

Readings for the Feast of God the Creator

6th September 2026

First Reading: Genesis 2:4b-25

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground — then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Second Reading: Acts 17:22a,24-28

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’”

Gospel: St John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

A Reflection for the Feast of God the Creator

from Rev'd David Higgon

When Bishop Mark visited the Northwest Charge a few weeks ago, he spoke warmly of his visit to Istanbul and of his meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew of Constantinople, who invited all churches to join the Eastern Orthodox church in celebrating a feast of creation. Bishop Mark very much supports the institution of what is a new feast for us in our liturgical calendar, the feast of God the Creator that we celebrate today

At its core, the Feast commemorates God's act of creation of heaven and earth, and of all that is seen and unseen. In fact, this is not a new feast, since the 5th century, this feast has been celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox church as a feast at the beginning of the Eastern Orthodox liturgical calendar. The Feast celebrates the mystery that all things were brought into existence not from pre-existent matter, but solely through the free and sovereign act of God. All created reality is therefore radically contingent upon the eternal God, the absolute source of being.

God's creative activity is not a one-off act at the beginning of cosmic history. Creation occurs in the beginning before time, so on this Feast Day, we celebrate the creation of time itself. It is worth repeating that God's creative activity is not a one-off action, but a "continuous creation". Creation is ongoing – still today. God continually sustains the whole universe, holding it in being at every moment. Unlike the sculpting of a statue that ends with the sculptor's departure, God's creative causality is akin to the continuous act of a singer whose song exists only as long as the singing continues and endures.

Today, we celebrate the existence of the created order as a continuous gift. God's creative activity is a "creation out of love". God does not create out of necessity. Because "God is love", the world exists as the fruit of divine freedom and generosity, and we celebrate Creation as a revelation of God's loving will, the foundation of the plan of salvation and of the love-driven "New Creation" to follow. We give thanks and praise for the gift of creation, thanking the creator for bringing the world into being. We also give thanks for our very own creation, and for the gift of life itself.

The Feast draws attention to a central tenet of our faith namely, that all things were created through the eternal Word. We commemorate Christ's role in the act of Creation proclaiming that "In the beginning was the Word [and] all things came into being through him." Everything in heaven and on earth was created in him, through him, and for him. So today we contemplate on the role of Christ in the creative act but also Christ's ongoing contribution to the ongoing flourishing of creation, sustaining the whole universe and holding it in being.

As part of our worship today we will affirm our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as we say together the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed is set within the context of the Trinity, and it presents the doctrine of Creation as a unifying thread in which the three divine persons act inseparably in the creative work. We proclaim our faith in "the Father

almighty, maker of heaven and earth”, in Christ “through [whom] all things were made”, and in the Holy Spirit, “the giver of life”. That all creatures proceeding from the Father and returning to the Father through Christ in the power of the Spirit illuminates the Trinitarian structure of creation. The relational communion of the divine persons is reflected in the interdependence of all beings. In short, the Feast of Creation uplifts the Trinitarian breadth of the mystery of Creation, pondering and celebrating the three persons of the Trinity, the triune God, for making heaven and earth.

A further dimension of the Feast of Creation is its recognition of the created order itself as a sacramental reality that reveals the presence of its Creator. Commemorating God’s creative activity entails acknowledging the created cosmos that flows from it as a sacred gift bound to God by covenant. As creatures embedded in time and space, we enter the mystery of creation through the materiality of the world around us, even if God is transcendent and distinct.

It was a deep concern for the desecration of this gift that was the driver for the Eastern Orthodox church to invite all churches to join them in celebrating this feast of creation. Just as an artwork reveals something about the artist who made it, “the greatness and beauty of created things” are revelatory of their Creator. The Feast is an opportunity to “consider the wondrous works of God” in creation, leading our gaze to the Artist. The created order is filled with God’s presence. There is a profound intimacy between Creator and creatures. God is present in all creation. Despite the transcendent nature of the Almighty, everything and everywhere is full of God’s immanent presence, which fills the world, and is all-embracing. This radiant presence has a glorious quality, as expressed in the Sanctus sung in our Eucharistic Prayer “Heaven and earth are full of your glory!”

The created order is loved by God. This love is not merely the appreciation of an Artist pleased by a “very good” artwork, but that of a Lover who is affectionately bound to the “otherness” of created beings. The world was created out of love and continues to be loved intensely by God, caring and providing for it ;a love that extends to the whole of creation – an “everlasting covenant between God and every living creature”

The created order is to be understood as a gift to be cherished. In Scripture we hear repeatedly that creation belongs to its Creator – “all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours” Therefore, we experience creation as a gift that is not ours. As Saint Paul put it, “The God who made the world... gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.” Indeed, this theme of God’s benevolent giving is a recurring theme, whether it is the gift of life to all living creatures, all things, plants, weather, food, or beyond. All creation is a sacred gift to be cherished and for which we must be grateful.

However, the created order is a desecrated gift, distorted and disfigured by sin. The inauguration of this festival occurs as we face humanity’s greatest moment of ecological peril. In many regions, rather than experiencing creation as a sacred gift saturated with God’s presence, we experience creation as a desecrated wasteland scared by human sin. Biblical prophecies about the Earth’s pollution and destruction are being fulfilled because we have “transgressed laws” and shown “no faithfulness” to the Creator. It is a warning of the consequences that follow when justice is abandoned, truth is distorted and dignity for all living things is denied.

The covenant was broken, so the Earth and the poor now cry out and this Feast is a time to repent for our sinful behaviours and to lament the ecological crisis, especially its devastating impacts in communities of the Global South. The Feast of God the Creator is not only a time of celebration and repentance but it is a time to challenge ourselves

to act, to call on governments to act and for us as communities and individuals to use our creativity to act and to demonstrate our care for the earth and all living things, to show compassion and care for the most vulnerable in our world, especially those devastated by war and those most affected by the global climate crisis.