



# ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
SEASON OF CREATION (YEAR A, WEEK 3): WILDERNESS SUNDAY

## Liturgy of the Word

September 27, 2020      10 A.M.

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### SEASON OF CREATION

Christians around the world have begun to recognize the period from September 1 (the Global Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to October 4 (St. Francis of Assisi Day) annually as Creationtide or the Season of Creation. Anglican, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Christians observe this time as one for prayer and action on behalf of the natural environment. Among the leaders in the movement are the Anglican Communion Environmental Network and the World Council of Churches. Information about The Episcopal Church and Creation Care may be found at [www.episcopalchurch.org/creation-care](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/creation-care).

According to the Season of Creation website ([www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org)), “The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through repenting, repairing, and rejoicing together. During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home. This year, amid crises that have shaken our world, we’re awakened to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and each other. During the season this year, we enter a time of restoration and hope, a jubilee for our Earth, that requires radically new ways of living with creation. The Season of Creation unites the world’s 2.2 billion Christians around one shared purpose. With so much injustice all around us, now is the time for Christians everywhere to come together and show the world how to love each other and creation.”

St. Thomas's is recognizing the Season of Creation on the four Sundays from September 13 through October 4. As noted, our liturgy includes special elements from a variety of sources. Rather than the Revised Common Lectionary, it includes readings suggested by *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*. For Year A, the readings are “the Spirit series,” and the four Sundays are designated as, in order: Forest Sunday, Land Sunday, Wilderness Sunday, and River Sunday.

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### INTROIT

Comfort ye my people, saith your God;  
speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished,  
that her iniquity is pardoned.

Comfort ye my people

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,  
prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Words: Isaiah 40:1-3    Music: George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), *Messiah*, 1742

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### INVITATION TO WORSHIP [Hildegard of Bingen, from the “2020 Celebration Guide,” a Season of Creation resource]

We gather in the Name of the one Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all its creatures! Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in us all.

## HYMN

Beneath the cross of Jesus (498, *The Hymnal 1982*)

1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I fain would take my stand,  
 2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus mine eyes at times can see  
 3 I take, O cross, thy sha-dow for my a - bid - ing place;

the sha - dow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,  
 the ve - ry dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me;  
 I ask no o - ther sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;

a home with - in the wil - der-ness, a rest up - on the way,  
 and from my smit - ten heart with tears two won - ders I con - fess:  
 con - tent to let my pride go by, to know no gain nor loss,

from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat, and the bur - den of the day.  
 the won - ders of re - deem - ing love, and my un - wor - thi - ness.  
 my sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all the cross.

Words: Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane (1830-1869), alt. Music: *St. Christopher*; Frederick Charles Maker (1844-1927)OPENING ACCLAMATION [*"Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation and Various Rites and Prayer for Animals," the Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music*]

Presider: Blessed be the God of all creation.

People: And blessed be God's Holy Name for ever and ever. Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN [*"Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation and Various Rites and Prayer for Animals," the Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music*]

Presider

Let us confess our sin against God and God's creation. [Silence is kept.]

*Presider and People*

**Holy and merciful God,**

**we confess that we have failed to honor you**

**by rightly claiming our kinship with all your creatures.**

**We have walked heavily on your earth,**

**overused and wasted its resources,**

**taken for granted its beauty and abundance,**

**and treated its inhabitants unjustly,**

**holding future generations hostage to our greed.**

**Have mercy on us and forgive us our sin.**

**Renew in us the resolve to keep and conserve your earth**

**as you desire and intend,**

**with grateful and compassionate hearts,**

**through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Presider*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray.

O heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to recognize your gracious hand in all your works, that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of the One through whom all things were made, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.** [*the 2018 Book of Occasional Services*]

## THE FIRST LESSON

JOEL 1:8-10,17-20

Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests mourn, the ministers of the LORD. The fields are devastated, the ground mourns; for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails. The seed shrivels under the clods, the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined because the grain has failed. How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dazed. To you, O LORD, I cry. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field. Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 18:6-19

- 6 I called upon the LORD in my distress \*  
and cried out to my God for help.
- 7 He heard my voice from his heavenly dwelling; \*  
my cry of anguish came to his ears.
- 8 The earth reeled and rocked; \*  
the roots of the mountains shook; they reeled because of his anger.
- 9 Smoke rose from his nostrils and a consuming fire out of his mouth; \*  
hot burning coals blazed forth from him.
- 10 He parted the heavens and came down \*  
with a storm cloud under his feet.
- 11 He mounted on cherubim and flew; \*  
he swooped on the wings of the wind.
- 12 He wrapped darkness about him; \*  
he made dark waters and thick clouds his pavilion.
- 13 From the brightness of his presence, through the clouds, \*  
burst hailstones and coals of fire.
- 14 The LORD thundered out of heaven; \*  
the Most High uttered his voice.
- 15 He loosed his arrows and scattered them; \*  
he hurled thunderbolts and routed them.
- 16 The beds of the seas were uncovered, and the foundations of the world laid bare, \*  
at your battle cry, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.
- 17 He reached down from on high and grasped me; \*  
he drew me out of great waters.
- 18 He delivered me from my strong enemies and from those who hated me; \*  
for they were too mighty for me.
- 19 They confronted me in the day of my disaster; \*  
but the LORD was my support.

