

Planning



Sunday, September 8 – Saturday, September 14 • 2019

SUN 8

13th Sunday after Pentecost
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Proper 18 (23)
Season of Creation 2

MON 9

TUES 10

WED 11

THUR 12

FRI 13

SAT 14

Holy Cross Day

Things to keep in mind this week...

Planning ahead...

Season of Creation (Year C)

Job 39:1–8, 26–30
Psalm 104:14–23
The focus in age-level materials
1 Corinthians 1:10–23
Luke 12:22–31



Resources based on
semi-continuous
readings of the Revised Common
Lectionary can be found in the RCL
folder.

Liturgical colour:
aqua

Lection Connection links
current events with this
week's scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and click on
the link.

Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia

Based on *In God's Hands: Common Prayer for the World*, ed. By Hugh McCullum and Terry MacArthur (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006).

September 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

August 2019							October 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31		





Job 39:1–8, 26–30

Psalm 104:14–23

The focus in the age-level materials

1 Corinthians 1:10–23

Luke 12:22–31



Resources based on semi-continuous readings of the Revised Common Lectionary can be found in the RCL folder.

Gracious God of all creation, we find you present in the vast and astonishing world around us. Yet too often we take you for granted, we assume we have every right to exploit Earth at any cost, and we care far too little for your great work. Guide us to a deep sense of appreciation for what you, our loving Creator, have done for us, who are ourselves a part of your creation. Amen.

Flora and Fauna Sunday

The world is a fragile thing. In the song *The Stories of the Street*, Leonard Cohen wrote, “We are so small between the stars, yet so large against the sky.” Such a truth reminds us that we can feel at one moment large and important, and at another small and insignificant. Our readings this week take on the task of challenging us to see ourselves as a part of God’s created world, as part of the fauna, dependent on the flora, of this amazing thing we call the world. Where do we fit in? How do we fit in? How does what we do—and think, and say—affect the world around us?

Job 39:1–8, 26–30 God is speaking, questioning Job, asking if he knows the details of creation. The implication is that only God has the intimate involvement with creation in sustaining it. The nature of the rhetorical questions implies strongly that only God is capable of being “in charge” of Creation.

Psalm 104:14–23 The Bible has several creation stories that seek not to tell us how God created the world – such an assumption is well beyond our imagining – but to tell us aspects of how ancient writers understood God present in the act of creation. Psalm 104, while not itself a creation story, nonetheless celebrates the presence of God in several aspects of the created world.

In its entirety, Psalm 104 is an unbridled and unconditional hymn of praise to the God who has created the world. Last week’s portion emphasized God’s involvement in the creation of the ocean; this week’s portion focuses on the plants and animals that God has made. Interestingly, the psalm marries a variety of viewpoints celebrated in some of the creation stories of the Hebrew Scriptures. From Genesis 1 we see reflected here the sense of God’s dedication to making things in an orderly fashion, seeking harmony and balance at every turn. The story from Genesis 2 is present in the great intimacy with which God creates things; this Creator is not detached from the Creation

but is keenly involved in the act of *creating* – implying an everlasting degree of care and compassion for the created things. The story from Proverbs 8:22–31 is present as well, in the sense of delight involved in the creation. We see this in verse 15, which celebrates the creation of wine “which cheers people’s hearts” and bread “which sustains the human heart.”

The theme of harmony in the created order comes to the surface in **1 Corinthians 1:10–23**. Here, the harmony in question is that which God initially intended for human beings. We are called to be in community, to live in a good relationship one with another. At the end of the statement comes the realization that God is smarter than all of us.

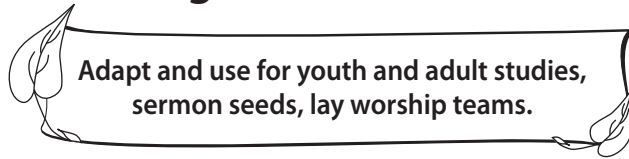
Luke 12:22–31 contains the familiar passage wherein Jesus invites the disciples to worry less and trust God more. Ravens do not plant, harvest, or store up food in barns and yet God feeds them. Lilies do not spin cloth, and yet are more beautiful in bloom than Solomon in his glory. The migrating bird is fed, and the seasonal grass is clothed. So instead of being hung up on the things that fill our lives, we might want to trust God to care for us.

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A theme runs through all of this week’s readings; God has things in hand if only we will get out of the way. It may seem a slightly odd reality, for we are used to hearing the scriptures challenge us to get involved and do things. But a slight difference changes things immensely: we need to trust God to take care of *us*. The call to help others is not the issue here (and, presumably, still stands). What is at issue is recognizing that God’s plans for the universe are better than ours. This is a profound reality to encounter in light of animals going extinct due to human actions, reefs dying due to global warming, and plants being genetically modified to produce “better” yields. What are some of the consequences when we step into God’s way?



