

**GENERAL SYNOD
LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

CIRCULAR

**THE FESTIVAL OF CREATION IN CHRIST
AND THE COMMEMORATION OF
THE TWENTY-ONE MARTYRS OF LIBYA**

This document offers practical information about the celebration of the new liturgical observances which were authorized pursuant to Canon B 2 at the July 2026 Group of Sessions of the General Synod.

The Festival of Creation in Christ

1. This new Festival, assigned to the first Sunday in September each year, is one of the fruits of a growing ecumenical movement across churches worldwide and offers an opportunity for Christians to give thanks for God's creation and redemption of the world, to reflect on humanity's responsibility to care for the natural world and to pray for its renewal. The title 'Creation in Christ' emphasises that creation is understood through the person and work of Jesus Christ: created through him, sustained in him and destined for renewal in him.
2. Full liturgical provision for the Holy Communion and for Morning and Evening Prayer has now been authorized by the General Synod. It may be found in the Annex to this Circular and in the forthcoming Second Edition of *A Time for Creation: liturgical resources for creation and the environment*, due to be published in August.
3. The Festival will be included in subsequent annual editions of the *Common Worship* Lectionary, beginning in Advent 2027. For the present year and for the Lectionary, now in print, beginning in Advent 2026, a bookmark with relevant material will soon be distributed. Electronic materials including the Daily Prayer and Lectionary apps will soon be updated.
4. As the *Rules to Order the Christian Year* indicate, the Festival of Creation in Christ (like any festival) together with its liturgical provision is not usually displaced.¹
5. A Commentary by the Liturgical Commission on the new Festival and its liturgical provision, which may be of assistance to ministers planning a celebration, may be found online and in the Second Edition of *A Time for Creation*.

¹ When a Festival falls on a Sunday, it may be kept on that day or transferred to the Monday (or, at the discretion of the minister, to the next suitable weekday). If a Festival converges with an observance kept as a Principal Feast (e.g. a Patronal or Dedication Festival), it may be moved likewise. Churches may therefore keep a Patronal or Dedication Festival on the first Sunday in September, or use the usual Sunday provision on that day and transfer the Festival of Creation in Christ to Monday or to another suitable weekday.

The Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya

6. The Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya were targeted specifically for their Christian identity and refused to renounce Christ despite the threat of death. They died with the name of Jesus on their lips. They will be remembered on 15 February as a Commemoration in the *Common Worship* Calendar, and included in subsequent printings of the Calendar and Lectionary.
7. Commemorations do not have a special Collect, readings, or other texts. They do not replace the usual weekday provision. They are, instead, made by a mention in prayers of intercession and thanksgiving. A form of biography prepared by the Liturgical Commission is included in the Annex to this Circular.
8. If the subject of a Commemoration has a special local significance or if there is an established celebration in the wider church, a Commemoration may be observed as a Lesser Festival, with liturgical provision from the Common of the Saints (that of the Common of Martyrs, in *Common Worship: Festivals*, pp.284-290) and with red as the liturgical colour.
9. If the observance is kept as a Commemoration, the liturgical colour of the season is used.

16 July 2026

The Revd Dr Matthew Salisbury
National Liturgical Adviser

ANNEX

First Sunday in September

Creation in Christ
White or Green

Invitation to Confession

The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it. Let us confess our failure to receive with gratitude God's gift of creation, and repent of the ways in which we have caused it harm.

Kyrie Confession

You laid the foundations of the earth,
but we have claimed your world as our own.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

All things were created through you and for you,
but we have not lived as those who belong to you.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

You make all things new,
but our hope has grown dim.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Collect

Holy and eternal God,
you are the Maker of heaven and earth,
you are the Word through whom all things were made,
and you are the Spirit, the giver of life:
draw us into the mystery of your love,
that with all creation we may proclaim your praise,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

O God and Father of all that was, is and ever shall be,
help us to be thankful for all that is made
at the hands of your Son
and through the wisdom of your Spirit,
that we may care in heart and in deed for the life of our world,
to the praise and glory of your holy name.

Lectionary

Evening Prayer on the Eve (if required)

Psalm 19

Genesis 1.1–5, 26–31

Hebrews 1.1–4

Principal Service

Isaiah 55.12–end

Psalm 96

Colossians 1.15–20

John 1.1–14

or Matthew 8.23–27

Second Service

Ezekiel 47.1–12

or Isaiah 45.2–8

Evening Psalm 104

Revelation 22.1–5

HC John 15.1–17

Third Service

Job 38.1–11, 16–18

or Sirach 18.1–14

or Sirach 43.9–12, 23–26, 28–33

Morning Psalm 148

Revelation 4

or 2 Peter 3.8–13

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things.

All **Alleluia.**

Introduction to the Peace

You shall go out in joy and be led back into peace; the mountains and the hills
before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Isaiah 55.12

Prayer at the Preparation of the Table

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
by your goodness the world was formed and filled with plenty.
As we set before you this bread and wine,
teach us gratitude for your gifts
and make us faithful stewards of your creation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

or

As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now united on this table in bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom.

All **Amen.**

Preface

And now we give you thanks
because in him, our risen Lord,
the new creation is being brought to perfection,
a broken world is being renewed,
and creation itself will share
in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Extended Preface

It is indeed right and good,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For by your word the heavens were made,
and all their host by the breath of your mouth.
You formed us in your image, the crown of your creation,
and entrusted us with the works of your hands.

In your great goodness you sent your Son,
the firstborn of all creation,
who holds all things together in himself,
and through whom you make all things new.

You have given us the first-fruits of the Spirit,
as creation itself waits with eager longing
to obtain the glorious freedom of the children of God.

And so, with angels and archangels
and with all that you have made,
we join the song of your glory,
forever praising you and *saying*:

Post Communion

God our Creator,
by your gift the tree of life was set
at the heart of the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:
may we who have been nourished at your table on earth
be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross
and enjoy the delights of eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Before the Dismissal the Act of Commitment for the Care of Creation (A Time for Creation, p.48) may be used.

Blessing

May God the Father, whose glory is proclaimed in the heavens, awaken in you a
delight and wonder in this good creation.

All **Amen.**

May God the Son, the Word made flesh, through whom all things were made, fill
you with his risen life.

All **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters of creation and formed the
world from chaos, form you in the likeness of Christ and renew the face of the
earth.

All **Amen.**

and the blessing...

Daily Prayer

At Morning Prayer, canticle 32 (A Song of the New Creation) may be said.

At Evening Prayer, canticle 84 (A Song of Francis of Assisi) may be said.

Eve: Magnificat: By your word, O God, the heavens were made, and all their host by
the breath of your mouth.

Benedictus The spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Magnificat You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things.

THE TWENTY-ONE MARTYRS OF LIBYA

On or about 15 February 2015, twenty-one Christian men were martyred by militants of the extremist organisation Da'ish on a beach near Sirte, Libya. The murder was documented and broadcast by the perpetrators. The men's steadfastness in the face of this brutal act has been widely recognised as a profound witness to the Christian faith. These martyrs (twenty from Egypt, and their friend from Ghana), who were primarily migrant labourers seeking to support their families, refused to renounce Christ despite the threat of death. They affirmed their faith with the supplication O my Lord Jesus as they met their end. They were targeted specifically for their Christian identity. Their murder was intended as a message of terror, yet it became an extraordinary testimony to Christian courage and perseverance. Following their deaths, the Coptic Orthodox Church swiftly recognised them as martyrs, establishing 15 February as their feast day.