

SEASON OF CREATION

2025 THEME

Each year, the Season of Creation Ecumenical Steering Committee proposes a theme for the Season of Creation.

This year's theme is "Peace with Creation", inspired by Isaiah 32:14-18:

"For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks. Until a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness, and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (NRVUE)

War on Creation

"The palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks" (Isaiah 32:14).

The prophet Isaiah portrays a desolate Creation, devoid of peace due to injustice and the broken relationship between God and humankind. Devastated cities and wastelands reflect the destructive impact that human activities can have on Earth. Animals readily move in and claim parts of what was once an exclusively human habitat, as if human settlement had deprived them of sufficient space. While the joy of a pasture for animals (Isaiah 32:14) is undoubtedly a good thing in itself, it comes at the cost of human displacement due to conflict.

Though God's plan for Creation is rooted in justice and peace, human sin disrupts this, leaving Creation in ruin—from wealthy palaces to poor farmlands, forests, and oceans. Isaiah vividly describes the results of human estrangement from Creation. Moreover, the abandoned and ruined watchtower and palace (or citadel, in some translations) suggest that warfare is ultimately frustrated by God.

Peace is more than just the absence of war. In the Hebrew Bible, shalom represents a far deeper concept—one that extends beyond the absence of conflict to the full restoration of broken relationships, as illustrated in Isaiah's vision. This restoration encompasses our relationship with God, ourselves, the human family, and the rest of Creation.

Throughout history, many human activities have contributed to the destruction of Creation. Yet today, more than ever, some human activities take the form of a war against Creation. Our impact has expanded from local to global, manifesting in unsustainable lifestyles, excessive consumption, lasting pollution, and a throwaway culture.

Some hold greater responsibility for this crisis—elite consumption, exploitative business models, and economic theories prioritizing profit over sustainability. Pollution, health crises, deforestation, and mining in conflict zones worsen the situation.

Last year's UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) in Cali, Colombia, aptly themed "Peace with Nature," highlighted the urgency of these issues.

Saint Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures* calls the Earth our sister and mother. How can Mother Earth nurture us if we fail to contemplate, learn from, and love her? Ignoring our interconnectedness undermines this vital relationship.

Our Hope: Creation Will Find Peace When Justice Is Restored

"Then justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness abide in the fruitful field" (Isaiah 32:16).

There is hope for a peaceful Earth. Biblically, hope is active—it involves prayer, action, and reconciling with Creation and the Creator through repentance (metanoia) and solidarity. Isaiah 32:14-18 envisions a peaceful Creation where God's people live only when justice is achieved. Righteousness leads to peace and restores the land's fertility: "The effect of righteousness will be peace; and the result of righteousness, quietness, and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:14-18).

Creation is God's sacred gift, entrusted to our care. Christians are called to protect and nurture Creation in peace, working in partnership with others and passing this responsibility on to future generations. Its deep interconnectedness makes peace both essential and fragile.

Pope Francis challenges us: "What is the goal of our work? What need does the Earth have of us? Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is up to us" (*Laudato Si'*, 160).

Churches engage globally in climate, agriculture, and biodiversity efforts, grounded in theology and a prophetic call for repentance and justice. Only through reconciliation with and genuine justice for all living beings will Creation find peace, fulfilling Isaiah's vision (32:14-18).

A Kairos Moment: 1700 Years of the Nicene Creed

"We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things were made. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life" (Nicene Creed*).

The year 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. Since 325, Christians everywhere have followed the Nicene call to confess their communion in faith and to witness their faith in the context of a troubled, unequal, and divided world. The Nicene Creed has become a bond of peace and communion between churches. Our work for peace with Creation can draw on this old and strong ecumenical communion. It is an expression of the Nicene Creed today.

The Creed of Nicaea affirms that Christians believe in the triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we read Isaiah 32:14-18 on the basis of our faith in the triune God: We recognize the Holy Spirit in the healing spirit that Isaiah foresees being poured out over the wilderness. We recognize the Son's work of justification in Isaiah's witness to God's promise that "justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness abide in the fruitful field" (Isaiah 32:16).

In our troubled, unequal, and divided world, we are strengthened by the confession of faith and by the ecumenical communion established in Nicaea to follow Isaiah's call and stand firm in our witness for God's promise of peace for all Creation. Therefore, in the face of conflicts and strife, let us proclaim God's promise: "The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever." (Isaiah 32:17)

*NB: the version of the Creed updated to 381, known as "Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed", has been used in the quotation.

A Call to Action: "The Effect of Justice Will Be Peace"

God calls us to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). We are called to live in peace, worship the Creator, and work for a just and sustainable community that aligns with God's eternal plans. As co-workers with the Creator, we must embody peace with all of Creation.

- "My people shall abide in a peaceful habitation" (v18). God's peace is unconditional, rooted in justice and righteousness for all people and Creation. Peace cannot exist for only a few.

- “The fruitful field is deemed a forest” (v18). God declared all Creation “good.” Despite the damage caused by sin (Genesis 3:17-19), biodiversity reflects generosity and abundance. Through Christ, God became human, calling us to learn from, respect, and protect Creation.
- “The populous city will be deserted” (v14). Let us pray and respond to the cries of communities losing land and livelihoods due to war, climate change, or land grabbing, and those burdened by unsustainable practices or debt.
- “Until a spirit from on high is poured upon us” (v15). The Spirit guides us to ecological conversion and a deeper understanding of our cosmic family. We must change our mindsets, embrace righteousness, and teach these values to future generations. The Spirit-inspired outcome must be something greater and truly transformative—we are not merely seeking to restore the conditions that led to conflict in the first place.
- Peace with Creation requires proactive steps. Jesus taught repentance and restorative justice. We must repair broken relationships: between humans and Earth, humans and other creatures, and humans and God.
- “The effect of righteousness will be peace” (v17). While the challenges may seem overwhelming, Christ reminds us, “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Hope fuels action; through prayer, discernment, and commitment, we can create a foundation for change.
- God’s peace emerges when we work for justice, solidarity, reconciliation, and harmony with Creation. Transformation takes patience, understanding, and trust.
- Action can include advocacy, sustainability projects, cleaning campaigns, or education to show that caring for Creation is central to our faith. We must collaborate and build on diversity to achieve peace.
- “The wilderness will become a fruitful field” (v15). Peace processes, such as reforestation, river cleaning, or building wells, can unite even divided groups.

May the Spirit be poured upon us so we can work together for peace with Creation.