

ASSISI CONFERENCE – PROGRAM (Detailed)

For remote participants: times listed are for **Central European Summer Time** (*time conversions [here](#)*)

See: [Short Program with Zoom links for Breakouts](#)

and [Conference overview](#)

DAY #1 – May 5th

8:30am – Opening prayer service

Featuring representatives of world communions present: Anglican Communion, Baptist World Alliance, Chaldean Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, Disciples of Christ, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Lutheran World Federation, Mennonite World Conference, Moravian Church, Pentecostal World Fellowship, Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Evangelical Alliance, World Methodist Council, World Council of Churches.

9:15am – Welcome greetings

Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay (*World Council of Churches*), Bishop Anthony Poggo & Rev. Dr. Rachel Mash (*Anglican Communion*), Rev. Dr. Antoine Al Ahmar (*Middle East Council of Churches*), Rev. Tonio dell'Olio (*PCC*).

9:30am – Introductory Address – An Ecumenical Dream for the Third Millennium

Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (*Chairman, World Council of Churches*)

9:45 - 11:15am | Plenary #1 – Nicaea, the Triune Creator, and Creation Day

Dialogue between leaders from various denominations about the Nicene-Constantinopolitan confession of the Triune God as Creator and the opportunity of this feast/festival of Creation to celebrate this mystery more intentionally in our respective liturgical/worship traditions.

Bishop Anthony Ball (*Anglican Communion*), Bishop Athenagoras of Thermo (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt (*Lutheran World Federation*), Dr. Thomas Yoder Neufeld (*Mennonite World Conference*), Rev. Dr. Kyrillos ElMacari (*Coptic Orthodox Church*), Dr. Harold Hunter (*Pentecostal World Fellowship*), Rev. Dora Arce Valentin (*World Communion of Reformed Churches*).

11:45am - 1:15pm | Plenary #2 – The Signs of the Times challenge our Liturgical Life – *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*

The signs of the times of the ecological crisis have acquired the proportion of no less than a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, interrogating profoundly the attention provided by liturgy to the created world and the mystery of Creation. The “Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi” axiom will be assessed, while proposing Southern and Eastern insights to enrich the exploration of the new feast, given that Christians from those regions are most attuned to Creation and suffer the harshest impacts of the ecological crisis. Attention will also be given to inadequate liturgical inculturation, still excessively Western in most regions.

Rev. Jacynthia Murphy (*Anglican Indigenous Network & Anglican Church in Aotearoa-NZ & Polynesia*), Rev. Dr. Agenor Brighenti (*Amazonian Ecclesial Conference’s Liturgy Commission & Latin American Episcopal Council*), Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mtata (*World Council of Churches*), Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim (*Earlham School of Religion*), Rev. Dr. Augustinos

1:15 - 3:00pm | *Lunch break*

3:00 - 4:30pm | **Plenary #3 – The Feast’s Title: Christological, Trinitarian, or other?**

“Creation Day” has gained much popularity in recent decades, but what should be its official title in liturgical books so as to merit the status of a liturgical feast/festival? This panel of liturgical theologians from various denominations will discuss both the Christological nature of the liturgical year and the Trinitarian dimension of the mystery of Creation, to then discern the question about the framing and title of the new liturgical feast/festival, particularly the articulation of its Christological-Trinitarian dimensions and of the different meanings of the word ‘Creation’ (the mystery of God’s creative act and the created world).

Rev. Christopher Irvine (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation & Mirfield Liturgical Institute), Rev. Dr. Frank Senn (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary), Rev. Dr. Luigi Girardi (Istituto di Liturgia Pastorale S.Giustina), Rev. Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes (Union Theological Seminary), Dr. Sarah Kathleen Johnson (Mennonite Church Canada), Dr. Basilius Groen (Pontifical Oriental Institute), Moderator: Rev. Ingrid Noren Nilsson (World Council of Churches).

4:45 - 6:15pm | **Breakout sessions – Round #1**

A. **This Feast’s Ecumenical Significance: Unprecedented since 1456? – Historical Lessons and Opportunities for Unity**

This Feast process has very few precedents in history, particularly after the 1054 schism. While there are comparable initiatives such as those of the common Western lectionaries (1960s - 1970s) and of the common Easter date (currently underway), the most recent precedent of a new liturgical feast that is shared across East and West probably is the Feast of the Transfiguration in 1456. Ecumenists from various traditions will discuss the ecumenical significance and opportunities of this Feast of Creation process.

