

Season of Creation Year A 2026

In the name of God the Creator, the Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Good morning and welcome to our annual Season of Creation celebration. The Season of Creation is part of our church calendar, beginning on September 1st and running through October 4th, which is the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. It started in 1989 and is now a worldwide ecumenical celebration. It is a special season when we take time to celebrate God as Creator, and we see Creation as a reflection and embodiment of God, as we read in Psalm 19: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.” —creation the divine ongoing act that calls all of us to love and care for this gift of God’s creation; and also to remember that we are part of—not separate from—the created order. It is a time for renewing and repairing and restoring our relationships with God, with one another, and with all of creation. Our Bishop Russell has written that the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast joins in this effort for prayer and action for environmental justice, and to put an end to the ecological destruction which now threatens all of life on Earth. This season invites us into a Creation-based vision of God, nature, and neighbor. We can and must imagine what it means to love our

home Earth, because in doing so we are loving God and one another. The planet needs us.

Each year the season has a new theme, and the theme for 2026 is “Living Water.” We borrow this theme from ancient Old Testament scripture, written thousand of years ago, from Ezekiel. The symbol this year is “Immersion in Living Water,” inspired by the prophet Ezekiel as he describes the “sacred river,” the water of life flowing from the throne of God, making the land a new paradise, providing hope for the suffering Israelites. Listen again to the words of Ezekiel chapter 47: “Wherever the river goes every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish...it will become fresh; and everything will live...on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.” When Ezekiel wrote this the Israelites were in exile and had lost everything. They were suffering. The theme “living water” explores Ezekiel as a powerful vision of hope and healing of the earth. The image of living water flowing from God’s sanctuary reveals divine healing that renews land, water, all living species, and human responsibility towards the whole creation. The symbol “Immersion in Living Water” tells us that in order to receive new life, we too must step into the water and also

become part of God's river of life, taking part in the healing of creation.

The theme living water this year is especially appropriate for our diocese. The diocesan Commission on the Integrity of Creation just a few weeks ago brought the diocese into a new ministry called "The Watershed of the Ecoregion of the Central Gulf Coast," the goal of which is protecting the waters of our watersheds emptying into the Gulf—that is the Gulf of Mexico!—and the environment as a whole. I have invited our guest speaker today, Blair Morrison, to talk about this new ministry. Blair is the lead scientist for the Mobile National Estuary Program, and is now a member of All Saints. Blair....

Thank you Blair. I believe you just said "sacred diversity," and "let us reflect on the bounties, blessings, and stories of our Coastal Alabama..." The entire creation is a blessing. It is all holy. It reminds me of the story of Moses and the burning bush. You'll remember the story. Where did Moses find God? It was not in a temple or religious building, but in the wilderness—on a mountaintop, a burning bush, in the wildness of nature. Few words echo through the ages as profoundly as God's words to Moses that day: "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." Try to imagine Moses' response to that encounter. It must have transformed his awareness of both God and the ground under his feet. Those

words “the place on which you are standing is holy ground” surely never left him. What if we let them haunt us too? What if we recalled them daily? How would they change who we are, our experience of God, and how we act toward the earth? Surely there is no better story for this season of Creation than this. We are all standing on holy ground.

Rev. Bob Donnell

