 21:29-33</b></p> <p>And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know</p>

	fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”	hills. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.  <i>OR:</i> Canticle 6 in BAS, pg. 78 (=Isaiah 55:6-11 but expand it to include verses 12 and 13)		that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away....” <i>(cf. RCL yr. C Advent 1)</i>
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**Supplementary Old Testament Passages** (suitable for insertion in any year)

Is. 55:6-13 “12 For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” Canticle 6 in BAS, pg. 78 goes only to verse 11 (Is. 55:10-13 in RCL yr. A after Pentecost proper 10 (15), yr. C Epiphany 8 & after Pentecost Proper 3 (8)] Leviticus 25:1-23\* The year of the Jubilee. Exodus 23:5-10\* “If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him. You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard,