



**Green Churches**  
Network



# SEASON OF CREATION 2018

## PRAYER GUIDE

### Description

For the use of organizing Committees for the Season of Creation in faith communities wishing to pray for better care of God's Creation.

[creation.greenchurches.ca](http://creation.greenchurches.ca)

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# September 1<sup>st</sup>

World Day of Prayer for  
the Care of Creation



## Gospel of Matthew (6: 25-33)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

## Prayer for the Season of Creation 2018

“Creator God, in your wisdom you established a delicate ecological balance to see that birds find nourishment and flowers are clothed in beauty. Please give us the courage to dedicate ourselves to taking care of your Creation. We thank you for providing us with all we need. Amen!”

## Brief History

On 1 September 1989, His Holiness Dimitrios 1, Patriarch of Constantinople, decreed the first of September as a day of special reverence and Prayer for the Safeguarding of Creation. The Orthodox Church continues to celebrate this important day, the start of the liturgical year, with the reading of Chapter 1 of Genesis.

Since 2008, the World Council of Churches has encouraged all Christian denominations to observe and celebrate this day. In 2015, Pope Francis announced that the Catholic Church would also mark September 1st as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. It also provides an occasion for Christians from various churches to gather together in prayer for the well-being of the earth, our common home.

## Quote

"The protection of the environment must be a common ecumenical cause. This gesture [praying together] means that we transcend the artificial separation between what is of the world and what is sacred, making all a sacrament of the Kingdom. Recognizing the mark of the divine in all of creation, the image of God in humanity and the stamp of the sacred in nature, moves us to take care of our world. Let's break out of our isolation! Let's pray for the environment! Let's get involved in protecting it! (Bartholomew 1, Ecumenical Patriarch)

## Prayer (St. Basil the Great)

"O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals [and all creatures] to whom you gave the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of humans with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to you in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that all creatures live not for us alone but for themselves and for you, and that they love the sweetness of life."

## Suggestions

- Compose your own prayer for the care of Creation. Share it with others. Send it to the Green Churches Network.
- Take a moment to contemplate God's Creation. Let your wonder at nature's marvels become praise to the Creator.
- Visit an Orthodox church, which surely highlights this day.

# September 2

## Sunday



*Therefore do not worry, saying 'What will we eat?' (Matt. 6:31)*

### Prayer

Sometimes, Lord, I waste the fruits of the earth. Make me more aware of your providence. Help me do better in sharing the riches of the earth with my brothers and sisters in need. Amen.

### Quote

"In the aftermath of the strongest typhoon that ever made landfall (2013), we realized the immense trail of devastation that the storm had left behind. In solidarity with the Filipino people and with many communities around the world dealing with the impacts of climate change, we embarked on a fast for the climate. We continue this fast on the first of each month, in the spirit of solidarity."

From: Naderev "Yeb" Madla Saño, Philippines' Chief Negotiator for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. He started fasting during the Conference and many people joined him.

### Petitions

- ✝ Lord, help us to appreciate the goods of this earth and to give you thanks, rather than to misuse them and make a habit of throwing them out. Lord, hear our prayer.
- ✝ Lord, help us to feed those in need, so they may no longer have to worry about what they will eat tomorrow. Lord, hear our prayer.

### Suggestions

- Take up the practice of home canning (tomatoes, jam, etc.) so that, when winter comes, you won't have to worry about what you will eat.
- Take a second look at what's in your plate. Ask yourself where this week's ingredients come from. Are they local produce, organic, fairtrade?

*"Is not life more than food?" (Matt. 6:25)*

# September 9

Sunday



Credit: Amparo

*"Look at the birds of the air .. your heavenly Father feeds them." (Matt. 6:26)*

## Prayer

We praise you, Father, for the birds that brighten our days with their song; for when ecological balances are respected, you feed them. Amen.

## Quote

"Our creating God is prior to and other than creation, yet intimately involved with it, upholding each thing in its freedom, and all things in relationships of intricate complexity. God is transcendent, while lovingly sustaining each creature; and immanent, while wholly other than creation and not to be confused with it.

We urge individual Christians and churches to be centres of creation's care and renewal, both delighting in creation as God's gift, and enjoying it as God's provision, in ways which sustain and heal the damaged fabric of the creation which God has entrusted to us."

Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation (1994)

## Petitions

- ✝ You love all creatures, Lord, and you provide food for them. Help us to protect the habitats of all species so you may continue to feed them. Lord, hear our prayer.
- ✝ Lord, you tell us that we are of more value than birds, for we are made in the image of God. Give us the wisdom to act in your image by promoting life all around us. Lord, hear our prayer.

## Suggestions

- Learn the songs of five (5) local birds. Your walks outside will never be the same again and you will enjoy even more singing the praises of the Lord together with our feathered friends.

*"Are you not of more value than birds?" (Matt. 6: 26)*

# September 16

Sunday



*“And why do you worry about clothing? (Matt. 6: 28)*

## Prayer

Lord, sometimes I worry too much about my clothes and how I look. Help me to provide clothes for those in need. Amen.

## Quote

“The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world.”

Pope Francis' encyclical: *Laudato Si*, 2015, par. 161

## Petitions

- ✝ Lord, so many people don't have warm clothes: refugees, the homeless, needy children. .. Help us find them adequate clothing so they don't have to worry about staying warm, as you promised. Lord, hear our prayer.
- ✝ Lord, you teach us that our body is more important than clothing. Help us cherish our body as the temple of your Holy Spirit and worthy of respect every day. Lord, hear our prayer.

## Suggestions

- Sort out the superfluous items and clothing at home and donate them to a used clothing store or a bazaar.
- Consider recycling. Post: “Recycle/Compost” on your garbage can this week to make you reflect each time whether you can recycle or compost instead of tossing out.

*“Your body is more important than clothing.” (Matt. 6:25)*

# Septembre 23

## Sunday



Credit: stafichukanatoly

*“Consider the lilies of the field .. even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.”  
(Matt. 6: 28-29)*

### Prayer

Father, you clothe the flowers in beauty! We praise you for this gratuitous spectacle, your artful creation, all around us. Amen.

### Quote

“The destruction of the earth’s environment is the human rights challenge of our time. Over the 25 years that climate change has been on the world’s agenda, global emissions have risen unchecked while real world impacts have taken hold in earnest. Time is running out. The most devastating effects of climate change – deadly storms, heat waves, droughts, rising food prices and the advent of climate refugees – are being visited on the world’s poor who have no involvement in creating the problem. This is a grave injustice.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, UN Climate Summit, 18 September 2014

### Petitions

- ✦ Lord, you bless our environment with the beauty of flowers. Help us fulfill our role as co-creators by spreading the message of your beautiful works all around us. Lord, hear our prayer.
- ✦ Lord, help us to cleanse and beautify our surroundings, our life with others and our interior life. Lord, hear our prayer.

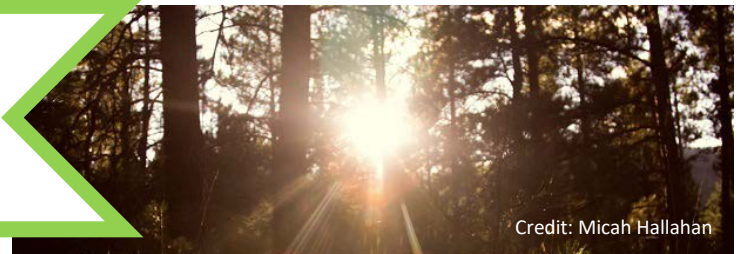
### Suggestions

- Plant some flower bulbs this autumn and relish their beauty in the spring. Their flowers will provide a primary food source for bees and butterflies.
- Offer a potted flower to brighten someone’s day. It will bring a glimmer of joy throughout the isolation of the winter months.

*“But if God so clothes the grass of the field .. will he not much more clothe you?” (Matt 6:30)*

# September 30

Sunday



Credit: Micah Hallahan

*“But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matt. 6:33)*

## Prayer

Our Father, may your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## Quote

“We need to drastically change how we produce goods, organize trade and operate in the financial system. We are currently living in a world driven by the globalized economy and dominated by financial motives – a world where almost everything has a price tag... Creation as God’s gracious gift cannot be reduced to natural resources and commodities. Air, land, water, energy – all that is essential for life – need to be treated responsibly as common goods.”

Talk by Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, 15 June 2016

## Petitions

- ✝ Lord, falsely confident that we know everything and are supremely in control, we too easily forget that it is you the Creator. Give us the Wisdom to interact positively with your Creation instead of wanting to reign over it in your place. Lord, hear our prayer.
- ✝ Lord, we too easily forget that you see to our needs, as you are the source of the fruits of the earth. Open our hearts and inspire us to be thankful. Lord, hear our prayer.

