

Sunday Worship Service – September 20, 2026
Joint Worship – BOL & EUC
Creation in Christ (Sunday)
Season of Creation: *Living Water*

The Gathering

Passing of the Peace

Land Acknowledgement

Welcome Statement

Announcements

Candle Lighting

Introduction to the Season of Creation

Call to Worship

In the beginning, God made the world,
Made it and mothered it, shaped it and fathered it.
Filled it with seed and with signs of fertility,
Filled it with life and with song and variety.
All that is green, blue, deep, and growing,
God's is the hand that created you.
All that is tender, firm, fragrant, and curious.
God's is the hand that created you.
All that crawls, flies, swims, walks, or is motionless,
God's is the hand that created you.
All that speaks, sings, cries, laughs, or keeps silence,
God's is the hand that created you.
The world belongs to God,
The earth and all its people.

Prayer for the Care of Creation

O God, the only source of life and energy and wealth, you have given us a wonderful gift in your creation. Renew our wonder, awaken our concern, and make us better stewards and more careful tenants of the world you lend us as our home. Hear us, O God, our creator and redeemer, in the name of Christ. Amen.

VU #409 Gathering Hymn “Morning Has Broken (ELWB #556)

1. Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

2. Sweet the rain’s new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God’s feet pass.

3. Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God’s recreation of the new day!

Children’s Time – *Blessing of the Backpacks*

Introduction

Blessing of the tags and the students

Prayer for the School Year

Loving God, **you are the God of all neighbors, and you made each of us with tenderness and care. Whether we are learning at school, playing at recess, practicing sports or dance, or creating art or music, may we see the people around us as beloved children of God, and neighbors in your kin-dom. When it is difficult to be kind, when we are annoyed by differences, or confused by others’ choices, may we show patience and grace. Encourage our hearts and minds to be loving to our neighbors. And when we are feeling lonely or disconnected from the neighbors around us, May they show us kindness, so everyone—EVERYONE—feels included and loved. Amen.**

The Word

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 2:4-25

Genesis 2 tells the beginning of the story of God's garden and includes several ambivalent foreshadowings:

- *appreciation of the gold of other lands,*
- *the combination of dust and spirit in the creation of humanity,*
- *the call to the human to “serve and protect” the garden,*
- *the introduction of healthy ecological limits that might be transgressed, and*
- *beautiful partnerships formed between humans and other creatures that are vulnerable to being violated.*

Both profound goodness and fragile mortality are evident in the beginning—and both call for reverent attention today.

The Old Testament reading from Genesis, chapter 2:

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. On the day God made earth and sky—before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because God hadn’t yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being to till the soil, though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land —God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life’s breath into the nostrils. The human came to life. God planted a garden in Eden in the east and put there the human that had been formed. In the fertile land, God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also God grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides into four headwaters. The name of the first river is the Pishon. It flows around the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. That land’s gold is pure, and the land also has sweet-smelling resins and gemstones. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It flows around the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris, flowing east of Assyria; and the name of the fourth river is the Euphrates.

God took the human and settled the human in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it. God commanded the human, “Eat your fill from all of the garden’s trees; but don’t eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day you eat from it, you will die!” Then God said, “It’s

not good that the human is alone. I will make the human a fitting companion.” So God formed from the fertile land all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky and brought them to the human to see what the human would name them. The human gave each living being its name. The human named all the livestock, all the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals.

But none of them proved to be a fitting companion.

So God put the human into a deep and heavy sleep, and God divided the human in two and closed up the flesh over it. With the rib taken from the human, God fashioned a woman and brought her to the human being. The human said, “This one finally is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. Now she will be Woman, and I will be Man, because we are of one flesh.”

This is why people leave their parents and become bonded to one another, and the two become one flesh. Now, the woman and the man were both naked, though they were not ashamed. (TIB)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalms 148:1-14

Praise God from heaven! Praise God on the heights!

Praise God, all of you angels; praise God, all you hosts!

Sun and moon, praise God! All of you bright stars, praise God!

You highest heaven, praise God! Do the same, you waters that are above the sky!