Reflecting on the Word



Connecting with life

Find a plant – any plant. It might be a garden, a houseplant, a park, it might be a tree outside your window; it might simply be a picture from a book or the Internet. Look at that plant. Ponder it.

- **What do you notice about the plant?**
- **What is beautiful about it? marvellous? surprising? unusual?**
- **What makes it grow?**

Scripture

Psalm 104:14–23

Psalm 104 speaks of God creating all manner of plants and animals – including the production of wine to “cheer people’s hearts” and bread “to sustain the heart.”

- **What does it mean to you that the psalm celebrates God’s desire to create things for pleasure?**
- **What happens when we throw off the balance between plants and animals?**

While this passage praises God for the creation of grasses and cattle, wine and goats, there is no mention of poisonous snakes, alligators, or mosquitoes.

- **Are you able to praise God for the existence of things that are bothersome or dangerous?**
- **Why do you think we can readily credit God with good things but are reluctant to praise God for those things that are bothersome or inhibit our personal enjoyment?**

Job 39:1–8, 26–30 The intricacy and intimacy of God’s created world come to the fore, although unlike the psalm the act of praise here consists of words spoken by God.

- **How does this passage from Job differ from Psalm 104?**
- **How is it similar?**

- **If God were to ask you things such as in this passage, how might that make you feel?**

1 Corinthians 1:10–23

The harmony of Creation is spoken of here in the context of disagreements within the Christian church.

- **What are some church disagreements or squabbles with which you are familiar?**
 - **What effect do they have on the world around them?**
- The passage goes on to say that God has chosen *not* to be known through knowledge.
- **How do we know God?**
 - **If you could not use words, how might you explain the wonders of Creation?**

Luke 12:22–31

Jesus contrasts worry about the things of our lives with the lack of worrying on the part of birds and flowers.

Connecting scripture and life

- **What happens when we disregard the “natural habitat”?**

“Endangered species” and population control” are terms we use to describe the opposing effects of imbalance in our environment and the impact humans have. Today’s readings celebrate both freedoms and boundaries as we acknowledge our dependence on God. Consider your communities species, values, anxieties, consumption, and waste.

- **What has become “endangered”?**
- **What habits and users of our environment need to be the focus of more control?**
- **How might you individually and as a church connect to Earth’s flora and fauna?**

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

The focus for this second Sunday of the Season of Creation is the plants and animals from whom we derived so much fullness of life. God, the Creator, is intimately involved in the life of Creation. Rather than merely creating and then leaving, God has remained ever-present in our world and

in our lives. Yet, we are free to ignore God, too, and to do our own thing. What are some of the results for the world when we do that? How does it impact other people? How does it affect the creation of which we are an integral part?



Fauna and Flora Sunday

Prepare

NOTE: All of these suggestions are mere starting points; adapt, delete, and add according to your local needs.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing Psalm 104:14–23. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller, to present “David Sings” on p. 46, or “God’s Wonder World” (on the children’s activity leaflet at the end of this week’s materials). For the slideshow, prepare and project a series of Powerpoint® or other slides
- ❑ For the readings from Job and Luke prepare to project a series of Powerpoint® or other slides, as described under Gather.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space: a variety of plants as described under Gather, models or soft toy animals.
- ❑ You might choose to print Milford Sound, New Zealand on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Print folder). For background to the art and artist, see “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8.
- ❑ Bring song “The Earth Is Our Cradle” (p. 7).
- ❑ Set stations as described on p. 47–48.



Music Suggestions

The Earth Is Our Cradle

Christopher New; page 7

God Is Our Shelter

Chris O'Hara; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 8

You Are Holy/Hamba Nathi

South African Traditional; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 8

Gather Us In

Marty Haugen

God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale

Jaroslav J. Vajda

Touch the Earth Lightly

Shirley Erena Murray, Colin Gibson

We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

Ruth Duck



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca. Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

Gather

Prior to worship, you might decorate the worship area with a variety of plants – not just flowers as might be traditional, but other plants such as vegetables, and even some “weeds.” You could also place some models of animals and/or stuffed animals in the worship area.

Call to worship

ONE: God, maker of plants and animals and all things, invites us to this place.

ALL: **We are glad to be here.**

ONE: God, who has created all things for our goodness, invites us to this place.

ALL: **We are glad to be here.**

ONE: God, who has called us to care for the Earth and all its inhabitants, invites us to this place.