Rev. Dr. Simone Sinn (Societas Oecumenica), Dr. Elizabeth Newman (Baptist World Alliance), Rev. Dr. Augustinos Bairactaris (Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete), Rev. Garen Yosoukian (Armenian Orthodox Church & Middle East Council of Churches), Dr. Sandra Ferreiro (Focolare Movement), Moderator: Rev. Dr. Philip Goyret (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross)

B. **The Feast’s Spatial Considerations – At Church and in the “Cathedral of Creation”**

What spatial liturgical considerations are to be kept in mind when celebrating the Feast of Creation? On one hand, how could indoor celebrations at church highlight creation themes on the special occasion of this feast? On the other hand, what considerations are to be made in outdoor liturgical celebrations of the feast in the “Cathedral of Creation” itself? And any region-specific factors or inculturation considerations?

Rev. Dr. Luiz Carlos Teixeira Coelho (State University of Rio de Janeiro & Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil), Rev. Michael Dyer (Australian Catholic University), Dr. Julia Helmke (Lutheran Church of Hannover), Dr. Girolamo Pugliesi (Istituto di Liturgia Pastorale S.Giustina & PCC), Moderator: Dr. Angela McCarthy (University of Notre Dame Australia)

C. **The Feast’s Title: Christological, Trinitarian, or other? (Continued)**

This is a continuation of plenary session #3 on this topic, where liturgical theologians representing various communions will discuss both the Christological nature of the liturgical year and the Trinitarian dimension of the mystery of Creation, to then discern the question about the framing and title of the new liturgical feast.

Rev. Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker (Boston University), Dr. Jason McFarland (Australian Catholic University), plus the special participation of speakers of the preceding plenary session #3. Moderator: Dr. Kimberly Belcher (University of Notre Dame).

7pm | **Evening Prayer**, animated by Lutherans (not live-streamed)

DAY #2 – May 6th

8:30 - 8:50am | **Opening Prayer**, animated by Eastern Churches *(not live-streamed)*

9:00 - 10:30am | **Plenary #4 – Creation Day: its Ancient History, Contemporary Adoption, and Future Potential – Continental perspectives**

An exploration of the history of Creation Day (September 1st), both its ancient Byzantine roots and its contemporary adoption since the Ecumenical Patriarchate's invitation of 1989, followed by a panel dialogue between representatives of continental bodies – both ecumenical and Roman Catholic – assessing its adoption so far and its significance based on the distinct realities of each continent.

Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis (*Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece*), Rev. Claire des Mesnards (*Conference of European Churches*), Bishop Allwyn D'Silva (*Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*), Rev. Dr. Antoine Al Ahmar (*Middle East Council of Churches*), Frances Namoumou (*Pacific Conference of Churches*), Bishop Lizardo Estrada (*Latin American Episcopal Council*), Bishop John Kobina Louis (*Symposium of African Episcopal Conferences*), Moderator: Rev. Dr. Simone Sinn (*Societas Oecumenica*).

11:00 - 11:30am | **Plenary #5 – The Feast's Title: Recap dialogue**

A continuation of panel #3 and its subsequent breakout session (on Day 1), drawing some initial conclusions about the question of the title and nature of the liturgical feast.

Rev. Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker (*Boston University*), Dr. Jason McFarland (*Australian Catholic University*), Rev. Ingrid Noren Nilsson (*WCC*), Moderator: Rev. Jérôme Guingand (*Jungmann Society for Jesuits and Liturgy*)

11:45am - 1:15pm | **Breakout sessions – Round #2**

A. The Feast's Lectionary Readings, session #1 – New Testament

An exploration of the rich treasure of Creation-related biblical options to be featured as lectionary readings to celebrate the new feast. The Consultation on Common Texts (North American ecumenical body) will present its proposals for the Revised Common Lectionary, and biblists from other regions will share their perspectives.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay and Rev. Eileen Scully (*Consultation on Common Texts*), Sr. Dr. Rekha Chennattu (*Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*), Dr. Cherryl Hunt (*University of Exeter*), Dr. Emanuela Buccioni (*Istituto Superiore di Scienze Religiose della Toscana*), Moderator: Rev. Christopher Irvine (*International Anglican Liturgical Consultation & Mirfield Liturgical Institute*).

