

Rachel writes . . .

Every year the Church of England marks a season called Creationtide, which runs from September 1st to October 4th, and is a time which is 'dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life'. General Synod decided earlier this year that on September 4th, the Church of England will celebrate a new Sunday: the Festival of Creation in Christ. This is not a festival of the Church of England's making - it has been celebrated by Eastern Orthodox Churches for centuries and the Roman Catholic Church for decades. This year General Synod approved adding it to the list of recognised Feast Days in our calendar. While it will be known as the Festival of Creation in Christ, it is also known as Creation Sunday, Creation Day and the World Day of Prayer for Creation., and is usually celebrated on September 1st, or the Sunday nearest to it.

This summer we have been maybe more than usually focused on the climate and all the heatwaves we have endured, and the subsequent drought. Recently I drove through Chatsworth and was struck by how dry and yellow the grass was, and of course there have been a number of terrible wildfires which have destroyed parts of our countryside and endangered life. We are told by scientists that this is how our summers are going to be now - if anything they will only get hotter.

And so it is good to set aside a season in the church to consider our world, which God the Creator entrusted to us and which it seems we have done so much to damage. We honour God as not only the Creator but the Sustainer, and since he entrusted his work of creation to us, that task of sustaining all life has also been entrusted to us.

A number of years ago, the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu reflected on the concept of *Ubuntu*, that 'a person is a person through people'. He wrote that human beings don't survive or thrive as individuals, but that we survive together. And applying that to God's amazing creation, he wrote this:

'If *Ubuntu* encourages us to cultivate and care for ourselves, for our families and our brethren, so too should we care for our larger, extended body - the veld, bush, air, water and the wetlands. We need to widen the circle of our ubuntu . . . into the soil, into the air, into the rivers and oceans.'

Creationtide begins with the Festival of Creation with Christ, and moves through September, ending on October 4th, when some of our churches will celebrate their Harvest Festival. As well as opportunities then to bring donations for food banks, we also have a service at St. John the Evangelist in Hazelwood to give thanks for the pets we are blessed with. That service will take place on Sunday September 27th at 3pm, and you can find more information on the flyer or online at A Church Near You.

Let us pray that we will all be faithful guardians of God's amazing creation.

Blessings,
Rachel CJN