



St Francis High Heaton

Worship - Community – Service

Notices, Readings & Prayers

6th September 2026 Christ in Creation

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This Sunday for the first time we mark the Festival of Christ in Creation. Nicholas Chamberlain is a former vicar of St George's Jesmond and is the present Bishop of Grantham. Here is a slightly edited version of a homily he wrote for the Diocese of Lincoln:

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 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 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.

Eco Tip

What to do with an old hot water bottle

It might come as news to some people that you are not supposed to keep a hot water bottle for more than two years! It is not easy to find but the date of manufacture is stamped on each hot water bottle. I bend the rules and stretch this to four or even five years but then they do have to be replaced. Ours are used only at the motorhome so don't get much use. I researched recycling of hot water bottles and drew a blank apart from a craft use. You can cut them up to make pan stands for the kitchen, cut small circles to use as grips for removing tight lids or stick strips to pan handles for insulation.

Jenny Germain

If you have a green tip to share contact jenny_germain@talk21.com

Monthly Litter Pick

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN ST FRANCIS ECO-CHURCH LITTER PICKERS on the first Saturday of each month. The next one will be Saturday 3rd October 10 - 11.30am, meet at church. All equipment provided, everyone welcome! *(children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult).*



Lent soup lunches!

The next soup lunch will be on Tuesday 6th October 12.30pm - 1.30pm, supporting *Practical Compassion for Destitute Children* working in the Holy Land.



Save the date! The Francis-tide Ceilidh will be on Saturday 3rd October from 6pm onwards. There is a list at the back of church for offers of food!

Worship & Prayers for The Festival of Christ in Creation

Opening Rite

If you're at home you might wish to light a candle, make sure you are sitting comfortably and take a few deep breaths to still yourself.

We gather in praise of the God
who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Prayers of Penitence

Let us confess our greed and repent of the ways in
which we have damaged God's good creation:

We confess to you our lack of care for the world you
have given us. Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

We confess to you
our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.
Christ have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

We confess to you
our failure to protect the environment.
Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse you from your sins,
and restore you in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

In a time of silence, let us pray that our worship will bring us closer to the one who has created all things.

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. **Amen**

Isaiah 55.12-end

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalm 96

/R: O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless his name;
tell out his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations
and his wonders among all peoples. **/R:**

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;

he is more to be feared than all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are but idols;

it is the Lord who made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him;

power and splendour are in his sanctuary. **/R:**

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples;
ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name;
bring offerings and come into his courts. /R:

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before him.
Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is king.
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity. /R:

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it;
Let the fields be joyful and all that is in them;
let all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the
Lord. /R:

For he comes, he comes to judge the earth;
with righteousness he will judge the world and the peoples
with his truth. /R:

Colossians 1.15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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.

This is the gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Commenting on John 1, Anthony de Mello writes, 'Look steadily at the darkness. It won't be long before you see the light. Gaze at things. It won't be long before you see the word ... And stop those frantic efforts to change flesh back into words. Words, words, words!' Many words have been written in the attempt to interpret and explain the meaning of this Gospel. A quick glance at the shelves of any academic library will reveal more books on John than on the other three Gospels put together. If we are set on reaching an intellectual understanding of this book, there is much to help us. But as de Mello indicates, there is a danger that in seeking to explain, to put meaning into words, we become

distracted and fail to 'see the light'. As Christians, we often burden ourselves and one another with the expectation that we should be able to explain everything about our faith. Do we secretly feel embarrassed, even ashamed, when we are unable to put the doctrine of the Trinity into words? Do we look to our clergy for a slick 'answer' to the problem of pain and suffering? Do we deny our children the opportunity to receive communion because they are too young to 'understand' what we, if we are honest, cannot comprehend ourselves? Today's readings deal with several interrelated and intellectually challenging concepts: creation, incarnation, redemption. They raise fundamental questions about the origins of the universe, the existence of evil, and the purposes of God. However, they do not attempt to answer these questions in abstract philosophical, theological or scientific terms. Instead, they offer us a series of pictures and images which draw us into a new way of looking at them. On one level, these passages present us with a series of pictures of the natural world which invite us to look at it afresh, marvelling at its variety, delighting in its order, revelling in its beauty, and so to praise the God who is revealed in his creation. But this God is shown to be far more than the architect, or the craftsman, or even the intelligence behind the design. Vivid, concrete images convey the reality of a God who is inextricably involved in his creation through the person of Jesus. This God infuses all life with his light. He lives with humanity, or, as the original Greek says, he pitches his tent among us. He unites and reconciles humankind through a living body of flesh and blood. As Eugene Peterson puts it, 'Jesus is the revelation of the God who created heaven and earth; he is also the revelation of the God who is with us, Immanuel'. In reflecting on these images, we can begin to grasp something of God's purpose as creator, and also of his continuing work as saviour and redeemer. For in entering his creation, and participating fully in its life, he confronts the darkness and the mess, and shows himself a God of love.

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Prayers

Spend a few moments praying for the people you know and love, for the world, for peace and for the relief of refugees everywhere

On the Festival of Christ in Creation

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. **Amen**

To be baptised today

Hannah Bobbie Lawson

Praying for the Earth

Farms and farmers

We pray for all who make their living from the land. Help them to contend with the vagaries of the weather and with the variability of the economic climate. Defend them from the threat of disease, and help them to protect the animals in their care. We ask for your blessing on farm shops and farmer's markets, and on all who buy and sell food locally.

Amen

From the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer for the Church

Porvoo Communion: Diocese of St Asaph (Church in Wales) and the Diocese of Salisbury

Anglican Communion: The Episcopal/Anglican Province of
Alexandria Archbishop Samy Shehata

Diocese of Møre: Advisor for Culture: John Erik Brakstad

Tynemouth Deanery: Pray today for all engaged in the Deanery
Planning Process in Tynemouth Deanery

From our Parish Prayer Cycle this week

Pray for the Cochrane Park Sports Centre, and for all working and
studying on the Northumbria University campus

For the sick and those being cared for in hospital or at home

Sheila Sidney-Wilmot, Maureen Webster, Pat Park, Neil Walker,
Sam Cole, Shirley Collingwood, Lynne Dryden, Corinne Harris, Jo
Whittam, Veronica Brown, Alastair Day, Jenny Freeman, baby
Gianna Skye and Daniel Hassan

For those in residential care

Doreen Richardson, Ida Smart, Irene Gibson, Tony Bartlett,
Jacqueline Pearson, Pat Bell and Pat Hindmarsh

For those whose year's minds were this past week

Margaret Crentsil, Olive Chisholm, Florence Moll, Tamar
Carpenter, Brynmor Lewis, George Reilly, Wyn Sture, Edward
Johnson, Andrew Topping and Mary Ludkin

For those whose year's minds are this coming week

Kathleen Hawdon, Russell Stewart, Jean Soppitt, Eric Grant, Annie Nockels, Kathleen Lacey, Thomas Richardson, Alan Sidney Wilmot and Lesley Holding

You might like to end your prayers with The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.

Amen

Let us bless the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Parish Directory

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We're open every Wednesday from 2 – 4pm for visitors of all ages, some from the congregation, others from further afield. Whether you're regular or it's your first time you'll be welcomed with friendly conversation and free refreshments!

We are also very grateful to our team of volunteers who run the sessions and would welcome anyone who would like to offer help, whether that be in the form of helping to set up the hall, making and serving drinks, welcoming new people or just being there to engage and interact with people – whatever your strengths might

be, they will be highly valued! Contact Helen Swann

placesofwelcomhighheaton@gmail.com or 07487 842 820