Let all of these praise God’s name because God gave the command and they were created!

God set them in place always and forever. God made a law that will not be broken.

Praise the God from the earth, you sea monsters and all you ocean depths!

Do the same, fire and hail, snow and smoke, stormy wind that does what God says!

Do the same, you mountains, every single hill, fruit trees, and every single cedar!

Do the same, you animals—wild or tame—

you creatures that creep along and you birds that fly!

Do the same, you rulers of the earth, leaders of all nations, all the judges in the world.

Do the same, you who are young, you who are old together, and you who are children!

Let all of these praise God's name because only God's name is high over all.

Only God's majesty is over earth and heaven.

God raised the strength of God's people, the praise of the faithful ones—that's the Israelites, the people dear to God.

Praise God! (CEB)

New Testament Reading: Acts 17:22a, 24-28

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the "unknown god" whom they worship is the true God of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

A reading from the book of Acts, the 17th chapter:

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said,
 "People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way.
 God, who made the world and everything in it, is God of heaven and earth.
 God doesn't live in temples made with human hands. Nor is God served by human hands, as though God needed something, since God is the one who gives life, breath, and everything else. From one person God created every human nation to live on the whole earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. God made the nations so they would seek God, perhaps even reach out to God and find God.
 In fact, God isn't far away from any of us. In God we live, move, and exist.
 As some of your own poets said, 'We are God's offspring.' (CEB)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-5

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

The holy gospel according to John, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light. (CEB)

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

VU #308 Hymn of the Day *"Many and Great, O God"* (ELWB #837)

1. **Many and great, O God, are your works, maker of earth and sky.
Your hands have set the heav'ns with stars;
your fingers spread the mountains and plains.
Lo, at your word the waters were formed; deep seas obey your voice.**
2. **Grant unto us communion with you, O Star-abiding One.
Come unto us and dwell with us;
with you are found the gifts of life.
Bless us with life that has no end, eternal life with you.**

A Contemporary Creed¹

**We believe in God in whom is power and compassion.
We believe in the Creator who gave birth to the universe,
set solar systems dancing in space,
shaped molecules and mountains,
and conceived beauty beyond our imagining.
God's power topples tyrants, and brings down walls of separation;**

¹ From the *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, published by Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK, 2017.

God's love embodies the tenderness
 of a parent, encouraging and caring for each of us.
 We believe in Jesus, born in obscurity in an occupied land;
 a human being, vulnerable to hunger, thirst, persecution and grief.
 Jesus understood the power of love and confronted the powers of evil,
 spoke the truth with courage and clarity,
 forgave his enemies and changed lives.
 In Jesus' living, dying and rising again
 he showed love strong enough to save the world.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit who sustains, comforts and empowers us,
 opens the scriptures, opens our minds,
 and illuminates earth's darkness. Amen.

UCAS & ADPA Sending Forth & Blessing

Prayers of Intercession²

We join with Christians far and near to worship God the Creator, praying for
 the earth and for all in need, responding to each petition with the words
"Your mercy is great." *A brief silence.*

O God of mystery, mercy, and might, for the church we pray: that churches
 around the globe collaborate in care for the earth, and that all people
 nurture a zeal for the wellbeing of creation.

Hear us, O God, source of life: **Your mercy is great.**

For the earth we pray: that this bounteous creation receive continued divine
 blessing, that the air be wholesome, that the waters be plentiful and clean,
 that the land be treasured, and that animals be protected. Grant that what
 on earth has been despoiled will be healed.

Hear us, O God, our creator: **Your mercy is great.**

For the nations we pray: that farmers, herders, foragers, fishers, and grocers
 provide the food humans need, that legislators strive in all things for the

² <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/DayTexts>

common good, and that science and technology lead us toward more responsible ways to live.

Hear us, O God, our stronghold: **Your mercy is great.**

For our country we pray: that national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges be safeguarded, that all natural resources benefit the whole population, and that our children learn respect for nature.

