

NWSWI Season of Creation Resources

Notes: All prayers and liturgies are from the ELW unless otherwise noted. Everything else can be used, copy/pasted, or adapted without worrying about attribution in order to make using these resources easier for you. And if you are looking at all of this, and it seems overwhelming, simply check out the liturgies and adapt those as needed.

Visual and Aesthetic Suggestions

- **Easy:** add some plants, like potted ferns. Got a shoe-string budget? Someone in your congregation *probably* has a potted plant, just ask in the announcements if you can borrow it. Let them take it home between services if you don't think you can keep it alive, or get four different people to bring four different plants.
- **Medium:** worship outside – and talk about it! This might be what you're doing now anyway, but it can be tricky to bring sound equipment and tables out. Keep it simple – you don't need paraments for this. Make sure to mention that you're worshipping in God's living sanctuary. Make time for silence so everyone notices the birds, insects, and wind worshipping too.
- **Hard:** Start a community garden in your building and bring the harvest up during the offering.
- **Expert Level:** plant a living wall in your sanctuary so that all year around you can remember that God's saving love is for non-human life too. See a sample description at this URL: <https://www.hgtv.ca/diy/photos/diy-how-to-make-your-own-living-wall-1927688/> Get your gardeners, crafters, or carpenters in the congregation involved. Also, make sure you enlist a few people to help water it.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

- **Easy:** use this liturgy from the ELW. When you pour the water, try to use a lot and pour from as high as possible so everyone gets the visual and the sound.

L: Blessed be the ☩ holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and salvation.

All: Amen

L: 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.

Begin pouring water into the font

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth. Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters: Noah and the animals* survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well. The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock. Naaman washes his leprosy away, and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.

End pouring, set pitcher down

At this font, holy God, we pray: Praise to you for the water of baptism and for the Word that saves us in this water. Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation. Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears. Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us. Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen

* It's good to acknowledge that God saved the animals too, not just Noah and his family. You can also check out these other options at the ELCA website:

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Water Memorial Worship Resources.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Water_Memorial_Worship_Resources.pdf)

- **Medium:** look up your watershed to specifically pray for where your water comes from and how it needs healing: <https://mywaterway.epa.gov/>
- **Hard:** collect water from different sources and specifically mention where it's from and how it reminds us of God's love. EX: use rain water so that every time it rains we remember God's promises, or river water so we remember how God's love flows through us, or ocean water to remember the vastness of God's love.
- Also: If you've been waiting for the perfect time to break out the aspergillum, this is it!!

SERMON

- **Easy:** Incorporate a story about nature into your sermon based on the texts from the RCL.
- **Medium:** Use the children's sermon to explicitly talk about our call to care for Creation
- **Hard:** Use the themes and texts provided from the Season of Creation for four weeks [see below]. A helpful resource if you go this route is the book *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*, edited by Norman C. Habel, David Rhoads, and H. Paul Santmire.

Year A: The Spirit Series (Matthew)

Forest Sunday	Land Sunday	Wilderness Sunday	River Sunday
Genesis 2:4b-22	Genesis 3:14-19; 4:8-16	Joel 1:8-10, 17-20	Genesis 8:20-22; 9:12-17
Psalms 139:13-16	Psalms 139:7-12	Psalms 18:6-19	Psalms 104:27-33
Acts 17:22-28	Romans 5:12-17	Romans 8:18-27	Revelation 22:1-5
John 3:1-16	Matthew 12:38-40	Matthew 3:13 – 4:2 or Mark 1:9-13	Matthew 28:1-10

Year B: The Word Series (Mark)

Earth Sunday	Humanity Sunday	Sky Sunday	Mountain Sunday
Genesis 1:1-25	Genesis 1:26-28	Jeremiah 4:23-28	Isaiah 65:17-25
Psalms 33:1-9	Psalms 8	Psalms 19:1-6	Psalms 48:1-11
Romans 1:18-23	Philippians 2:1-8	Philippians 2:14-18	Romans 8:28-39
John 1:1-14	Mark 10:41-45	Mark 15:33-39	Mark 16:14-18

Year C: The Wisdom Series (Luke)

Ocean Sunday	Fauna Sunday	Storm Sunday	Cosmos Sunday
Job 38:1-18	Job 39:1-8, 26-30	Job 28:20-27	Proverbs 8:22-31
Psalms 104:1-9	Psalms 104:14-23	Psalms 29	Psalms 148
Ephesians 1:3-10	1 Corinthians 1:10-23	1 Corinthians 1:21-31	Colossians 1:15-20
Luke 5: 1-11	Luke 12:22-31	Luke 8:22-25	John 6:41-51

