

Earth Day
Christ Church - 19 April 2015

We had six readers who did a “readers theater” during this service.

Creation Story from Genesis 1 (read early in the service)

1 When God began to create the heavens and the earth— 2 the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God’s wind swept over the waters— 3 God said, “Let there be light.” And light appeared. 4 God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

6 God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the waters from each other.” 7 God made the dome and separated the waters under the dome from the waters above the dome. 8 God named the dome Sky.

There was evening and there was morning: the second day.

9 God said, “Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so that the dry land can appear.” 10 God named the dry land Earth, and the gathered waters, Seas. God saw how good it was. 11 God said, “Let the earth grow plant life: plants yielding seeds and fruit trees bearing fruit. 12 The earth produced plant life.... And God saw how good it was.

13 There was evening and there was morning: the third day.

14 God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and years. 15 They will be lights in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth.” 16 God made the stars and two great lights: the larger light - Sun - to rule over the day and the smaller light - Moon - to rule over the night. 17 God put them in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.

19 There was evening and there was morning: the fourth day.

20 God said, “Let the waters swarm with living things, and let birds fly above the earth up in the dome of the sky.” 21 God created the great sea animals and all the tiny living things that swarm in the waters, and all the winged birds. God saw how good it was. 22 Then God blessed them: “Be fertile and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

23 There was evening and there was morning: the fifth day.

24 God said, “Let the earth produce every kind of living thing: livestock, crawling things, and wildlife.” 25 God made every kind of wildlife. God saw how good it was. 26 Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may **take care** of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”

27 God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. **Take care** of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.” 29 Then God said, “I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food. 30 To all wildlife, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food.” 31 God saw everything [and] it was very good.

There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

2 The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed. by the sixth day....on the seventh day God rested from all the work. 3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

After prayer time, the reflection time begins -

We are Easter People. We are awed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and all the ways that God is making things new within our lives. As we continue in this Eastertide period over the next several weeks, we will continue to hold resurrection before us. Our lectionary scriptures shine a very particular light on new possibilities through the lens of love. Love is our guide and Love is our

calling. Not only is Jesus the cornerstone of our faith, but Love is the foundation of all that we are and all that we give to others.

Today, we turn our attention to the love and care that we have been called to give to our Earth Home.

In Genesis 1, in the very beginning...

God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may **take care** of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth."

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. **Take care** of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground." ...31 God saw everything he had made: it was very good.

Assisted by these readers, we will share the voices of people in the past and today who are championing the cause of Earth Stewardship....caring for our home... so that it will be healthy for our children's children and beyond.

It is very appropriate that our attention on Earthkeeping today is also Native American Sunday for the United Methodist Church.

Many of us have heard of the term "seventh generation." The words come from the Constitution of the Iroquois Nation. Hear a summary from Seann Sweeney.

A common short version of "seventh generation" derived from the Constitution of the Iroquois Nation that most of us have heard of is "In every deliberation, we must consider the impact on the seventh generation... even if it requires having skin as thick as the bark of a pine."

The Constitution of the Iroquois Nation (The Great Binding Law - dated to between about 1500) explains "seventh generation" philosophy as follows:

"The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans __ which is to say that you shall be proof against anger, offensive actions and criticism. Your heart shall be filled with peace and good will and your mind filled with a yearning for the welfare of the people. With endless patience you shall carry out your duty and your firmness shall be tempered with tenderness for your people. Neither anger nor fury shall find lodgement in your mind and all your words and actions shall be marked with calm deliberation. In all of your deliberations in the Council, in your efforts at law

making, in all your official acts, self interest shall be cast into oblivion. Cast not over your shoulder behind you the warnings of the nephews and nieces should they chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law which is just and right. Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground — the unborn of the future Nation."

This philosophy is not unique to just the Iroquois nation. Many Native American nations and tribes and other indigenous people around the world have and still do live by this philosophy as well. They may not explicitly call it "seventh generation" thinking but it is evident through their oral (and now written) histories, actions, and ways of life that they share this important, virtuous and selfless way of life as well.