B. Southern Eco-theological, Indigenous, and Liturgical Perspectives about the Feast (Continued)

This is a continuation of plenary session #2 ("The Signs of the Times challenge our Liturgical Life"), enriching the Feast of Creation dialogue with further insights from indigenous wisdom and Southern eco-theology based on the lived reality of Christians in the Global South, who are most attuned to Creation and suffer unjustly the harshest impacts of the ecological crisis.

Dr. Ernst Conradie (*University of the Western Cape*), Sr. Elizabeth Carranza (*Laudato Si' Movement Philippines*), Rev. Dr. Stephen Burns (*Pilgrim Theological College*), Alirio Cáceres Aguirre (*Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosos*), Moderator: Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim (*Earlham School of Religion*)

C. Creation Day, the Season of Creation, and Ecumenical Action

Most denominations are already active in celebrating the Season of Creation (Sept 1 - Oct 4) that flows from Creation Day, so this workshop will be an opportunity to introduce the season and plan joint action during the larger season this year, with tangible resources and ideas for the Christian family to raise a prophetic voice to care for creation. A reference will be made to the similar nature of the Season of Creation and the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" – ecumenical observances that are not part of liturgical calendars, but are grounded in and inspired by liturgical feasts.

Moderator: Henrik Grape (*World Council of Churches*), Rev. Dr. Rachel Mash (*Anglican Communion Environment Network*), Rev. Aksel Lund (*Church of Norway*), Michael Terrien (*CADEIO*), Aphrodite Peponis (*Ecumenism Metro Chicago*), Kimberly Belcher (*University of Notre Dame*), Rev. David Coleman (*EcoCongregation Scotland*).

D. Contemporary Christian music to celebrate the Feast

Featuring artists that have been producing creation-related Christian music, this session will be an exploration of songs that could be sung outside the liturgical setting – or perhaps also liturgically – to celebrate the mystery of Creation.

Jason Gray (ASCAP award-winning artist), Leslie Parker (A New Heaven and A New Earth), Antonio Caschetto (Artists for Creation & Laudato Si' Center), Moderator: Rev. Einar Tjelle (Church of Norway)

1:15 - 3:00pm – | **Lunch break**

3:00 - 4:20pm | **Breakout sessions – Round #3**

A. The Feast's Lectionary Readings, session #2 – Old Testament

An exploration of the rich treasure of Creation-related biblical options to be featured as lectionary readings to celebrate the new feast. The Consultation on Common Texts (North American ecumenical body) will present its proposals for the Revised Common Lectionary, and biblists from other regions will share their perspectives.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay and Rev. Eileen Scully (Consultation on Common Texts), Dr. Richard Bauckham (Ridley Hall, Cambridge), Rev. Dr. Fidel Oñoro (Latin American Episcopal Council & Universidad Minuto de Dios), Rev. Dr. Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon (Society of Asian Biblical Studies & Pilgrim Theological College). Moderator: Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond (Laudato Si' Research Institute).

B. The Feast's Liturgical Prayers, session #1 – Eucharistic Prayers

An exploration of various Eucharistic prayers to celebrate the Feast/Festival, proposed from the perspective of mainline Protestant and Anglo-Catholic traditions – not aiming for uniformity, but for sharing, inspiration, and cross-pollination.

Dr. Gail Ramshaw (formerly La Salle University), Rev. Thapelo Masemola (Anglican Church of Southern Africa), Moderator: Rev. Allison Werner Hoenen (Lutheran World Federation)

C. The 'Via Creationis', Science, and Creation Day – From conflict to harmony

With the backdrop of the turbulent history of the faith-science dialogue, this session will explore how Creation Day is helping (or could help) navigate that complex dialogue. In particular, this session will introduce and explore the 'Via Creationis' (also known as 'The Way of Creation'), a devotional practice that is becoming increasingly popular in Creation Day celebrations, inspired by the 'Via Crucis' while helping satisfy the pastoral need for deeper reflection on Creation and the compatibility of faith and science.

