



**Mennonite
World Conference**

A Community of Anabaptist
related Churches

**Congreso
Mundial Menonita**

Una Comunidad de
Iglesias Anabautistas

**Conférence
Mennonite Mondiale**

Une Communauté
d'Eglises Anabaptistes

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CREATION SUNDAY 2026

Sermon notes on potential Bible passages

These are the texts that churches that follow the Lectionary Calendar will use for Creation Sunday 2026. If you choose one or more of them for your service, many other Christians around the world will be reading them with you.

- Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 OR Genesis 2:4 to 25
- Psalm 148
- John 1:1-5
- Acts 17:22a, 24-28

The notes below, prepared by Rev Dr Dave Bookless (Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance CCN), might serve as sermon starters on these passages. Excerpted from the Creation Sunday website, Scripture selections.

OLD TESTAMENT

- **Genesis 1:1-2:3 – Theme: Creation's God-given goodness**
 - God speaks everything into existence – it is “*ex nihilo*”, from nothing, except God's imagination. Traditionally, the whole Trinity is involved in creation – God creates using his Word (Christ) and God's Spirit hovers over the waters of chaos (v.2) and breathes life into all creatures (v.30).
 - God's repeated delight in material creation – it is “good” ... ‘all very good.’
 - Three days of giving shape and structure followed by three days of filling with various kinds of creatures.
 - The ‘very good’ in v.31 applies to all that God has made – including humanity but also including all other creatures and aspects of creation.
 - Note that humans are created on the same day as all other land creatures (day six), showing we are part of creation.
 - Humans are also marked out as created in the “image of God” (vs.26-28) with a calling to “rule over” other creatures. This can be seen as a vocation or job description to reflect God's character and purposes toward the rest of creation. It is not permission to dominate or exploit selfishly but rather responsibility to “rule” as God does – the shepherd King caring for his sheep.
- **Genesis 2:4-25 – Theme: What it means to be human in God's world**
 - The Genesis 2 account is complementary to Genesis 1. It focuses particularly on the nature and role of human beings within Eden.
 - We are part of creation (v.7) “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” The ‘dust of the ground’ is “*adamah*” in Hebrew and the name of the first human, “Adam,” emphasizes that we are part of creation, not separate from it.
 - Like Genesis 1, Genesis 2 emphasizes the beauty and goodness of creation. We learn that Eden contained a great variety of “trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food”. Both their aesthetic / cultural importance and their practical usefulness are emphasized. Yet, it's clear that this is God's garden – not ours (cf. Psalm 24:1) and we are God's guests within it.

- There are strong links between the imagery of Genesis 2 and Revelation 22 – creation and new creation. Both have rivers and fruit-bearing trees and are harmonious expressions of intimate fellowship between God and all creation. The prohibition on eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a hint that, between Eden and the new Jerusalem, there is trouble and disharmony ahead if humans fail to heed God’s words. Even within a good world there are risks and dangers, and there will be consequences for going astray.
- The task of the first human is to “work and take care of” the garden (v.15). Our deep connection with the land, with plants and trees, with agriculture and gardening are integral to being human. In urban contexts, we need to ensure that people have access to nature for their mental and physical wellbeing.
- The words translated as “work” and “take care” (*abad* and *shamar*) show two sides of our human vocation. ‘Work’ includes growing crops, harvesting water and wood and helping the land produce what we and other species need. “Take care” is about *how* we go about our interactions with the natural world. We are to be caretakers and guardians, not exploiters and destroyers. We are to work with the rhythms and patterns of nature, rather than focusing narrowly on productivity for profit. We are to “take care” of the whole ‘garden’ of creation including fellow creatures that also depend on the natural world, as well as the plants and the soil itself. This raises big questions about industrial large-scale agriculture where the relationship between humanity and the land is broken and natural processes are ignored in favour of short-term productivity at the expense of biodiversity and soil health.

PSALMS

- **Psalm 148:1-14 – Theme: Creation praises God. So should we!**
- Many Psalms begin with creation worshipping God, as an example and inspiration to us to join in.
- In vs.1-6 the whole universe praises God, including angelic beings, celestial bodies (sun, moon and stars) and the ‘heavens’. In ancient Jewish cosmology, the heavens or skies were an inverted disk or bowl through which God sent the rains. All of creation is invited to praise God.
- As those with a ‘modern’ view of the universe we may find it strange that inanimate objects such as the sun, moon and stars (and elsewhere mountains, trees, rivers) worship God. However, to worship God is simply to fulfill the function God gave in creating each object or creature. Trees worship by growing, producing fruit and shelter. The sun worships by shining each day.
- Our task as humans is to enable and facilitate the worship of all God’s creation. When we pollute and destroy, we silence some of the voices in creation’s orchestra of praise.
- Verse 6 says that God established the universe ‘for ever and ever’ and His decree will ‘never pass away’. This challenges theologies that speak about creation as temporary and see our eternal destiny as purely spiritual.
- Verses 7-12 Moves from the cosmic to planet earth, listing how habitats and creatures of every type worship God, including marine ecosystems (v.7), the weather and climate (v.8), mountains and trees (v.9), animals and birds (v.10), and human beings of all ages, gender and ranks (vs.11-12).
- In verses 13-14, the Psalm concludes with how God’s splendour is greater than all the aspects of creation and yet how God also focuses his love on “the people close to his heart”. We can be comforted by this, but also challenged to grasp God as both personal and caring for us individually and also as the God of all creation – vast, mysterious and powerful.

GOSPEL

- **John 1:1-5 – Theme: Jesus and creation**
 - John's Gospel consciously echoes the Genesis 1 creation account in starting with 'In the beginning'. However, the focus is on Jesus as God's creative Word.
 - It's worth reflecting on the astonishing claim that the Word, Jesus, was "with God, and the Word was God". These words were written within the lifetime of people who knew the earthly Jesus, yet here He is described as eternal and co-creator of all that exists.
 - We live in a Jesus-shaped universe! All things were made 'through Him' and thus His fingerprints are scattered throughout the whole created order. You could ask people to reflect on aspects of Jesus' character and power that they see in parts of creation.
 - "In him was life" (v.4). The immediate context is that of Jesus being light to all humanity, but it's worth pausing to reflect on how diverse and extraordinary the variety of life on earth is. In a sense all this was 'in' Jesus. As creator, He gave form and substance to all forms of life.
 - Today, with increasing ecological dysfunction and chaos, we can find hope in the assurance that the light of Christ continues to shine in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it (v.5).

EARLY CHURCH

- **Acts 17:22a, 24-28**
 - Paul's speech in Athens is remarkable because, rather than quoting Old Testament scriptures as he usually does, he quotes pagan Greek poetry. His audience is Gentile and intellectual, so he chooses suitable material to connect with them and teach about God as creator and saviour.
 - God is Creator of everything: he "made the world and everything in it" (v.24). This is very similar to Psalm 24:1 which reminds us that God not only made everything. The whole earth also belongs to God.
 - God is generous: he gives life and breath to everybody and all creatures.
 - God is active in the created world. He does not need Temples / Churches or religious acts. The Old Testament speaks of creation itself as God's Temple (Isaiah 66:1-2 and implied in Genesis 1-2). Is that an encouragement to worship outdoors?
 - God is revealed in and through creation: "God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us" (v.27). Just as Paul suggests in Romans 1:20, creation is God's first evangelist – pointing to God's glory, character and power. That also means destroying the environment reduces God's witness through creation.

