

CREATION



**Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound,
and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
Psalm 96:11**

Scripture:

Psalm 8:1-9

- ¹O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.
- ²Out of the mouths of babes and infants, you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.
- ³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;
- ⁴what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?
- ⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.
- ⁶You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,
- ⁷all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
- ⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
- ⁹O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 96:11-13

- ¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
- ¹²let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing
- ¹³before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.



AN EMOTIONAL PLANET

- Rejoicing heavens;
- Glad earth;
- Resounding seas;
- Jubilant fields;
- Singing forests.

A wonderful psalm!

**It is as if God has given the earth voices.
This is not just a blue planet,
it is a talking planet.
It is a joyful planet.
We need to keep it that way.**

Have you heard singing forests?

I heard the forests singing as I was riding on my bicycle yesterday near Graton. And I have seen the heavens rejoice as the sun set into the Pacific.

How sad it would be if the singing and rejoicing stopped.

Preaching to this congregation and this community about the importance of caring for the earth, about management of natural resources, about wildlife conservation and administration, about recycling, about keeping the environment clean and safe for generations to come is preaching to the converted. Our city and county are very conscious of environmental care, and our landfill is a state of the art facility that people visit from all over the world.

One of the mandates of the California State University Agricultural Colleges is to educate the public about daily life issues of agriculture, both plants and animals, the environment, families, and society.

CARING FOR CREATION IS A BIBLICAL AGENDA.

Care for creation is one of the first theological issues written into our holy scriptures. Throughout Genesis God praises the creation of the earth as “good” and God urges people to keep it that way. Biblical environmentalism is deeply embedded in the stories of the creation, the public health warnings of Leviticus, and in the preaching and parables of Jesus. We find earth care in the psalms, care for the animals in Job, in the letters of the apostles.

“The earth and its fullness are the Lord’s,” says Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:26.

There is an entire generation waiting for the church to take a strong and relevant stand on environmental issues. “Earth keeping” may be the most important task of mission that our generation faces. Sadly, we are failing to keep up our end of it in keeping our environments sustainable.

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT MAKES US WHOLE

What is good for the environment is good for the quality of human life. But human life is not the only judge of what is good.

Caring for resources is good for people, it is good for jobs, it is good for the future, and it is good for our quality of life.

But creating jobs is not the judge of what is good.

These are not merely human issues. Singing forests are happy forests. Jubilant fields are healthy fields.

Human comfort is not the only measure of value and worth.

Biblical Environmentalism is based upon the theological understanding that care of the earth brings together flesh and spirit; it is the place where male and female are created equal.

CARE FOR THE EARTH IS NOT A FLAVOR OF THE MONTH

- We are God's stewards of the earth only for a season, but NOT forever. So what have we done on our watch? That is the test Biblical Environmentalism brings to our culture – to pass on a sustainable environment to the future.
- Care of the earth is not confined to rural areas. Care of the inner city is part of the stewardship of the earth, and it becomes more important as cities are becoming larger and more unruly.
- And finally, care of the environment is not just one more crisis among many. It is the most important spiritual issue. Whether it is an act of war that poisons the environment for human life, an act of neglect, or sheer stupidity ... wrecking the environment, poisoning the fields and water and air harms both friend and foe. Care of the planet is THE issue.

When Martin Luther was asked what he would do if he knew that the world would end tomorrow, he said, "I would plant a tree today."

A PRESBYTERIAN STATEMENT

Our denomination has a strong record on Biblical Environmentalism. I have extracted some of the statements from the Book of Order and the policy statements of the General Assembly for you to take home with you today.

THE BOOK OF ORDER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awesome power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it.

In worship Christians rejoice and give thanks to God, who gives and sustains the created universe, the earth, all life, and all goods. They acknowledge God's command to be stewards. They confess their own failures in caring for creation and life. They rejoice in the promise of the redemption and renewal of the creation in Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Word and sealed in the Sacraments. They commit themselves to live as God's stewards until the day when God will make all things new. (W-1.0000)

As stewards of God's creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to:

- a. use the earth's resources responsibly without plundering, polluting, or destroying,
- b. develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth's environment to preserve and enhance life,
- c. produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life,
- d. work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction,
- e. use and shape earth's goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God's love for all creatures.

God has given us...

- Rejoicing heavens;
- Resounding seas;
- Jubilant fields;
- Singing forests.

CREATION (CHILDREN'S STORYBOOK)

Gerald McDermott created a beautiful book that combines the populations of the earth with the care of the earth. He says, "In the beginning there was nothing, only darkness. Then came light, water, earth, sun, moon and stars. Man and woman were created to be keepers of all this beauty. This was God's gift to them."

McDermott's book meditation on creation is filled with shapes, vivid colors and textures. You will enjoy watching this story unfold. But the story isn't just in the words, it is in the color, and the conclusion that each young child has a role in preserving this.

So please enjoy "*Creation*" as told and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. The music is Yo-Yo Ma.



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