## THE SECOND LESSON

ROMANS 8:18-27

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ALLELUIA

Norah Duncan IV

*The Cantor sings the Gospel Alleluia once through, then the People join in singing.*

D      A/C#      G2/B      D/A      G      D/F#      A      D  
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

9      D      A/C#      G2/B      D/A      G      D/F#      A      D  
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor: Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: thy holy cities are a wilderness, Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation: our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee.

*The People sing the Alleluia again.*

## THE GOSPEL

MATTHEW 3:13-4:2

Presider: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

Presider: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## THE SERMON

### A LITURGICAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH [A New Zealand Prayer Book]

*Presider and People*

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.  
You create our world and give us life.  
Your purpose overarches everything we do.  
You have always been with us.  
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,  
good beyond all measure.  
You came to us before we came to you.  
You have revealed and proved  
your love for us in Jesus Christ,  
who lived and died and rose again.  
You are with us now.  
You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.  
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.  
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.  
You are our God. We worship you.**

### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE [*"Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation and Various Rites and Prayer for Animals," the Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music*]

*Intercessor and People*

Let us pray for the revealing of the reign of God in the world, now and always.

In the beginning, **God was.**

Here and now, **God is.**

In the future, **God will be.**

Creator of earth, sea, and sky, kindle the fire of your Spirit within us, that we may be bold to heal and defend the earth; and pour your blessing upon all who work for the good of the planet. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Breath of life, receive our thanks for the beauty of our local habitat and all who dwell in it, and grant us the wisdom and will to conserve it. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Source of life, heal and redeem the wounds of your creation, and visit the places and people who suffer from our indifference, neglect, and greed. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Lover of all you have made, we thank you for the wondrous diversity of your creatures, and we pray for their well-being. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Author of the book of nature, receive our gratitude for places of restoration and healing, and continue to bless those places that feed our lives and spirits. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Wise Creator, whose works are full of mystery, give us wonder and appreciation for your creatures with whom we find ourselves in conflict. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Giver of all good gifts, awaken us daily to our dependence upon your bounty, and make us always thankful for the abundance of your blessings. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Divine Physician, heal our communities, especially those where neglect, greed, or violence inflict suffering upon people and other creatures. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Comforter of all the earth, sustain the people of this congregation who desire or need your presence and help. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Rock and refuge of all your creatures, receive into everlasting mercy all those who have died. God, Giver of life, **Hear our prayer.**

Good Shepherd of these your sheep, hear the prayers of praise, celebrations, and concern that we now offer in the stillness of our hearts. [*Silence is kept.*]

*Presider*

Eternal God, come and fill our hearts with your love. Help us speak when many keep silent, help us stand for what is right when many sit in indifference. Increase our faith and charity, until your kingdom comes and heaven and earth rejoice in everlasting glory; through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

Presider: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Your ongoing financial support of St. Thomas's Church is especially appreciated at this time. To give online with a debit or credit card, go to the Home page of the Church website ([www.stthomasnewhaven.org](http://www.stthomasnewhaven.org)), and click GIVE NOW. If you are viewing this document electronically, you can simply [CLICK HERE](#). Know also that the Church office is able to process checks that have been mailed. Thank you!*

## OFFERTORY HYMN

Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing (344, *The Hymnal 1982*)

1 Lord, dis - miss us with thy bless - ing; fill our hearts with  
 2 Thanks we give and a - dor - a - tion for thy Gos - pel's  
 3 so that when thy love shall call us, Sa - vior, from the

joy and peace; let us each, thy love pos - sess - ing,  
 joy - ful sound: may the fruits of thy sal - va - tion,  
 world a - way, fear of death shall not ap - pall us,

tri - umph in re - deem-ing grace: O re - fresh us,  
 in our hearts and lives a - bound: ev - er faith-ful,  
 glad thy sum - mons to o - obey. May we ev - er,

O re - fresh us trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.  
 ev - er faith-ful to thy truth may we be found;  
 may we ev - er reign with thee in end-less day.

