



# Creation Season 1: Forest Sunday

The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2020 • 10:00<sub>AM</sub>

The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

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*Welcome! This Sunday and the next three call us to join in the hymn of all creation – with the wrens and robins, otters and owls, baboons and butterflies, elm trees and pine trees, rice and snow peas, grass and grasshoppers, lava and lake, mountains and seas – all created things everywhere. We are invited to join the communion of all creation to let heaven and nature sing and to let all creation join as one, to praise God’s holy name. All together the choir of creation acknowledges God as the inexhaustible source of life and goodness.\**



***“All of the trees of the field sing for joy”. Psalm 96:12***

*(SERVERS VERSION FOR SUNDAY)*

The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth  
4301 Meadowbrook Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76103  
edfw.org

*The people's responses are in bold.*

## The Entrance Rite

*The people stand as able.*

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN 398 *I Sing the Almighty Power of God*

1 I sing the almighty power of God, that made the mountains rise,  
that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;  
the moon shines full at his command, and all the stars obey.

2 I sing the goodness of the Lord, that filled the earth with food;  
he formed the creatures with his Word, and then pronounced them good.

Lord, how thy wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,  
if I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky!

3 There's not a plant or flower below, but makes thy glories known,  
and clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from thy throne;  
while all that borrows life from thee is ever in thy care,  
and everywhere that I could be, thou, God, art present there.

### THE OPENING ACCLAMATION

The Rev. Canon Janet Waggoner

Blessed be the one, holy and living God.

**Glory to God forever and ever. Amen.**

Christ, we come into your presence today to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,

**A planet filled with your presence, sheltered in the forests, flourishing in the land,  
expectant in the wilderness, flowing in the rivers.**

God, reveal yourself to us and show us your face in all creation.

**Holy! Holy! Holy! Earth is filled with the Creator's presence.**

### HYMN OF PRAISE • 412

*Earth and all stars (vss. 1-2)*

H. Brokering

Earth and all stars, loud rushing planets,

sing to the Lord a new song!

O victory, loud shouting army,

sing to the Lord a new song!

*Refrain* God has done marvelous things.

I, too, will praise him with a new song!

Hail, wind and rain, loud blowing snowstorms,

sing to the Lord a new song!

Flowers and trees, loud rustling dry leaves,

sing to the Lord a new song!

# The Word of God

## THE COLLECT FOR THE DAY

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

God, our Creator, whose glory fills our planet, help us to discern your presence among us, especially in the mysteries of the tree-filled forest. Lift our spirits to rejoice with the forest and all its creatures. In the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews all created things. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

## THE FIRST LESSON: GENESIS (2:4b-22)

A reading from the book of Genesis.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

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 herb 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.

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 139:13-16 (*Pray in unison*)

**13 I will thank you because I am marvelously made;  
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

**14 My body was not hidden from you,  
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.**

**15 Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;  
all of them were written in your book;  
they were fashioned day by day, when as yet there was none of them.**

**16 How deep I find your thoughts, O God!  
How great is the sum of them!**

THE SECOND LESSON: ACTS 17:22-28

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 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 nations 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.”

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The people stand as able at the introduction of the hymn.*

HYMN AT THE SEQUENCE

*This is my Father's World*

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THE HOLY GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew (18:15-20).

**Glory to you, O Christ.**

Jesus said, “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be

done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The people are seated at the invitation of the homilist.*

## THE HOMILY

*A moment for silent reflection follows the homily.*

The Rev. Canon Linda Taylor

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that God creates all things, renews all things and celebrates all things.

We believe Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God’s presence,  
a home for us to share with our kin.

We believe that God became flesh and blood, became a piece of Earth,  
a human being called Jesus Christ,  
who lived and breathed and spoke among us,  
suffered and died on a cross for all human beings  
and for all creation.