ALL: **We are glad to be here.**

ONE: Come, let us worship God!

Opening prayer

Creator God,
we are awed by the creation you have made –
the plants and animals (including humans)

that you have placed within this world.

In this time of worship, may we be aware
of the gifts of flora and fauna to Creation, and all created
things.
Amen.

Prayer of confession

God of hawk and puffin, of koala and panda, of moose and squirrel, of tiger and cobra; God of pansy and daffodil, gum tree and redwood, of mountain meadows and rainforest jungles: we are in awe of all you have done for us. You created a world of plants and animals that can live in such wondrous harmony; yet too often we exploit one another, we devastate, and we leave things in ruin. Forgive us and guide us in the restoration of the harmony you intended. Amen.

Words of affirmation

We do not change the world by worrying about it, but by dedicating ourselves and our actions to doing God’s will. When we fail, God forgives us, and asks us to try again. Know that ours is the God of perpetual second chances! Amen.



Engage

Opening the word

Job 39:1–8, 26–30 and Luke 12:22–31

The Job reading speaks of fauna, and the Luke passage of both birds and flowers. Images on Powerpoint® would greatly enhance both readings. Following are some suggestions; adapt to suit your tastes. The expression “flora and fauna” generally refers to the plants and animals of a specific region, so you may wish to use images from your local area. If you do not have access to photographs taken locally, many stock images can be found online. Be sure to check so as not to use copyright images.

Job 39:1–4	Images of deer (while the passage speaks of deer giving birth, generic images would be more appropriate)
Job 39:5–8	Wild donkeys
Job 39:26–30	Hawks and eagles
Luke 12:22–26	Birds – this passage speaks specifically of ravens but you may wish to include a wider variety of birds.
Luke 12:27	Flowers, preferably growing wild
Luke 12:28–29	Wild grasses
Luke 12:30–31	Images of people from different nations (yes, human beings are fauna, too!)

Moving into Psalm 104:14–23 *the focus scripture for age-level materials in ENCORE*

It is one thing to praise God generically – to simply proclaim “God is good” – and another to think of some of the specifics for which we wish to give thanks. Psalm 104 invites us to think in some detail about what God has done, for us and for all of Creation. This in turn invites further questions such as “What has God done lately? What does God do regularly? What does God do despite us? What does God do through us?” What happens when we ask those sorts of questions?

Choose from the following.

Bible story Have a storyteller present the story “[David Sings](#)” (p. 46). Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present the story “[God’s Wonder World](#)” (on the children’s activity leaflet at the end of this week’s materials).

Slide show Prepare and project a series of Powerpoint® or other slides. Move slowly and carefully through the verses of Psalm 104:14–23, pausing for illustrations that bring the message home. For example, during verse 14 you might have images of fields, cattle, gardens, farms, and so on. Plan a few slides for each verse and move through them fairly quickly. The reader will want to practice the reading and mark their text to coordinate with the slides. In preparing the slides, you might wish to blend distant images with local ones that people will recognize.

Invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations. Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word.

Respond

After proclaiming the word, you might invite those who have not already done so to move to and around the stations, taking ten minutes or so with a chosen practice.

Sing or listen to the song “[The Earth Is Our Cradle](#)” (p. 7).

Prayers of the people

You, Creator God,
have created a world in balance and harmony.
There is day and there is night;
there is up, and down, and all around.
You have created all kinds of animals –
including humans! –
and call us to find ways to get along with each other.

You have given us all kinds of plants:
some for food, others to delight the senses,
and others to provide important medicines and for
other uses.

And you have called us to care for the garden
in which you have placed us all.

Help us to do that.

For those who struggle to have enough,
help us find ways to share what we have.

For those who wonder if there is a place for them,
help us to show that there is room for everyone.

For those who are sick and anxious

help us to find ways to bring hope and healing.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.



Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

Holy One, as first you gave to us,
so now we give to you.

Take our gifts and use them
to support, maintain, and bring about
the harmony you so keenly desire
for all our world. Amen.

Bless

God has made us, and all the plants and animals,
and calls us to care for one another.
So go out into the world in peace,
and seek ways to get along with others.
Know that God – Creator, Christ, and Spirit –
will sustain you always. Amen.

Special Day Commentary

September 14 – Holy Cross Day

Several traditions are connected with this observance. One focuses on St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine. While Helena was overseeing some evacuations in Jerusalem she found what was believed to be Jesus' cross. On September 14, 335 CE, a basilica was dedicated on the site of Jesus' tomb, the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre. Other traditions claim that Constantine himself found the cross.



