



# Hunger Catechism: First Article of the Apostles' Creed

**BIG IDEA:** Care for creation | **Reading:** Colossians 1:15–16

## Purpose

This Hunger Catechism lesson will discuss the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, Martin Luther's interpretation and how we can live out this commandment with our neighbor. Also, this lesson covers environmental justice, climate change and how we are called as Christians to care for God's creation and, in doing so, care for our neighbor.

## Article and focus

**THE FIRST ARTICLE:** "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

**FOCUS QUESTION:** How are we—as part of God's creation—called to care for the world God has created?

### Luther's lens *(Small Catechism)*

"I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties.

"In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse

and children, fields, livestock, and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true."

## Going further

Have you ever wondered where God is or how one might see God? As Christians, we believe that God is everywhere. Lutherans believe that since God has created every living thing, we can see the handiwork of God within all of creation. We can learn about God by looking at the beauty and complexity of the natural world around us. In fact, God continues to create and work through God's people to make the earth a place where all living creatures survive and thrive, together.

Our faith calls us to have a different relationship with the earth than what may be commonplace. We might assume that the earth belongs to us, but we—along with the whole earth—belong to God. Making this shift in our minds and hearts allows us to see the world as a common home for all God's people.

When we see the world as a home for all, we see why we as followers of Christ are called to care for the land and sea we live on and the neighbors we live with.

**QUESTION:** How would our view of the world change if we saw God in everything we walked by, touched and even tasted? How could we use that lens to learn about God?



**READING**

**Colossians 1:15–16**

*"[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Christ all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him."*



**ELCA World Hunger**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Points to ponder

- + Have you ever felt the presence of God when out in nature?
- + What have you learned about God during these times?
- + Why is it important to live peacefully with God’s creation?
- + How could caring for creation also show concern for our neighbor?

## The facts

- + **11 percent of the world’s population** (roughly 800 million people) is vulnerable to droughts, floods, heat waves, extreme weather events and sea-level rise due to climate change.<sup>1</sup>
- + In 2017, **18.8 million people** were forced to evacuate their homes due to sudden weather-related hazards, which is an average of over 50,000 people every day.<sup>2</sup>
- + Here in the United States, communities of color have a **128 percent higher exposure rate to air pollution** and people experiencing poverty have a **135 percent higher exposure rate**.<sup>3</sup>

## Make it matter

The world that God has created for us is experiencing more waste and pollution than ever before. This impacts all of us, but when it comes to the effects of mistreatment of God’s creation, certain groups bear the burden more than others. Major sources of pollution—such as landfills, factories, refineries—are often built near minority communities of color and communities with high rates of poverty. Although some of these sources of pollution provide jobs, they also can cause dangerous amounts of air and water pollution that can lead to asthma, lead poisoning and cancer in both adults and young children. Households in these communities often do not have access to the resources needed to relocate and must deal with the risks that these businesses pose for their families and for the earth.

Additionally, links have been made between the changing climate and the increase in greenhouse-gas emissions. Due to the change in climate, communities around the world face a higher risk of droughts, extreme heat waves, floods and other natural disasters. These events make it difficult for people to grow crops, raise livestock or have access to clean drinking water.

As Lutherans, we have a specific call to care for God’s creation, not just to maintain the natural world but to protect, serve and love our neighbor. Caring for the creation we all share is one important way to do that.

**Act:** Write letters to legislators, create a recycling program at your church, or use ELCA World Hunger’s **Community Gardens How-to-Guide** to start a garden that cares for God’s people and God’s creation.

## ‘Set free to do justice’ (ELCA Advocacy)



Link to video: [vimeo.com/215735472](https://vimeo.com/215735472)

## Diving deeper

- + How could advocating for public policies make a difference in how we interact with our environment?
- + What kinds of policy did you see ELCA members advocate for?
- + How can you advocate for God’s creation, human rights or other relevant issues in your community?



PRAY

GOD’S CREATION

*This week, give thanks to God for the abundant and beautiful world that has been created for us. Pray that we may live more peacefully with the earth so that all who share this world may experience the fullness of creation.*

## Brewing questions

What other questions come to mind after learning about the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed and caring for creation?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1 Conservation International. (2018). Climate change: 11 Facts you Need to Know. Retrieved from Conservation.org: <https://www.conservation.org/stories/Pages/11-climate-change-facts-you-need-to-know.aspx>.  
2 Internal Displacement and Monitoring Centre. (2018). Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018. Geneva.  
3 Mikati, I., Benson, A. F., Luben, T.J., Sacks, J. D., & Richmond-Bryant, J. (2017). Disparities in Distribution of Particulate Matter Emission Sources by Race and Poverty Status. American Journal of Public Health.