



Sunday 6th September 2026

Feast of Creation in Christ

Gospel Reading

John 1.1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Other readings: Isaiah 55.12–end, Psalm 96

Colossians 1.15–20

Matthew 8.23–27

Homily

‘All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluya, alleluya’

So begins one of the best loved hymns of all time. It is based on St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Sun, and is very fitting for this festival day, or for use at any time during this Season of Creation, which runs from 1st September to 4th October (St Francis of Assisi's feast day).

Today is the first time that the Church of England has celebrated this Festival of Creation in Christ, which was established by General Synod in July this year, so joining many other Christian denominations in a truly ecumenical act of witness.

For centuries the Eastern Orthodox churches have celebrated this Festival as the beginning of their year, and in 1989 the Ecumenical Patriarch invited ‘the entire

Christian world to offer every year on this day prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation and as petitions for its protection and salvation.'

Today in the Diocese of Lincoln, we accept this invitation, and share in this joyful, serious, prayerful festival, allowing ourselves to remember God's work in creation in Christ, and to pray for the wellbeing of all that he drew into loving existence out of nothing.

Our gospel reading sets the scene. Before anything else, there is God, and it is God who gives life to plants and creatures, setting the universe into motion and energising all things with purpose and meaning. We hear the stories of creation in Genesis, and we can feel the impact of creation in many of the psalms, such as Psalm 96, which is also set for today: 'Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth'.

The act of creation out of nothing is implicit to today's gospel. God speaks, and creation begins. The Word of God, God's creating agent, is the second person of the Trinity, who takes human flesh in Jesus. His pre-existence in the mystery that is the Holy Trinity is described with great beauty here by the evangelist John. We are used to hearing this passage at Christmas, and to focusing on it as a description of the birth of the Christ-child. Today, we are invited to read and to feel it as an evocation of the awesome wonder that is God. We and everything else are God's creatures. God loves us all into being, holding us in existence, cradling us even when we encounter the inevitable pains of this life, and endowing us with responsibility and connectedness to the rest of the created order.

So today's Festival of Creation in Christ is above all an opportunity to give thanks for the wonder that we have been given in the world.

Let us try to see its beauty, its intricacy, its grandeur and its vulnerability to the impact of human greed. And let us recognise that, as God's stewards, in succession to Adam and Eve, we are given the responsibility of working the land and the seas, and caring for them and their non-human fellow creatures.

We are celebrating this Season of Creation having had probably the hottest year in Greater Lincolnshire since records began. Our grain harvest was at least three weeks early. We have experienced drought. These are realities which we must face, and which require us to respond. As stewards, our actions make a difference. And our hope, despite the challenges that we face, is in Christ. This is because, in the words of the New Testament reading that is also set for today: 'He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together' (Colossians 1.17).

Jesus Christ, the Word, created the world in the beginning. Jesus Christ, the Word, loved the world to the end on the cross, and called his disciples into a new relationship with him that would ready them for eternity and equip them to serve him and their neighbours in love. Our calling in Christ is a profound one. We can often understand it

as trying to respond to others in service, and to the Father in prayer. But it also means trying to follow Jesus the Word made flesh in drawing ourselves and the rest of creation into a more flourishing, just and hopeful life.

On this first Festival of Creation in Christ may we rejoice in the gift of creation and throughout this season may we consider how we can best serve God and all his creatures:

‘Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, Alleluya!

Conversation Questions

1. The Festival of Creation in Christ is a new festival. It sits alongside other celebrations such as Rogation and Harvest-tide. Do you think it is important for Christians to celebrate and explore our understanding of Creation?
2. What matters to you about your relationship with the world, as a Christian?
3. How does the passage from St John’s Gospel speak to you about creation?
4. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
5. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*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.*

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