



**Liturgical Notes on the
Season after Pentecost (including Creation Season)
Prepared by the Bishop's Liturgical Advisory Panel
2024-09-13**

These notes are the fourth in a series of “evergreen” documents that have been prepared by the Bishop's Liturgical Advisory Panel. Previously the panel offered notes on “Advent, Christmas and Epiphany”, “Lent and Holy Week” as well as “Eastertide”. In subsequent years all notes will be revised and expanded. The notes are approved by our Bishop, and intended to assist parish clergy and worship planners by providing guidelines and encouraging creativity as we move through the liturgical year as a diocese.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Collects, Readings & Eucharistic Prayers

Familiarity with the weekly lections helps the presider decide whether or not to select a Collect of the Day from the Alternative Collects (see: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-2019-updated-2024-03.pdf>). There are two alternative choices for each week, with the Scripture passages noted for reference.

Be careful to ensure there is a fitting conclusion to any alternative collect you choose as some do not include them (“through Jesus Christ, our Lord etc...”) Sample conclusions can be found on pages 159-160 of the General Synod document.

The BAS provides six eucharistic prayers to choose from. In addition, there are three Supplementary Eucharistic Prayers found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Eucharist.pdf>. Again, the lections of the week are the best guide for selecting which of the nine eucharistic prayers to use on any given Sunday. Parishes that mark the Season of Creation will want to consider using Eucharistic Prayer #4 during that period.

The Primacy of Sunday versus Theme Days

“The liturgy of the Church celebrates but one mystery: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday is the weekly commemoration of that mystery of Christ.

Christians gather each Sunday to celebrate, in word and sacrament, their participation in Christ. The Lord's Day is consequently given primacy over other commemorations."

Easily said - or rather, written. This quote is taken from an essay on page 14 of the *Book of Alternative Services*. The essay gives a helpful perspective on the value of the church calendar. However, it has become increasingly challenging for Sunday worship to keep a focus on the paschal mystery. The season after Pentecost is a long one, and there are a myriad of 'theme days' that can fall within it, from 'Say Yes to Kids Sunday' to Pride Day, local agricultural fairs, the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Remembrance Sunday and more.

Thankfully it is possible to nurture a congregation's focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ alongside a lively awareness of the cultural context in which we live. Clergy and parish leaders rightly bring a passion for particular social issues to the life-giving news of the Christian gospel.

Parishes are finding creative ways to address significant themes without giving a Sunday a 'special' name. Simple advocacy efforts and educational events rather than didactic intercessions can - over time - transform the spirituality of a parish.

Printed or projected images, careful selection of hymns, thoughtful sermons, symbolic objects, explanatory material in the Sunday bulletin as well as sensitive and creative Prayers of the People can combine to create the awareness of an important theme or issue while maintaining a worshipful focus on the paschal mystery.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Most parishes observe Trinity Sunday with white vestments and frontals and perhaps the singing of 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. It has, however, sometimes been difficult to give creative attention to this feast after the excitement of Pentecost Sunday with its conclusion of the Easter season.

Yet the composition of new hymns such as 'Come, Join the Dance of the Trinity' (#56 in *Sing a New Creation* sung to the familiar tune 'Kingsfold') and the creation of six new Collects (two for each of Year A, B and C) can inspire both fresh projected and printed images as well as sermons that stimulate the faithful's grasp of the triune mystery. The collects can be found on the General Synod website on pages 26, 73-74 and 119-120 of the 'Alternative Collects' document: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-2019-updated-2024-03.pdf>.

The use of a cue phrase and refrain such as 'Trinity, most holy, **hear our prayer**' is appropriate in the Prayers of the People.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DAY OF PRAYER

In May 2024 the Bishop of Ottawa authorized a liturgy for use in our diocese for observances of the National Indigenous Day of Prayer (June 21st or the Sunday before or after). It can be found here: <https://ottawa.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-05-24-Liturgy-for-National-Indigenous-Day-of-Prayer.pdf>.

THE SEASON OF CREATION

Some Anglican parishes have begun to mark a time of prayer, education and action called the Season of Creation (SOC), part of a growing ecumenical movement. Although neither obligatory nor an actual liturgical season, such an observance can highlight aspects of our understanding of God and the gospel that the Church has neglected over the centuries.

If a parish observes the SOC it is best done with a lightness of touch and sense of flexibility. For one thing, the proposed dates of September 1-October 5 do not always fit well with parish schedules. It might be more realistic for Canadian parishes to select a four to five-week period that accounts for both the timing of Labour Day as well local agricultural harvests. Each farming community knows which harvests are most important to them - Soy beans? Apples? Thus, in our diocese many parishes will delay the start of the SOC until well after September 1, in order to accommodate a fulsome harvest celebration later in the year.

Printed and projected images do not need to be limited to pumpkins and apples. NASA's famous view of earth from space can orient people to the grandeur of God's creation, as can images of flora, fauna and natural places from around the globe as well as locally.

Much of the spiritual impact of marking the SOC will come from the educational and advocacy efforts offered by a parish. Learning about a local watershed or a relevant environmental issue will make the realities of creation stewardship come alive for parishioners. They will bring that energy into their prayer on Sunday morning as well as during the week. General Synod has a useful link with abundant study and action material for parishes to use during the SOC: www.anglican.ca/publicwitness/season-of-creation.