Rev. John Leydon and Sr. Elizabeth Carranza (Laudato Si' Movement Philippines), Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Smith (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation), Rev. Dr. Giadio De Biasio (ISSR Area Casertana)

D. Liturgical Music to celebrate the Feast

Facilitated by The Hymn Society, this session will be an exploration of hymns – old and new – that could be sung to celebrate the mystery embodied by the new feast. It will build on a contest by The Hymn Society to identify hymns for the feast.

Facilitated by Dr. Carl Bear (The Hymn Society) and Dr. Jason McFarland (Australian Catholic University). Speakers to be announced.

4:45 - 6:00pm | **Plenary #6 – Creation in Scripture and Lectionary options for the Feast**

A plenary discussion to recap the conversations had over two preceding breakout sessions (earlier that same day) on New Testament and Old Testament readings, respectively, reviewing the rich treasure of biblical texts about the mystery of Creation as an input for the discernment of lectionary options to celebrate the new feast. The Consultation on Common Texts will have a central role given the process underway to add the feast to the Revised Common Lectionary.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay (Consultation on Common Texts), Rev. Eileen Scully (Consultation on Common Texts), Rev. Christopher Irvine (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation & Mirfield Liturgical Institute), Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond (Laudato Si' Research Institute); with the participation of speakers from preceding biblical workshops: Dr. Richard Bauckham (Ridley Hall, Cambridge), Rev. Dr. Fidel Oñoro (Latin American Episcopal Council), Rev. Dr. Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon (Society of Asian Biblical Studies), Sr. Dr. Rekha Chennattu (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences), Dr. Emanuela Buccioni (ISSR Toscana), Dr. Cheryl Hunt (University of Exeter). Moderator: Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross (World Methodist Council)

6:30pm – **Evening Prayer**, animated by Roman Catholics (not live-streamed)

8:30 - 10:00pm | **In Memoriam: Pope Francis (1936-2025) – Film Screening & Dialogue**

Optional program to honor the life of Pope Francis through a screening of the YouTube Originals documentary film "The Letter: A Message for our Earth" (see [trailer](#)), which features both the Pope and scenes shot in Assisi, followed by a dialogue about Laudato Si' and Pope Francis' legacy.

DAY #3 – May 7th

7:30 - 8:30am | **Oceania & Asia** regional dialogues (1:30pm Manila / 3:30pm Sydney) | Other regions will meet [later](#)

8:30 - 8:50am | **Opening Prayer**, animated by Anglicans (not live-streamed)

9:00 - 10:15am | **Plenary #7 – The Date of the Feast**

"Creation Day" has been traditionally celebrated on September 1st (or on the subsequent Sunday) in recent decades, in line with its symbolism as the liturgical feast that opens the Eastern Orthodox church year. This session will explore the question about the date of the feast/festival in other churches who will institute it in their respective liturgical calendars, i.e. if it should continue to be anchored on September 1st or if it should be anchored on the September equinox – or if other considerations are to be explored.

Dr. Louk Andrianos (World Council of Churches), Dr. Simone Morandini (Pontifical University Antonianum), Dr. Sr. Carmel Pilcher (formerly Pacific Regional Seminary). Moderator: Dr. Audrey Seah (College of the Holy Cross)

10:45am - 12:15pm | **Breakout sessions – Round #4**

A. **Creation, Incarnation, Paschal Mystery – Interconnected Mysteries, Interconnected Feasts**

A session to deepen the reflection about the mystery and the feast of Creation from the perspective of systematic theology, with special reference to mysteries that are celebrated by other liturgical feasts, shedding light on the interdependence of these three theological mysteries and of those three feasts of the liturgical year.

Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond (Istituto Laudato Si', Università di Oxford), Dr. Declan O'Byrne (Sophia University Institute), Dr. Elizabeth Groppe (University of Dayton), Moderator: Dr. Mark Clavier (Anglican Communion).

B. **Preaching and Creation Day**

This session will explore the preparation of sermons to celebrate the Feast of Creation, with particular attention to the practice and contexts of Free Church traditions that do not necessarily use a Lectionary, while also relevant to all other liturgical traditions. Bottom line, how can the word of God challenge and inspire us in our relationship both with the Creator and Creation?