COMMUNION

- Easy:** use this communion setting from the ELW. Feel free to shorten it depending on your congregation's tolerance for long communion liturgies:
 L: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal: you we praise and glorify, you we worship and adore. You formed the earth from chaos; you encircled the globe with air; you created fire for warmth and light; you nourish the lands with water.
 You molded us in your image, and with mercy higher than the mountains, with grace deeper than the seas, you blessed the Israelites and cherished them as your own.
 That also we, estranged and dying, might be adopted to live in your Spirit, you called to us through the life and death of Jesus.
 In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.
 Together as the body of Christ, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes:
All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.
 L: With this bread and cup we remember your Son, the first-born of your new creation. We remember his life lived for others, and his death and resurrection, which renews the face of the earth. We await his coming, when, with the world made perfect through your wisdom, all our sins and sorrows will be no more.
All: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

L: Holy God, holy and merciful one, holy and compassionate, send upon us and this meal your Holy Spirit, whose breath revives us for life, whose fire rouses us to love. Enfold in your arms all who share this holy food. Nurture in us the fruits of the Spirit, that we may be a living tree, sharing your bounty with all the world.

All: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Holy and benevolent God, receive our praise and petitions, as Jesus received the cry of the needy, and fill us with your blessing, until, needy no longer and bound to you in love, we feast forever in the triumph of the Lamb: through whom all glory and honor is yours, O God, O Living One, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, now and forever.

All: Amen.¹

- **Medium:** Go as natural as you can for all four weeks – eliminate plastic cups in favor of glass or intinction, use real home-baked bread instead of wafers from a plastic sleeve, and maybe even track down some organic wine.
- **Hard:** Use a local wine and find someone willing to use this vegan bread recipe: <https://gfcommunionbread.wordpress.com/?fbclid=IwAR1Dq-KWzDQHvA57ps9dzO7OGGe3SpdwT4a6iAdTQbHQ3HFWL9z8nmTCvnI> . And don't stop after the four weeks of the Season of Creation are over! Not sure what local wine would be best for communion? Have a wine tasting for congregational leaders! Choose different varieties for the changing church season.

HYMNS

- **Easy:** Buy All Creation Sings! So many wonderful creation songs! But that's also expensive, so use the hymns depending on what hymnal your congregation is using or what style of worship you have. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list.

LBW	ELW	Contemporary
527 All Creatures of our God and King	835 All Creatures worship God most high	
561 For the beauty of the earth	830 How marvelous God's greatness	God of all Creation – Hillsong
563 For the fruit of all creation	561 Joyous light of heavenly glory	Indescribable – Chris Tomlin
551 Joyful joyful we adore thee	566 Morning has broken	God of Wonders – Third Day
557 Let All things now living	878 Soli deo gloria	All Things New – Steven Curtis Chapman

¹ ELCA and ELCC, *ELW:LDE*, 200-201.

554 This is my father's world	771 God who stretched the spangled heavens	Do Not Worry – Ellie Holcomb
	412 Come join the dance of Trinity	Additional Contemporary Worship songs: https://renewourworld.net/2018/08/songs-of-creation/ ; https://www.worshiptogether.com/lists/gods-creation/
WOV 684 Spirit of Gentleness	876 Let the whole creation cry	
WOV 767-770	730-740	

EXTRA CREDIT

- Easy:** Invite your congregation to take the following steps in your newsletter, Facebook posts, or website:

Week 1: Reduce the amount of waste you throw away each day. Bring a reusable bag to the grocery store and save your plastic produce bags to reuse on future visits. Ever thought about composting? This might be the time to start collecting your food scraps to help with your garden or yard.

Week 2: Give stuff a second life. Consider buying clothes, furniture, shoes, and books from thrift stores or online forums like Facebook marketplace or Craigslist. Also try to buy fewer things like trinkets or gag gifts that you know will quickly be thrown away. When things break, see if you can repair them or 'up-cycle' them before throwing them away.

Week 3: Lower your carbon footprint. Unplug appliances you aren't using, combine trips or carpool to use less gas, turn the thermostat up in summer and down in winter, and buy fewer things made of plastic. This week you could also try going one day without eating meat.

Week 4: Be a climate advocate. There are so many ways to help show God's love to the planet! Remind your friends and family to recycle, write to legislators to ask them to oppose new fossil fuel projects, post on social media about caring for the earth, and talk to institutions that you're part of (like schools or work) about how to be more sustainable.
- Medium:** Bookend the Season of Creation with a God's Work: Our Hands project at the beginning, like clean-up of a beach, park, or other natural area on one end and a blessing of the animals on the end! You can either incorporate the blessing of the animals into the normal service or you can do a short one following the service using the liturgy at the end. Or do both, with the second one away from the church for anyone in the community. This second blessing would be ideal for ecumenical participation.

- **Hard:** Go to www.seasonofcreation.com and click on the Practical Earth Ministry Ideas to find weekly ideas that fit within the theme.

Other Creation Care and Worship Resources:

- www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org
- www.seasonofcreation.com
- www.seasonofcreation.org
- www.letallcreationpraise.org