Hear us, O God, our guardian: **Your mercy is great.**

For those in need we pray: that humankind be sheltered from extreme weather, and that all who are sick or suffering receive medical attention and communal support. Hear us, O God, our healer: **Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, our maker and keeper, we commend ourselves and your whole creation, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Meal

Offering Prayer

Gracious and loving God, We thank you for the blessings life.

We bless you for the wonders of the world: for heights of mountains and breadth of prairie, for diversity of peoples and intimacy of families, for the goodness of all you have made.

We bless you for the gift of Jesus Christ, who lived and died, and lives again wherever justice is known, wherever love is found.

We bless you for your life among us forgiving sins, renewing spirits, and refreshing us in the fellowship of your table. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Communion Instructions

Great Thanksgiving

God is with us

And we are with God.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God our Creator.

It is right to offer thanks and praise.

Holy God, Lover of creation, we give you thanks and praise

for in the ocean of your steadfast love you bear us

and place the song of your Spirit in our hearts.

When we turn from your love and defile the earth,

you do not abandon us.

Your Spirit speaks through prophets, sages, and saints in every age,

to confront our sin and reveal the vision of your new creation.

Joining in the song of the universe we proclaim your glory singing:

Holy, Holy, Holy, God, God of power and love

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is our companion Jesus,

Who walks with us the road of our world's suffering

And is known to us in the breaking of bread.

On the night of his arrest Jesus took bread

And having blessed it

Jesus broke the bread

And gave it to his disciples, saying,

"This is my body, given for you".

In the same way Jesus took the wine

And having given thanks for it

Jesus poured it out

And gave the cup to his disciples, saying,

"This cup is the new relationship with God,

Sealed with my blood

Take this and share it.”

Loving God, it is through your goodness that we have
This bread and wine to offer,
Which earth has given and human hands have made.

In the sharing of this bread,
What we do here is to celebrate the life
Jesus has shared among the community through the centuries
And shares among us now.
Made one with Christ
And thus one with each other,
We offer these gifts and ourselves,
A single, holy and living sacrifice,
Now and forever. Amen

Alternate Lord's Prayer³

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Parent of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For the kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Look, the Body of Christ is broken

³ *A New Zealand Prayer Book*: The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia © 1989 William Collins Publishers Ltd.

For the life of the world.

Here is Christ coming to us in bread and in wine.

The Communion

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Communion *(for online worshippers)*

Communion Distribution

VU #291 Communion Hymn “All Things Bright and Beautiful” (WOV 767)

Refrain:

**All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful, in love God made them all.**

- 1. Each little flow'r that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors, God made their tiny wings.**

Refrain

- 2. The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.**

Refrain

- 3. The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden: God made them every one.**

Refrain

- 4. The rocky mountain splendour, the lone wolf's haunting call,
The great lakes and the prairies, the forest in the fall;**

Refrain

- 5. God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God our maker, who has made all things well.**

Refrain

Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion*

God of all creation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,

reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
 Through this meal, may we become Christ's body in the world,
 bearing witness to your love for all creation, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Sending

Blessing⁴

Bless to us O God,
 The sun that is above us,
 The earth that is beneath us,
 The friends who are around us,
 Your image deep within us.
 In the name of + God, our Creator, Jesus, our Healer,
 and the Holy Spirit, our Comforter. Amen

VU #296 Sending Hymn *"This Is God's Wondrous World"*

(ELWB #824 *This Is My Father's World*)

1. This is God's wondrous world, and to my list'ning ears
 all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
 This is God's wondrous world; I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; God's hands the wonders wrought.
2. This is God's wondrous world; the birds their carols raise;
 the morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise.
 This is God's wondrous world; God shines in all that's fair.
 In the rustling grass or mountain pass; God's voice speaks ev'rywhere.
3. This is God's wondrous world; oh, let me ne'er forget
 that, though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
 This is God's wondrous world; why should my heart be sad?
 Let voices sing, let the heavens ring; God reigns, let earth be glad!

Sending

A Go in peace, to love and serve God in word and deed. **Thanks be to God!**

⁴ From the *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, published by Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK, 2017.