Words: Attributed to John Fawcett (1739/40-1817) Music: *Sicilian Mariners*, Sicilian melody; first published *The European Magazine and London Review*, 1792, alt.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

*You are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in the language of your choice.*

Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your Name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.  
 Give us today our daily bread.  
 Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those  
 who sin against us.  
 Save us from the time of trial,  
 and deliver us from evil.  
 For the kingdom, the power,  
 and the glory are yours,  
 now and for ever. Amen.

## A PRAYER OF COMMUNION

*Presider and People*

Almighty God, you promised through our Lord Jesus Christ that where two or three are gathered together in his name, you will be in the midst of them. We ask you to be in the midst of us now, though we are far apart, and to bind us to one another, and to you, through the power of your Holy Spirit. Just as you, Father, are in the Son, and he in you, so may we also be in you, and Christ in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL [*"2020 Celebration Guide," a Season of Creation resource*]

*Presider*

May God who established the dance of creation,  
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,  
Who transforms chaos to order,  
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church  
To reflect God's glory in creation. **Amen.**

Presider: Let us bless the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## ANTHEM

O for the wings of a dove

O for the wings of a dove!  
Far away would I rove!

In the wilderness build me a nest,  
And remain there for ever at rest.

Words: William Bartholomew (1793–1867), after Psalm 55:7-8    Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), *Hear my prayer*, 1844

*After the Anthem, you are invited to stay online for virtual Coffee Hour. Please see the Parish Enews for the latest announcements and information.*



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## Announcements

*Stay in touch! Subscribe to the Weekly Parish Enews and "like" St. Thomas's on Facebook.*

The Season of Creation continues today with "Wilderness Sunday." Thanks to our preacher, Sean Duffy!

Sean is Professor of Political Science at Quinnipiac University. Since January of 2018, he has also served as the Executive Director of the [Albert Schweitzer Institute](#). He has taught at Quinnipiac since the fall of 1998, and teaches courses on foreign policy, international relations, international political economy, environmental politics and identity politics. He holds degrees from Brown University (BA: Political Science), the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (MA: International Development), and Yale University (PhD: Political Science). Before beginning his doctoral program, he worked for three years as an Information Analyst at the U.S. Agency for International Development, in Washington, D.C.

At the Albert Schweitzer Institute, Sean has developed programs that involve students in local and global community to address issues related to Schweitzer's legacy in Environmental Sustainability, Human Health and Development, and Peace and Human Rights. Programs have particularly emphasized Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. Sean works with the Hamden Food Security Task Force, and has developed opportunities for students to engage in Food Recovery, Community Gardening, and related programs here in Hamden, and abroad in Guatemala and Peru. For the past several months, he has co-chaired Quinnipiac's Sustainability Planning Committee. His research and teaching interests include understanding the dynamics of conflict, peace processes, and reconciliation in divided societies.

Sean has served since the summer of 2019 as the President of the [Edgerton Park Conservancy](#) (EPC). The mission of the EPC is to preserve, restore and enhance the park, and to promote it as a place for public use and enjoyment. The recent (Fall 2019) completion of a Landscape Framework Plan provides guidance and direction for advancing this mission into the second century of this distinct landscape, to ensure that the design elements that make the park so enjoyable for those who visit can be maintained into an era of environmental instability and change.

**Next Sunday, October, 4, the fourth and final Sunday of the Season of Creation, parishioner Jocelyn Tidwell is preaching.** Jocelyn is the Farm Manager for [Gather New Haven](#), the organization formed from the recent merger of New Haven Farms and New Haven Land Trust. It happens to be the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, so have your pets ready to be part of a short Blessing of the Animals rite during the service.

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## Serving Today

**Presider:** The Rev. Keri Aubert

**Preacher:** Sean Duffy

Dr. Noah Horn

**Lectors:** Claire Scully, Jenny Chavira

**Intercessor:** Bill English

## This Week's Prayer Intentions

**Pray for those in any need or trouble, especially:**  
all who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic,  
especially those who work in healthcare and those  
who have lost their livelihood

**Pray for those who have died, especially:**  
Kellie Echols (daughter-in-law of Greg and Valerie  
Echols)

### In the Episcopal Church in Connecticut Cycle of Prayer, pray for:

The 236th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (October 14–18)

### In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for:

the Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan

### In the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, pray for:

Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela

## Leadership at St. Thomas's

### Church Vestry

Kyle Holton (Senior Warden)

Denise Terry (Junior Warden)

Ricardo Chavira (Treasurer)

Linda Meyer (Clerk)

Greg D'Andrea

Bill English

Chris Martinez

Alexandria Robison

Catherine Stricklan

The Rev. Keri Aubert (Rector)

### Church (Volunteer) Associate Priests

The Rev. Canon K. Dexter Cheney

The Rev. Jakki Flanagan

### Day School Board of Trustees

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## ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH & DAY SCHOOL

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