

# A LITURGICAL GUIDE TO CELEBRATING GOD'S CREATION

By the Chartered Committee for Environmental Ministry

*Background: In 2009, the 193<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, resolved "that the Diocese and its congregations be encouraged to celebrate a liturgical creation cycle of at least four weeks in length at an appropriate time during the liturgical year for the purposes of affirming the sacredness of God's Creation, of spreading hope about God's reconciling work in creation and about an understanding of environmental stewardship and of ecological justice....[and] that the Chartered Committee of Environmental Ministry be directed to provide liturgical resources to support congregations in this endeavor."*

Many congregations across the United States are currently celebrating God's Creation liturgically. The days chosen for the celebrations, the liturgies and music used are varied and can be found in numerous resources, both in hard copy and online. The Chartered Committee for Environmental Ministry has compiled this resource list to aid congregations in developing their own Celebration Cycle to worship God, our Creator, and his Creation.

The time during the liturgical year for celebrating the four-week Creation Cycle is chosen at the discretion of each congregation. Some congregations currently celebrating the Creation Cycle have chosen to celebrate Creation liturgies consecutively; others at various times during the liturgical year. Many who celebrate the cycle consecutively have chosen weeks during either the Easter or Pentecost seasons.

Liturgies and service bulletins used by different congregations and dioceses are available at several different websites online:

**Episcopal Ecological Network:** [www.eenonline.org](http://www.eenonline.org)

This website has a very comprehensive compilation of liturgies and music. Resources for an entire four week Creation Season are available which include Sunday themes, focus of lessons and reflections. Service bulletins for specific Sundays, i.e. Rogation Sunday, Blessing of the Animals, etc. are available as well. The website is easy to navigate with list of materials and links that provide a wealth of information to aid in tailoring the service to each congregation's needs.

**Web of Creation:** [www.webofcreation.org](http://www.webofcreation.org)

This easy to navigate website is operated in conjunction with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. It includes information creating a strategic plan for congregations ready to become a green parish as well as resources for creating a season of Creation-care worship.

**National Council of Churches of Christ Eco-Justice Programs:** [www.ncccecojustice.org](http://www.ncccecojustice.org)

This action oriented website is produced by a member organization of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. The events listings and information on environmental issues are not limited COC. An easy access US map links to church sponsored events listed by state.

Suggestions for creation oriented music for use in a traditional Episcopal Order of Service are most easily accessed at the Episcopal Ecological Network website. The link under "Liturgies" to the service bulletins from the Diocese of Minnesota have a link to a particularly helpful table which provides suggestions for hymns for specific parts of the service, i.e. procession, songs of praise, gradual music, etc. Music from *The Hymnal 1982* and *Wonder, Love and Praise* are included along with music from four other hymnals in the table. The EEN site also has links to *The Cyber Hymnal*, which allows you to listen to the hymns, and *The Oremus Hymnal*, which allows you to listen to the melody and read the text.

As a community of faith, we have been commanded by God to be good stewards of his Creation. Let us assist you and your congregations in celebrating and caring for the inestimable gift we have been given and humbly approach the task we have been assigned.

For further information, please see [www.episdionc.org](http://www.episdionc.org), search "Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry," or email The Rev. Thomas Droppers, Chair of the Committee for Environmental Ministry at [www.tdrops@triad.rr.com](mailto:www.tdrops@triad.rr.com)