

September 1, Creation in Christ A (Genesis 1:1?2:3 or Genesis 2:4?25; Psalm 148:1?14; Acts 17:22a, 24?28; John 1:1?5)

There is nothing in us that is not also in earth, sun, stars, and everything composed of matter.

by [Frank C. Senn](#) in the [September 2026](#) issue
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This is an exciting day in the ecumenical Christian world: Churches across the globe have agreed to observe September 1 as the Feast of Creation in Christ. This is the first truly ecumenical feast—appearing in both Eastern and Western church calendars—since the fourth century. While worldwide ecological concerns lay behind the impetus for this project, it is not another Earth Day. It is a christological festival at which to recognize and celebrate the creative work of the triune God (see cover story, p. 40). Indeed, as indicated by the psalm the lectionary has assigned, this is a day for cosmological praise. Psalm 148 calls on a long series of all the elements of the universe to “praise the Lord!”

This new set of lectionary texts includes one that is assigned for all three years: John 1:1–5. This reading brings out the christological emphasis of “Creation in Christ.” It proclaims that “all things” came into being through the Word (*Logos*) of God who was “in the beginning . . . with God” and who “was God.” Many commentators believe that the whole prologue to the Gospel of John (1:1–18) is based on an early Christian hymn that has little to do with the substance of the gospel. “In the beginning was the Word” places the *Logos* before creation. There can be no speculation on how the *Logos* came to be; it simply “was God.” What came to be through the *Logos* was, generically, “life.” Psalm 33:6 indicates that by “the word of God” and “the breath of God’s mouth” the heavens and all things were made. Creation was a trinitarian undertaking.

Paul, in his address to the Greeks at the Areopagus, notes many temples of local gods in Athens but proclaims a God who made heaven and earth and needs no temple made with hands. Nevertheless, the God whom Paul proclaims is not far from those who search for God because, as a Greek poet said, “In God we live and move and have our being.” To find God we can look at the creation around us and within ourselves. Consistently, the God of the scriptures is both transcendent and immanent.

We see this in the choice of readings from Genesis 1 or 2. Genesis 1 (the E or Elohim text) provides a God who speaks in the majestic “we” when God says, “let make humankind in our image.” God speaks and it is done. In Genesis 2 (the J text), the Lord (YHWH) gets down on hands and knees to fashion the man (Adam) from the dust of the earth, with the help of the spring of water that sprung up from the desert.

In Genesis 1, the pre-created world is a formless watery void. A wind of God sweeps over the waters and brings order out of chaos. There follows a poetic description of the progressive “days” of creation, ending with the establishment of the sabbath. This is a theological treatise against Babylonian creation myths. It gives no credence to the gods and goddesses identified with different parts of creation, asserting instead that Elohim set the parts in their places, and what God created God called “good” or “very good.” The Christian tradition has seen in the Hebrew “Elohim” a plural or triune God that encompasses word and wind.

In Genesis 2, YHWH breathes into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life. Then the acts of creation follow, and Adam is given the scientific task of naming the plants and animals. It is an overwhelming task because of the

abundance of created things, and Adam can find no helper among the animals. So YHWH puts Adam to sleep and creates Eve out of Adam's fractured rib. On seeing Eve, Adam recognizes "bone of my bone" and "flesh of my flesh," an equal who can join him in his task. This leads up to the institution of marriage text, in which the man and woman leave their families of origin, cling to each other, and become "one flesh."

Finally, note the cosmological dimension in Genesis 2. If Adam (and Eve by derivation) were created from the dust of the earth, they and we embody the material elements of the universe. There is nothing in us that is not also in earth, sun, stars, and everything composed of matter. When "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), the Word's flesh in Jesus was composed of that same matter. By virtue of the two natures of Christ, materiality has been taken into God.

Our access to God in Christ is through the material elements of the sacraments. Theologies of the sacraments insist on their materiality, using water, oil, bread, and wine; by Word and Spirit these elements become means of grace. We celebrate Creation in Christ also in the sacraments that are, by Word and the Spirit, means of grace.