In Praise of Creation

write your own creation psalm

With a notebook or journal and your favorite writing implement, go to a place where you are in the presence of creation. It may be a park, a beach, a riverbank, a meadow, a hillside, a forest trail, a lake, your backyard, or outside your own front door. This is a place where you can encounter the beauty and wonder of creation. (If you wish, you can travel in your mind to a beautiful place you've visited that holds special appeal for you.) Take time to be still in this place of beauty. Sit or walk silently, observing this natural setting. As you attune yourself to the expression of creation around you, begin to write down what you notice, describing the following.

What lives here? (animals, birds, fish, vegetation...)

I see...

I hear...

I feel the texture of... I smell...

How is the Creator present in this place? How is the Creator made known to you here?

What does this place remind you of?

Creation feels like...

Words I would use to describe creation include...

I want to tell the Creator that creation is, for me,...

When I consider creation, I would like to ask the Creator...

Viewing the whole of Creation, I am aware of the contrast of...

When I consider creation, I want to say the following phrase over and over again...

something that I think others find amazing or awesome about creation is...

Because of creation, humans and other life forms on this planet can enjoy the following things...

Review what you have written, circling any words or phrases that interest you. Take time to make a few more notes about what stands out for you, about the impact and effect creation has on you, and about the source of this creation and its unfolding.

Now compose your own creation psalm.

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David Sings

Based on Psalm 104:14–23

When David was a boy, he spent many hours in the fields with his sheep. He would often take his harp along to play a simple melody or make up a song while he sat in the fields. As he got older, he began to appreciate the beauty and the balance of the world around him.

One day, David awoke early and decided to grab his harp and take a walk as the sun came up. The pink clouds chased away the darkness and chill and the nighttime insects quieted down as the daytime insects got busy for work. David's heart was filled with such a peace and joy, seeing how creation weaved together to create a perfect and divine balance.

As the last bit of the sun shimmered up from the horizon, David began to play a song on his harp and sing a prayer to God. He sang:

Creator God, how great you are! You grow the tender grass to feed the cattle. You give us fruits, vegetables, and grains to cultivate, wine to share and gladden our hearts, bread to eat and strengthen us, even oil to lotion our skin.

You planted the cedar trees, grew them tall and strong, and now the birds can build nests safely in their branches. Your high mountains are pastures for the wild goats, and even the rock-badgers find a home burrowing in the boulders there.

You gave us the moon which marks the months and the sun which marks the days. At night the young lions roar. At dawn they slink back to their dens to rest as we go off to work until the evening shadows fall once more.

Oh God, what a variety you have made in all your wisdom! Earth is full of your riches.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Bible story

Materials recording of today's story "David Sings," player, paper, crayons, pencils, a copy of the directions displayed where all can see; alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story

The practice of storytelling

Directions

1. Listen to the story "David Sings."
2. Reflect on the connections that "David" makes between all elements of creation. Write or draw some of the connections you see between animals, humans, plants, and water in your community.

Younger children Draw a large tree and add animals that might live in the tree.



Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space or in other places around the church. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the [directions](#).

For your convenience, instructions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

The article "[Connecting with the Art](#)" on page 8 provides some background to the two posters for Season of Creation, Pentecost 2 and some art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might choose to add an Art Engagement station each week, using one of the art engagement ideas.

Hanging planter

Materials 2L/ 2qt milk or juice carton for each per person (in advance, cut about 10–15 cm/ 4–6 in from the bottom of each carton, and recycle the remainder), scissors, single hole punch, construction paper and glue stick (or a self-adhesive foam sheet, or a set of pre-cut self-adhesive facial features), potting soil, spoon, grass seed, water, strong cord or yarn, copy of the [directions](#) displayed where all can see



Suitable for
ages 3–11

The practice of nurture

Directions

1. Punch three evenly spaced holes around the cut edge of the carton.
2. Cut out eyes, mouth, and nose from construction paper, or from the foam sheet (or choose features from pre-cut selection).
3. Glue or stick the facial features to the planter as a reminder of the farmer who grows seeds.
4. Using a spoon, fill the planter with soil.
5. Scatter grass seeds on the soil and sprinkle a small spoonful of soil over the seeds.
6. Add a little water.
7. Thread yarn or cord through each hole in the planter. Gather the yarn and tie together.
8. Hang in a sunny spot, watering occasionally. As the grass grows, let it be a reminder of the wonder of Creation, how plants sustain life and our role in caring for Creation, too. What else might we do in our caring relationship with flora and fauna of Creation?



