

# Paper J2

## Celebration of Creationtide

### Worship, Faith, & Order Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Robert Pope, Convenor <a href="mailto:rpp20@westminster.cam.ac.uk">rpp20@westminster.cam.ac.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Resolution 41</b> General Assembly encourages United Reformed Churches to observe the Feast of Creation in Christ on the first Sunday in September from 2026. <b>Resolution 42</b> General Assembly instructs the Worship, Faith and Order Committee to provide and curate worship resources to help the churches to celebrate the Feast of Creation, including resources produced as a result of the global ecumenical process.

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To encourage churches to observe the Feast of Creation.
<b>Main points</b>	There is growing ecumenical support for the formal acknowledgement of the Feast of Creation on or around 1 September each year. There is theological merit in celebrating the Feast but it is also appropriate to do so as we face the climate emergency. Having no formal liturgical calendar, the United Reformed Church might be encouraged to observe the feast while Worship, Faith and Order might curate the supply of liturgical and theological material.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	n/a
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Chaplain of Eco Congregation Scotland

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	The movement to establish the Feast is supported by WCC, WCRC as well as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the Anglican Communion.

In 1989, the Orthodox Churches invited all Christians to pray together on 1 September – or the following Sunday – to mark the ‘Feast of Creation’ or ‘Creation Day’. The aim was to praise God as Creator and to wonder at the mystery of the Creation. As an act of the Trinitarian God, creation was to be heralded as the foundation for God’s act of salvation in Jesus Christ which is interpreted not just in individualistic terms but also as God’s work to bring the work of creation to its fruition. Subsequently the Feast of Creation has expanded into a Season of Creation (1 September to 4 October).

Following an ecumenical seminar held in Assisi in March 2024, supported by the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, several church communions worldwide have agreed to introduce the Feast of Creation into their liturgical calendars. Though on the surface this changed very little, it in fact transformed it from a ‘world day of prayer’ into being a ‘formal liturgical feast’. This development enables more intentional celebration of this great mystery of the Christian faith. The Revised Common Lectionary agreed to include the feast from 2026.

The Feast of Creation ecumenical committee outlined the following opportunities that will be provided in marking the Feast of Creation:

- (I) a liturgical opportunity to fill a gap of the liturgical year, which is meant to ponder “the whole mystery of Christ” but still neglects the role of Christ in the creation of heaven and earth;
- (II) a pastoral opportunity to support and accompany the faithful in confronting the “signs of the times” of the ecological crisis, nurturing action to care for our imperilled creation in solidarity with the communities most vulnerable to this injustice;
- (III) an evangelisation opportunity with young people, both by speaking to their strong sensitivity to creation issues and their calls for intergenerational justice, and by preaching about the compatibility between science and faith in a Creator;
- (IV) a catechetical opportunity to ponder the sacredness of Creation and proclaim God as Creator, uplifting a notion that should receive as much attention as that of God as Redeemer;
- (V) a theological opportunity to rediscover the great mystery of Creation, a Christological and Trinitarian doctrine that is a cornerstone of our faith;
- (VI) an ecumenical opportunity for visible unity with the many churches instituting the Feast.

An emphasis on God as creator and the world as created has its own merit but it seems particularly apposite as we seek to respond to the climate emergency.

The United Reformed Church does not have an official liturgical calendar, though many ministers and lay preachers follow the Revised Common Lectionary. The Worship, Faith and Order Committee asks General Assembly to commend and encourage celebration of the Feast of Creation to the churches and, in consultation with others, to provide liturgical and theological resources for the marking of the Season of Creation.