## Suggestions

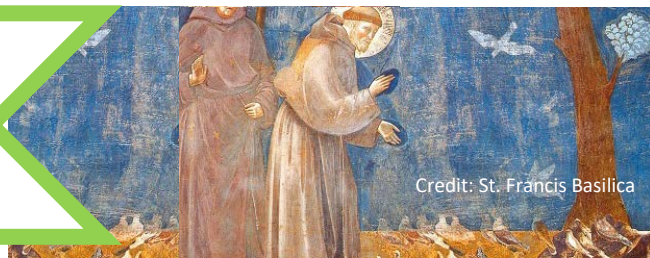
- Make a list of the good things God has blessed me with in my life, so that I don't forget them.
- Encourage your Christian community to consider joining the Green Churches Network as a support and a resource in advancing your ministry of Creation care.

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life or about your body.” (Matt, 6:25)*



# October 4

## Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi



Credit: St. Francis Basilica

### Canticle of the Creatures

A prayer by Saint Francis of Assisi, 1224

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!  
All praise is yours, all glory, all honour,  
and all blessing.  
To you alone, Most High, do they belong.  
No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,  
especially through my lord Brother Sun,  
who brings the day; and you give light through him.  
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!  
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;  
in the heavens you made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,  
and clouds and storms, and all weather,  
through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;  
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,  
through whom you brighten the night.  
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister, Mother Earth,  
who feeds us and rules us, and produces  
various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive  
for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial.  
Happy are those who endure in peace, for by you,  
Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,  
from whose embrace no living person can escape.  
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!  
Happy those she finds doing your most holy will.  
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks,  
and serve him with great humility.

### Psalm 148

Alleluia!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!  
Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!  
Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!  
Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for he commanded and they were created.  
He established them forever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be  
passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!  
Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.  
He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the Lord!  
Alleluia!

## Francis preaches to the birds

Meanwhile, at a time when many were joining the brothers, most blessed father Francis was passing through the valley of Spoleto. He came to a certain place near Bevagna, in which a great many birds of various types had congregated, including doves, crows and some others commonly called daws. When he saw them Francis, that most blessed servant of God, being a man of great fervour and very sympathetic toward the lower, irrational creatures, quickly left his companions on the road and ran over to them. When he got there, he saw that they were waiting expectantly and saluted them. Surprised that the birds had not flown away as they normally do, he was filled with joy and humbly begged them to listen to the word of God. Among the things he told them, he said the following:

“My brothers the birds, you should love your creator deeply and praise him always. He has given you feathers to wear, wings to fly with, and whatever else you need. He has made you noble among his creatures and given you a dwelling in the pure air. You neither sow nor reap, yet he nevertheless protects and governs you without any anxiety on your part.”

Both Francis and his companions agree in reporting that, when he had spoken thus, the birds exulted marvellously in their own fashion, stretching their necks, extending their wings, opening their mouths, and gazing at him. Francis walked into their midst, touching their heads and bodies with his tunic. Finally he blessed them and, making the sign of the cross, gave them permission to fly off to some other place.

Rejoicing, the blessed father went off with his companions, giving thanks to God whom all creatures worship. Since he had now been made simple by grace and not by nature, he began to accuse himself of negligence for not having preached to the birds before, since they listened to the word of God with such reverence. And thus it came about that, from that day on, he exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and even nonexistent creatures to praise and love the creator, for every day, when the name of the saviour was announced, he himself saw their obedience.

Thomas of Celano, Life of Saint Francis  
English translation by David Burr, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu>

## Suggestions

- St. Francis gave up the possession of earthly goods in solidarity with other creatures of the earth. What can I give up to strengthen my solidarity with fellow creatures?
- Suggest that your faith community hold a blessing of the animals. Include pets first of all, then farm animals and extend this blessing to wild animals as well.
- On this last day of the “Season of Creation”, answer the call to “reform” the Church in the humble manner of St. Francis. With a green committee, start planning how to make the celebration of next year’s “Season of Creation” even more meaningful for your faith community.

# October 8

## Thanksgiving





### Second Epistle to the Corinthians (9: 6-15)



*The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written: "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."*

*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. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

### Jewish Blessings of Bread and Wine

-  Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth. Amen.
-  Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine. Amen.

### Suggestions

-  Invite some members of your community to display their home grown fruits of the earth to illustrate the meaning of the thanksgiving prayer.
-  Make the fruits of the earth part of the offering during the thanksgiving service.