

# ‘Season of Creation’ emphasizes creation care as a way for Episcopalians to care for neighbors

BY MELODIE WOERMAN

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*The logo of the Season of Creation features a river, echoing Isaiah 43:19: “Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.”*

[Episcopal News Service] The Season of Creation, which begins on Sept. 1 and concludes on Oct. 4, is more than just a time when Episcopalians can reflect on God’s act of creation, Delia Heck told Episcopal News Service. It’s also a time church members can be intentional about how they think about and act on the issues of climate change and caring for others.

Heck, who is a professor of environmental science at Ferrum College in Virginia, also is a member of The Episcopal Church’s Task Force on Care of Creation and Environmental Racism. She said that people increasingly are aware of the damaging effects of climate change, including the recent deadly fire on Maui, and those events point to how actions affect others. “When we look at issues of sustainability, what does loving your neighbor look like?” she said. “How is that lived out in a world with increasing disasters from extreme weather?”

Participating in the Season of Creation with Christians around the world is one way to explore that, she said. The ecumenical observance is bookended by two important dates – it begins on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and concludes on the feast of St. Francis, who is revered for his love of all creation.

The Anglican Communion is one of the ecumenical [partners](#) in this worldwide effort. It offers a list of resources through the [Anglican Communion Environmental Network](#).

The theme for this year’s observance is “Let Justice and Peace Flow,” quoting Amos 5:24: “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” The symbol is a river, echoing Isaiah 43:19: “Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.”

The Episcopal Church’s [Creation Care](#) ministry supports the Season of Creation and says on its website, “The Episcopal Church joins this international effort for prayer and action for climate justice and an end to environmental racism and ecological destruction.” It also suggests that churches consider holding an outdoor worship or ministry event during the month long observance.

It also provides a variety of [resources](#) that are geared to helping Episcopal congregations and individuals engage with the season. They include “[A Celebration Guide for Episcopal Parishes](#),” which is a list of liturgical resources authorized by 16 diocesan bishops for use during the season; [Episcopal Liturgical Resources for Honoring God in Creation](#), offered by The Episcopal Church’s Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music; and a “[Prophetic Voices](#)” podcast. (Heck is featured in the first podcast episode.)

Creation care is one of the three priorities Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has set out for The Episcopal Church as part of the [Jesus movement](#), along with evangelism and reconciliation.

Heck noted that caring for the Earth is a Christian principle at least as old as St. Francis himself (who died in 1226), and observing the Season of Creation is a way to be more mindful of our need to practice that. “How do we bring us back to the core of who we are as followers of Jesus?” she asked.

She added that if Christians are willing to ask hard questions about their own choices, from what to eat to what kind of car to drive, then making transformative change is possible. “That is where the church can and will make a tremendous impact on the world,” she said.

And if the church is serious about this work, young people will be watching, Heck added. “They are passionate about this,” she said, “and we become more relevant to them as an institution that cares deeply about it and that’s willing to be honest about it and work with their concerns, in a framework of love and mercy and grace.”

*—Melodie Woerman is a freelance writer and former director of communications for the Diocese of Kansas.*