The clear message of "seventh generation" living is to think seven generations ahead and act in ways that benefit, not sacrifice, the future generations, specifically the seventh generation after us. Ecological acts and ways of life are a big part of seventh generation thinking, but it is much more than this. Everything is connected and affects other parts of our interconnected world and lives.

Lost

by David Wagoner

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

Rachel Louise Carson (who was born on May 27, 1907 – and died on

April 14, 1964 - 50 years ago) was an American marine biologist and conservationist, an advocate of nature and environmental ethics whose book Silent Spring and other writings are credited with advancing the global environmental movement.

Carson began her career as an aquatic biologist in the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, and became a full-time nature writer in the 1950s.. Late in the 1950s, Carson turned her attention to conservation, especially some environmental problems that she believed were caused by synthetic pesticides. The result was the book Silent Spring (1962), which brought environmental concerns to an unprecedented share of the American people. Although Silent Spring was met with fierce opposition by chemical companies, it spurred a reversal in national pesticide policy, which led to a nationwide ban on DDT and other pesticides, and it inspired a grassroots environmental movement that led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Carson was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Jimmy Carter.

Hear some of Rachel's powerful message from her book, Silent Spring

“In nature nothing exists alone.”

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature __ the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

“Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species __ man __ acquired significant power to alter the nature of the world. ”

“How could intelligent beings seek to control a few unwanted species by a method that contaminated the entire environment and brought the threat of disease and death even to their own kind?”

“Nature has introduced great variety into the landscape, but man has displayed a passion for simplifying it. Thus he undoes the built-in checks and balances by which nature

holds the species within bounds.”

“We stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost's familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth superhighway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road — the one less traveled by — offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of the earth.”

Psalm 104

104 Let my whole being bless the Lord!

Lord my God, how fantastic you are!

You are clothed in glory and grandeur!

2 You wear light like a robe;
you open the skies like a curtain.

3 You build your lofty house on the waters;
you make the clouds your chariot,
going around on the wings of the wind.

4 You make the winds your messengers;
you make fire and flame your ministers.

5 You established the earth on its foundations
so that it will never ever fall.

6 You covered it with the watery deep like a piece of clothing;
the waters were higher than the mountains!

8 They flowed over the mountains,
streaming down the valleys
to the place you established for them.

10 You put gushing springs into dry river beds.

They flow between the mountains,

11 providing water for every wild animal—
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

12 Overhead, the birds in the sky make their home,
chirping loudly in the trees.

13 From your lofty house, you water the mountains.
The earth is filled full by the fruit of what you've done.

14 You make grass grow for cattle;
you make plants for human farming
in order to get food from the ground,

15 and wine, which cheers people's hearts,
along with oil, which makes the face shine,
and bread, which sustains the human heart.

19 God made the moon for the seasons,
and the sun too, which knows when to set.
20 You bring on the darkness and it is night,
when every forest animal prowls.

24 Lord, you have done so many things!
The earth is full of your creations!
31 Let the Lord's glory last forever!
33 I will sing to God as long as I live;
... let my whole being bless the Lord!

Katherine Hayhoe in a Sojourners Magazine in 2011 said,

In the end, it comes down to: "Why should [we] care?" We've all had enough of feeling bad about [things]. We all know we should be eating better, recycling, and making more healthy choices.... The bottom line is that real people in real places around planet Earth are already being affected by changing climate [and other environmental calamities]. Doing something about [this] is making the love of God tangible to hurting people. Our God has made us into people who are designed to look outside of ourselves, and love our global neighbor - and today, that means caring about what climate change [and our behaviors] are doing to our world.

I do not think the measure of a civilization is how tall its building of concrete are, but rather how well its people have learned to relate to their environment and fellow man.

Chippewa

Mindful

by Mary Oliver

Every day
I see or I hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle

in a haystack
of light.
It is what I was born for - -
to look, to listen,

to lose myself
inside the soft world - -
to instruct myself
over and over

in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,

the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant - -
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,

the daily presentation.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help

but grow wise
with such teachings
as these - -
The untrimmable light

of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?

Today we acknowledge Mother Earth. Today we consider the things we can do to leave a legacy of health and sustainability... for our descendants.... for seven generations into the future. Today we do what we can to show our Love to our Earth Home, and all who live here.