Sunday morning liturgies must use the normal Scripture readings and propers of the day. The newly published hymn book, *Sing a New Creation*, has a number of creation-focussed hymns. Suggestions for preaching can also be found on the ecumenical SOC website found here: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>.

Midweek liturgies may use any of the many readings and prayers suggested in the SOC material found online, rather than being limited to the Daily Office lectionary or the Weekday Eucharist Lectionary.

If desired, the prayers of confession found in the Book of Alternative Services (BAS) and Book of Common Prayer (BCP) may be preceded by an invitation to confession that

highlights themes of the SOC. Consider referencing the baptismal promise related to safeguarding the integrity of creation. Alternately, the Prayers of the People could include a penitential component suitable to the season, in which case the general confession would not be used at all. In any case, avoid overly-long prayers or ones that have a judgemental tone. The point is to awaken a sense of repentance among worshippers, as well as encouragement to trust in God's merciful forgiveness.

Harvest Sunday

Although white is often indicated as the colour for Harvest Sunday, this is not prescriptive. Depending on the design of vestments, frontals and banners, green or other colours can be a more appropriate choice. It is not necessary to purchase or make special vestments and frontals in order to mark the SOC.

Three 'years' of Scripture readings as well as six alternate Collects for Harvest Thanksgiving can be found on pages 148-150 here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-2019-updated-2024-03.pdf>.

Parishes that decorate with seasonal greenery and the 'fruits of the harvest' will want to consider when to assemble and when to remove the decorations. Consider whether it is desirable to keep them in place for a few weeks rather than for only one Sunday.

Blessing of the Animals

Whether or not the SOC is observed, some parishes have either occasionally or annually held a 'Blessing of the Animals' liturgy. Sometimes these services are scheduled near St Francis Day on October 4 though it is important to note that this day does not take precedence over a Sunday and so the usual readings and prayers of the day must be used.

There are many reasons why such services are most effective when they take place at a time other than Sunday morning, as well as outdoors rather than in a church building. A Saturday or Sunday afternoon service can be a wonderful opportunity to reach out to members of the community, including those who are not comfortable entering a church building. In case of inclement weather, an alternate venue such as a church hall is useful.

Being outside or in a church hall encourages a very informal rite that accommodates the needs of animals and young children, allowing them to be wonderfully noisy and freely active. It also accommodates people who are afraid of dogs. Finally, it allows the freedom to choose just one or two short Scripture readings focussed on the theme, as well as limiting singing to a few short hymns, shortening the service as a whole.

Parishes in farming communities might choose to design 'blessings services' for farm animals as well as household pets. The Book of Occasional Celebrations offers two sets of rites (<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/OccasionalCelebrations.pdf>) which can be blended or used separately:

Asperges or sprinkling can augment or replace individual blessings of animals. Consider including a petition for people who have been recently bereaved by the death of their pet, while noting that the prayers in the Book of Occasional Celebrations include a concern for all creatures, not just domesticated pets.

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

It was mentioned that “a sense of flexibility” is necessary when observing the SOC. This is certainly the case if marking the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) on a Sunday near September 30. It is not necessary to emphasize creation themes when other serious concerns are at hand. Some parishes encourage people to wear orange t-shirts, taking a ‘photo op’ following the liturgy. That said, remember the NDTR does not take precedence over a Sunday.

In 2024 the Feast of St Michael and All Angels falls on Sunday, September 29. Of course, this feast is a day that **does** take precedence over a Sunday. Consider using one of the two alternate Collects of the Day found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-2019-updated-2024-03.pdf> on page 148.

If a parish wants to also acknowledge the NDTR it can easily make links between the propers of that day - with its themes of politics, cosmic evil and salvation through Christ - with the national need for truth and reconciliation. Using the Scripture readings as a lens to understand Canadian history can provide healing medicine to help bridge divisions between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

Among the resources for the NDTR are ‘A Litany for the Healing and Restoration of our Church’, found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Litany-for-Healing-and-Restoration.pdf> and ‘Remembering the Children’ found here: <http://www.rememberingthechildren.ca/tour/documents/prayer.pdf>. If desired, use one, not both, for the Prayers of the People, using them as written rather than shortening or adapting them. The intercessor who leads either litany needs to be conscious of its sensitivity and thus read it with appropriate solemnity. Short biddings offered prior to either litany will allow people to offer prayers for other concerns.

ALL SAINTS DAY

All Saints Day is celebrated on November 1 and can also be observed on the Sunday following November 1. There are many creative ways of observing All Saints. Future editions of this document will outline some of these, as well as ways to mark All Souls Day.

Meanwhile, consider including an alternative ‘Thanksgiving Over the Water’ during the Gathering of the Community on All Saints Day. The prayer can be followed by the sprinkling of the congregation. The words can be found here:

<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Thanksgiving-Over-the-Water-All-Saints-DaySunday.pdf>.

Six alternate Collects of the Day have been authorized for All Saints (two for each year). See pages 150-152: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-RCL-Collects-2019-updated-2024-03.pdf>.