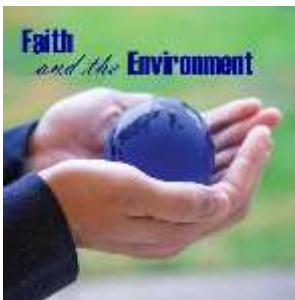


Worship Engagement and Reflection for week of April 19, 2020

Creation Waits, Faith and the Environment Sunday

Read Genesis 1: 1-13; 24-31; Genesis 2: 1-3, Romans 8:18-25



As we begin the second week in the season of Easter, we focus on exploring what it means to be good stewards or caretakers of God's creation. In the very first verses of the Bible, in the book of Genesis, we find the story of God's creation of the earth. In these beginning verses of the Bible, God tells us that we were each created in the image of God. "God saw everything he had made: and indeed it was supremely good!" (Genesis 1:31, CEB) In the book of Genesis, we see that God calls us, each of us, to be good stewards or caretakers of God's creation. How do we respond to God's call to care for the earth in light of Christ's Resurrection? How is God calling us to be caretakers of the earth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic? Spend some time reflecting on this week's scriptures and engaging in the reflection questions. Record your thoughts in a journal and refer back to them. Learn more about Faith United's Faith and the Environment ministry. Explore creation care as spiritual practice.

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

Romans 8:20-21, NRSV

Questions for Reflection:

- What do you believe God wants people to know about the environment?
- What do you feel we are called to do as Christians in relation to the environment?
- What motivates and excites you to be a better steward of creation?

Spiritual Practice: Care of the Earth

Caring for the earth is an expression of God's delight in his wondrous creation. When we engage in the loving care of the earth, the environment, plants and animals, we are honoring and celebrating the gifts, treasures and wonders of our Creator God. Noticing, appreciating, and respecting God's creation lead to greater understanding of the importance of and our individual and communal responsibility in caring for creation. Creation is God's gift to us. Nurturing and maintaining God's creation with love and care is our gift to God. Barbara Brown Taylor writes, *"The land that gives us our food, our water, these trees that clean up the air for us to breathe, all these green and growing things that bless our bodies with their beauty – these are not resources. They are fellow creatures, with their own rights and responsibilities before God. They have their own sacred duties to perform, if only we will let them."*

The practice of creation care includes any of the following:

- Protecting the earth's natural resources.
- Being concerned for future generations and what they will inherit.
- Working to prevent and overcome pollution of air, water and land.
- Treating animals humanely.
- Using energy supplies wisely.
- Recycling.
- Learning about God's amazing creation.
- Honoring God and celebrating God's gifts.
- Contributing to the beauty of and mending the brokenness of this planet.
- Sharing God's earth, our harvest, the beauty we find and nurture with others.
- Witnessing to Christ through wise stewardship of our ecological resources.
- Growing in the realization that all created things belong to God.



What can you do this week to practice caring for the earth?

How will your desire to care for the earth bring glory and honor to God?

Adapted from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

Share your thoughts about the spiritual practice of caring for the earth or responses to this week's reflection questions by emailing or texting Kathy Schmucker (kschmucker@faithumchurch.org, 330-224-6138) or Pastor Steve (ssstutzcostello@faithumchurch.org, 330-224-7337). You are also welcome to share on social media @faithnorthcanton.