We believe that the risen Jesus is the Christ at the core of creation,  
reconciling all things to God,  
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

We believe the Holy Spirit renews life in creation,  
groans in empathy with a suffering creation and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

We believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation. +

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Presider* Let us pray for the revealing of the reign of God in the world, now and always:

**In the beginning, God was.**

**Here and now, God is.**

**In the future, God will be.**

Creator of earth, sea, and sky, kindle the fire of your Spirit within us that we may be bold to heal and defend the earth around us, and pour your blessing and guidance on our elected officials, and upon the people and organizations working everywhere for the good of the planet.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Breath of life, receive our thanks for the beauty of our local habitat and all its inhabitants, and lend us the wisdom and will to conserve them.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Light and source of life, heal and redeem the wounds of your creation, and visit the places and people who suffer from our indifference, neglect, and greed.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Lover of all you have made, we thank you for the wondrous diversity of your creatures, and we pray for their well-being.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Author of the book of nature, receive our gratitude for the places of restoration and healing, and challenge us to sustain the places that feed our lives and spirits.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Wise Creator whose works are full of mystery, give us wonder and appreciation for your creatures with whom we find ourselves in conflict.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Giver of all good gifts, awaken us daily to our dependence upon your generosity, and make us always thankful for the abundance of your blessings.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Joy of human hearts, heal our human communities, especially those where your word is not heard, or where neglect, violence, greed, and warfare increase the suffering and need of people and other creatures.

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Comforter of all the earth, sustain the people worshiping together today and all who desire and need your presence and help, especially \_\_\_\_\_. (*The people may add their petitions.*)

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

Rock and refuge of all your creatures, receive into everlasting mercy all those who have died. *Silence*

God, Giver of life,

**Hear our prayer.**

*Presider* Great Spirit God, we give you thanks for another day on this earth. We give you thanks for this day to enjoy the compassionate goodness of you, our Creator. We acknowledge with one mind our respect and gratefulness to all the sacred cycle of life. Bind us together in the circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and one another. **Amen.**

(source: Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Liturgies, prepared for the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, July 2009, Anaheim, California)

## THE CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Let us pray also for the forgiveness of our sins.

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful God;  
in your compassion forgive us our sins,  
known and unknown,  
things done and left undone;  
and so uphold us by your Spirit  
that we may live and serve you in newness of life,  
to the honor and glory of your Name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

*Presider*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, together we pray,

*All*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## THE BLESSING

Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother.

Go in peace to follow the good road and may God's blessing be with you always. **Amen.** *(Saint Clare)*

## THE DISMISSAL

In the name of Christ go in peace, rejoicing in the good gifts of the Creator. Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

# This is My Father's World

Old English Melody  
Lyrics by M.D. Babcock  
Arranged by John E Doshier

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music. Above each staff are guitar chords: D, A7, D, G, D, A7 for the first staff; D, A7, D, A7, D for the second; A7, D, Bm, E7, A, A7 for the third; and D, A7, D, A7, D for the fourth. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with some words underlined to indicate syllable placement.

1. This is My Fath - er's World, And - to my list' - ning ears, All  
 2. This is My Fath - er's World, The birds their car - ols raise, The  
 3. This is My Fath - er's World, Oh let me ne'er for - get, That

na - tur sings And a - round me rings the mus - ic of the spheres. This  
 morn - ing light, the lil - y white De - clare their mak - ers praise. This  
 though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the rul - er yet. This

is My Fath - er's World, I rest me in the Thought Of  
 is My Fath - er's World, He shines in all that's fair, In the  
 is My Fath - er's World, The bat - tle is not done, Je -

rocks and trees of skies and seas: His hand the wond - ers wrought.  
 rust - ling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev' - ry - where.  
 sus who died shal be sat - is - fied, And Earth and Heav'n be one.

\*The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary (Habel, Rhoads, and Santmire, eds., Fortress Press) 2011

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# Forests and Trees: Experience, Learn, and Take Action

National forests are located in forty of fifty states in the US. Find those that are near to you. Consider spending time at a forest near you. Pick up a forest guide. Read the creation accounts from Genesis 1 and 2. Remember the garden in Eden, the forest garden and the God-charged responsibility for humanity to serve as guardians of the forests.

Take a walk and notice all that is pleasing to your sight, sense of smell, and the touch of your hand. Check the forest guide before picking and tasting any berries! You will be moved by the forest to praise God not only for the forests of Earth, but also for all of creation and your life to witness its goodness and abundance. You might be rejuvenated by the flame of the Holy Spirit and motivated to take actions that protect and sustain forests. Let this be the message you carry along with Smokey Bear's.

For a listing of resources to plant global trees see [www.ucc.org/earth/plant-a-global-tree.html](http://www.ucc.org/earth/plant-a-global-tree.html).

See <http://www.plantabillion.org> and learn about the campaign to raise enough money to plant a billion trees by 2025.

Wonderful resources about forestation and reforestation are available at [www.edenprojects.org](http://www.edenprojects.org).

Check out this scientific research about how trees communicate <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSGPNm3bFmQ>.