

Day of Care for Creation Offers Ecumenical Opportunities

The World Day of Prayer for the Care for Creation, a designation first [established by the Eastern Orthodox Church](#) in 1989, is Sept. 1.

The observance was expanded in 2007, [according to](#) the World Council of Churches, into a season known as “Creationtide” or “Time for Creation,” lasting from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4.

The Roman Catholic Church [affirmed this annual observance](#) in 2015, following the [release of “Laudato Si,”](#) Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment.

Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, [“first among equals” in the Eastern Orthodox Church](#), plan to issue on Friday a joint statement urging care for creation.

The pope previewed the statement on Wednesday during his weekly general audience, according to a Vatican Radio [report](#).

He said they would urge all Christians “to assume a respectful and responsible attitude towards Creation,” and “also appeal, to all who occupy influential roles, to listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most from ecological imbalances.”

In his 2015 letter designating Sept. 1 as the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation” for Catholics, Francis emphasized his hope that this would expand ecumenism among global Christians.

“The celebration of this Day, on the same date as the Orthodox Church, will be a valuable opportunity to bear witness to our growing communion with our Orthodox brothers and sisters,” he wrote. “It is my hope that this Day will in some way also involve other Churches and ecclesial Communities, and be celebrated in

union with similar initiatives of the World Council of Churches.”

The Baptist World Alliance, though it has not formally recognized the season of Creationtide, has [regularly discussed environmental matters](#) at its annual gatherings and passed formal resolutions on care for creation.

For example, [a formal resolution was passed in 2016](#) acknowledging human complicity in climate change and “urg[ing] global Baptists to develop a vibrant theology of creation care, educating and advocating for practices based on love of neighbor over economic gain.”

Resources are available to assist congregational leaders in planning observances on Sept. 1 and throughout Creationtide:

- EthicsDaily.com’s mini-site, [TheGreenBible.org](#), provides links to articles and videos focused on the environment and creation care.
- The [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s blog](#) has a number of articles related to these topics.
- “Quick Tips on Creation Care” and “Tips for Making Your Home and Church More Energy Efficient” are [among the resources offered](#) by the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.
- Creation Justice Ministries [partners with](#) a wide-ranging group of U.S. denominations, including American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and provides many [educational resources](#) to help local churches. ABC-USA [established a Creation Justice Network in 2016](#), which also has resources available.
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops [has compiled](#) Roman Catholic Church statements related to the environment along with other resources, such as a children’s storybook about caring for creation and a homily / sermon guide for ministers.
- The Church of England has [a PDF resource sheet](#) available for download, which includes biblical texts for preaching as well as prayers and songs for use in worship.

- Arthur Champion, environmental adviser to Gloucester Diocese in the United Kingdom, recently reflected on the season of Creationtide and provided links to resources on [the John Ray Initiative blog](#), a faith-based educational nonprofit whose current chairman is Baptist leader [John Weaver](#).