

**May 22, 2022 (Earth Day) | Journey & Sanctuary Worship Service****TEXT: [Genesis 1:1–2:4a](#)****TITLE: And it Was Good...***By the Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy*

I want to establish upfront that I will not be debating the historical or scientific veracity of the Genesis creation story...because in reality, this creation story is a discourse on the faithfulness of Israel's God, an assurance that God is with them and us, even when life is chaotic and unsure, and that God's covenant is for all of creation—inanimate, animate, and human.

The creation story, written while the Israelites were in Babylonian captivity, was composed to assure them that despite their present circumstances—residing under the dominion of a foreign power, surrounded by people who did not know or worship their God, acknowledge or respect their culture, traditions, and living in confusion and chaos—their God, the creator of heaven and earth and everything contained therein, is faithful and had not abandoned them.

However, this is Earth Day Sunday, and so, let us briefly recount the creation story. In the beginning, God created, God spoke, and so it was. God formed the heavens and earth, sun, moon, and stars, light and darkness, night and day, land and sea, animals in the land, water, and air and vegetation; and on the sixth day, God created humanity in God's likeness and gave us authority and responsibility for all of creations; and God declared everything created was very good.

The Psalmist writes: *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor (Psalm 8:3-5).*

Created a little lower than God, crowned with glory and honor, and declared by God as very good, we have made a mess of God's good creation. We have ravaged, neglected, polluted, and destroyed. We have over worked, over harvested, hunted, killed, and maimed. In a sense, we have ruined the goodness of God's creation, including our own humanity by the way we mistreat, malign, and harm one another. In this land of plenty, inflation is making it more difficult for people who were already living with insufficiency to put food on their tables and provide other necessities; parents are struggling to find formula to feed their babies; deadly fires, rains, floods, and tornadoes are ravaging the land; overt and covert racism, injustice, social dysfunction, misogyny, transphobia, inequities, and sexism; these are all destructive forces against everything that God created and declared as good.

How do we reconcile the goodness of God's creation with our neglect, destruction, and abuse? There is no justification, but reconciliation is possible. If we take accountability and admit our guilt, admit that we have fallen short and sinned against God, creation, and one another; if we humbly seek God's forgiveness and direction, and if we become

obedient and do what God commanded in the beginning, to be responsible stewards and caretakers, of nature and one another, then reconciliation, recreation can and will occur.

One commentator shares “the biblical Creation narrative is a document of faith. It is a quest for meaning and a statement of religious position.” Dare I say, it is time for us to seek new meaning, to declare our religious position, and under God’s direction, faithfully usher in a new beginning, a genesis in our own hearts, lives, relationships, homes, and church!

To begin again and to deliberately seek after and discern where God is leading us in this moment—could it be that we are to re-enact the creation story? Last Sunday, Pastor Randy shared these words from Ecclesiastes 3—“to everything there is a season, and for every matter under heaven.” Beloved, this is our season to faithfully walk into the new thing God is doing; to embrace it, live into it, and prayerfully accept, that just as God’s creation was good in the beginning, God’s new creation will be the same.

As good stewards, we plant trees, minimize our fossil fuel consumption and use of inorganic materials. As faithful people of a faithful God, we hold companies accountable for deforestation, plundering the earth for minerals, and over working the land. We demand that everyone has clean air to breath, is treated equitably with respect, justice, and mercy, and have agency over their own bodies. As followers of Christ, who challenged systems and governments, and religious leaders who were more concerned about form and fashion worshipping God and supporting God’s people called to hold leaders, systems, and institutions fiscally and morally accountable. And we are called to treat one another with dignity, respect.

God is still creating. Creation was not a one and done event. So, we as we move into new seasons in our personal and corporate lives, it so may seem chaotic, unsettling, disorienting, and yes, even sad; and God is faithful, God is with us, and God has promised to never leave nor forsake us. Beloved, everything must change, nothing remains the same, with few exceptions—God’s love, grace, justice, and mercy never changes. The command for us to love the Lord God, with our whole heart, body, mind, and soul, and to love ourselves, and to love neighbor as we love ourselves never changes.

Our assignment to be stewards of God’s creation is from everlasting, we are called, always and without ceasing, to be faithful creators and caretakers, and vessels of peace, mercy, grace, justice, reconciliation, and love. That was the new world order Jesus ushered in as he walked on earth and led by example. On the sixth day, God looked around and saw everything that was made, and declared everything as very good.

May it be so. Amen!