Dr. Harold Hunter (Pentecostal World Fellowship), Rev. Dr. Dave Bookless (Lausanne Movement), Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (Episcopal/Anglican Church), Rev. Luca Baratto (Federation of Italian Evangelical Churches), Moderator: Rev. Samuel Van Der Maas (World Evangelical Alliance)

C. **The Feast's Liturgical Prayers, session #2 – Non-Eucharistic Texts**

Beyond the Eucharistic Prayers explored in an earlier session, this will be an exploration of other liturgical prayers to celebrate the Feast/Festival: collects, prayers of confession/absolution, intercessory prayers, and Daily Office prayers, proposed from the perspective of Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions. A reference will be made about what should be the criteria and constraints for new text for this feast.

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Smith (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation), Dr. Catherine Vincie (formerly Aquinas Institute of Theology), Moderator: Rev. Allison Werner Hoenen (Lutheran World Federation)

D. **Liturgical Art for the Feast**

Mindful that visual arts have a key role in liturgy and in the reception of new feast amongst the faithful, this session will explore how artists can contribute to the process. It will be facilitated by the organization 'Art and Christianity'.

Laura Moffatt (Art and Christianity), Dr. Siobhán Jolley (National Gallery & University of Manchester), Charles Pickstone (Art and

12:30 - 1:15pm | **Plenary #8 – From Dream to Bloom: Introduction**

Stocktake and learnings from the first year of Feast proposals in various denominational governance bodies, as well as an overview of the proposed ecumenical process moving forward. (This session is intentionally brief as it introduces the subsequent regional breakout sessions and the closing plenary about the next steps.)

Neil Vigers (Anglican Communion, on behalf of world communions who co-convene), plus representatives from regional and national denominational bodies. Moderator: Corinne Bitaud (Eglise Protestante Unie de France).

1:15 - 3:00pm | **Lunch break**

3:00 - 4:15pm | **Breakout sessions (inc. Regional dialogues) – Round #5**

- **Beyond the Feast – Uplifting Creation in liturgy at large**

Given that a new feast is not enough to underscore Creation's central-yet-unnoticed role in our liturgical life, what else could be done to uplift Creation in liturgy? Complementary projects will be explored, such as highlighting all Sunday celebrations as a weekly feast of both creation and redemption, stronger creation themes in the lectionary for other feasts and seasons throughout the year, and more.

Rev. Dr. Benjamin Stewart (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago), Lisa Dahill (Hartford University), Samuel Torvend (Pacific Lutheran University).

- **From Dream to Bloom (continued): Regional dialogues**

These sessions will be a continuation of Plenary #8, serving as an opportunity for delegates to gather and discuss plans at a regional level to prepare for the implementation of the new feast. What are the main opportunities and challenges to official uptake of the Feast in our national churches and at parish level? What are some concrete next steps – both ecumenically and denominationally – to leverage those opportunities and overcome those challenges?

- **Africa** dialogue
- **Europe** dialogue
- **Latin America** dialogue
- **Middle East** dialogue
- **North America** dialogue

*** Oceania & Asia dialogues will take place earlier, at 7:30am CEST / 1:30pm Manila / 3:30pm Sydney.*

4:30 - 6:15pm | **Closing plenary**

From Dream to Bloom: What next? – Denominational perspectives

Featuring closing remarks from representatives of world communions present.

Anglican Communion (Rev. Dr. Mark Clavier), Baptist World Alliance (Lina Sawan), Catholic Church (Bp. Lizardo Estrada for Roman rite & Bp. Felix Dawood Al Shabi for Eastern rites), Coptic Orthodox Church / Oriental Orthodox communion (Rev. Dr. Kyrillos ElMacari), Disciples of Christ (Robert Welsh), Ecumenical Patriarchate (Bishop Athenagoras of Therme), Lutheran World Federation (Rev. Allison Werner Hoenen), Mennonite World Conference (Dr. Thomas Yoder Neufeld), Moravian Church (Jørgen Helge Bøytler), Pentecostal World Fellowship (Dr. Harold Hunter), Salvation Army (Major Heather Poxon), World Communion of Reformed Churches (Rev. Tara Curlewis), World Evangelical Alliance (Rev. Samuel Van der Maas), World Methodist Council (Rev. Tony Franklin-Ross), World Council of Churches (Rev. Dr. Ulrich Moeller), Middle East Council of Churches (Rev. Dr. Antoine Al Ahmar).

6:30 - 7:00pm | **Closing Prayer**, animated by Reformed *(not live-streamed)*