Listening to wildlife

Materials photographs of plants and wildlife (these can be from calendars, magazines, picture books, encyclopedias, or personal photos); pillar candle; matches; paper; pens, pencils, coloured pencils; personal journals; a copy of the [directions](#) displayed where all can see



Suitable for
all ages

The practice of meditation

Directions

1. Look at some of the photographs of plants and wildlife. Imagine the sounds that the wildlife in the photographs would make.
 2. Respond to the following reflection questions in your journal/with the paper and pens provided:
 - **What sounds does wildlife make? How would you describe them?**
 - **What do the sounds or voices of wildlife say to you?**
 - **Think about the last time you heard the sounds of wildlife. Where were you? What was happening?**
 3. Spend a few more moments meditating on the sounds of God's creation.
- Younger children** Draw a picture of God's plants and animals.



Caring for flora and fauna

Materials table covered in green fabric, pictures and/or photographs of the plants and animals that are found in your community or nearby, a potted plant or fresh flowers to use as a centerpiece, paper, poster board, pens and pencil, personal journals, copy of the [directions](#) displayed where all can see



**Suitable for
ages 6–adult**

The practice of creation care

Directions

1. Take a few moments to look at the images on the table. Recall a time when you have seen these plants and animals in your community. You might doodle, write or draw in your journal or on a separate sheet of paper.
2. What steps might you and your congregation take to protect the plants and animals that are part of God's creation? (Think locally and globally.)
3. On the large sheet of paper, add your thoughts to those of others at this station of ways plants and animals can be preserved and protected.
4. Write a short prayer for the flora and fauna in your community and the global community.
5. Leave your prayer on the potted plants or arrangements of flowers for others to read.

Digging deeper

Materials computer with Internet access, copy of the [directions](#) displayed where all can see



**Suitable for
ages 9–adult**

The practice of awareness

Directions

Often plants and animals that we take for granted are in fact “invasive” meaning they are not native to the area where they live, and they cause problems for local plants and animals.

1. Look up “invasive species” or “invasive plants” or “invasive animals” in a search engine on the computer.
2. You may wish to add the name of your local area (e.g., province, state, country, region) to narrow it down.
3. Explore some things that are invasive, and contemplate these questions:
 - a. Where do these animals live? *or* Where do these plants grow?
 - b. What harm do they cause?
 - c. How might this problem be resolved?





Egg carton caterpillar

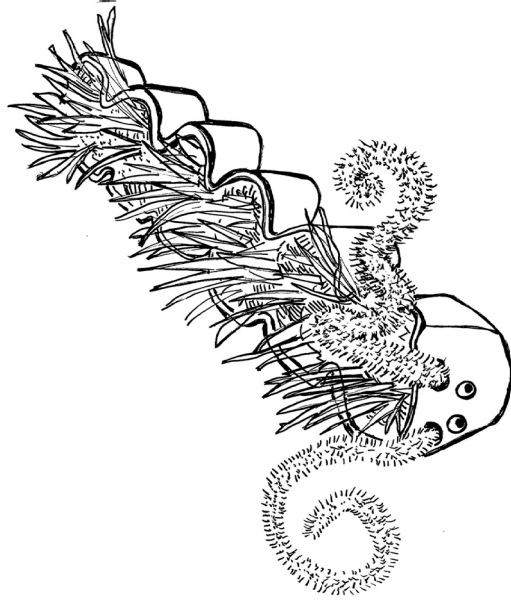
There are so many things in this wonderful world, tiny creatures and bushes and grasses and thorns. Grow and care for your own grass in this grassy caterpillar.

You will need

1 side of an egg carton
(line of six sections)
paint and paint brushes (optional)
glue
pipe cleaners
wiggly eyes
marker
soil
grass seed or micro herb seeds.

Instructions

Paint the outside of the egg carton, paint the outside of the cups in whatever colour you like. Punch two holes in one end of the carton cups and thread pipe cleaners through for antennae. Draw eyes, or glue wiggly eyes, to the caterpillar's head. Use a spoon to add the soil to the cups, leaving a small space at the top. Sprinkle a generous amount of seed on the dirt. Sprinkle a little more soil over the seed. Water your seed every day. Be careful not to overwater, or the carton will go soggy.



God's Wonder World

Snails and wombats,
Beetles and bees.
Horses, fishes,
And tiny fleas.

Stars and sunshine,
Raindrops and snow.
White clouds and rainbows
And moonlight glow.

Beans and grasses, bushes and thorns.
Flowers and seaweed, oaks and acorns.

Tall people, short people, big people, small.
Old people, young people, babies who crawl.

God made a world full of wonder and love.

Wiggily, jiggily, dibbily, dove!

God's Wonder World by Donna Scorer, Wood Lake Publishing Inc.
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ACTIVITY

God created all the plants and animals you see in your community and around the world.
Draw the plants and animals that you know.



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