

Karen Anderson, Lay Preacher

Genesis 1:1-25, Psalm 33:1-9, John 1:1-14, The World Once Green Again by Parker Palmer

Welcome to Creation Season! Over the course of the next 4 weeks, we will read, sing and hear about the abundance of God's creation that surrounds us. This is a time for recognizing the beauty, the complexity, and the grandeur of our earth. It is also a time to show our gratitude for all of the blessings we have been entrusted with. By introducing Creation season to us Father Gary has enriched our service with these beautiful prayers and liturgy. Thank you.

Autumn is my favorite season to live in the north-east! All we have to do is peak out our windows and we are treated to spectacular splendor. Farmer's markets are overflowing with crisp fruits and vegetables that we have waited all year to bite into and feel the juices drip down our chin and taste the full flavor of garden-fresh produce that was picked at its peak!

It is also a time to enjoy apple-cider and pumpkin everything! As the days cool off, we trade our shorts for jeans and we get to pull out our fleece or favorite sweaters. And the red, orange and yellow leaves just continue to paint brilliant vistas for our enjoyment.

This week, we begin our readings with the first verse in the first book of the Bible. "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth." We read that everything that we know of: light and darkness; earth and seas, the sky and stars; plants and animals; and then in the verses that follow, but were not included in our reading today, humankind - all of it was created by God.

Regardless of your knowledge or stand on the big bang theory, there is a wonderful message to this reading. As Christians we believe that God gave rise to everything, in spite of a lack of clarity on the details. Not only is the world we inhabit a gift from God, but so too the talents we possess, plus all of our treasures - they are all bestowed to us by God. We are merely stewards of these bounteous presents. So the question we face is how do we demonstrate our gratitude to God for blessing us with such rich lives?

We see one answer to that question in today's Psalm - we are to sing praises and play harps and trumpets, we are to stand in awe of the Lord! Richard has done an

outstanding job of selecting hymns and anthems that allow us to literally sing our praises to our creator God.

What a blessing Richard is to this congregation! And how marvelous it is to once again have our worship enhanced by our talented choir!

Parker Palmer in his poem "The World Once Green Again" was anticipating not autumn, but the return of spring time. However, his message is also meant to encourage anyone who writes. He is telling us that there is no such thing as squandered words. If what we write today does not lead us where we need to go, tomorrow we can start again. He states "I know that none of my words will go to waste. Instead, they become compost for the next round of new growth." (An Encouragement for Spring and the Writing Life" onbeing.org March 18, 2014)

We use words in a multitude of ways. They allow us to praise God, to express our opinions, to offer our sympathies, and to announce our intentions. We pen letters to inform, we send cards of encouragement or celebration or to express our gratitude. Sometimes we even write our prayers on a piece of cloth and offer it to God.

Our words matter. They inform our actions. We are all here today to share in worshiping God. To pray for the church, the world, our neighbors and loved ones. We will soon affirm our faith and confess our sins. Then we will break bread together and give thanks for the blessings we have received.

We could have chosen to do many things rather than come to St. James today. We could, like many people, believe that corporate worship is unnecessary - that being "spiritual" is enough. We could choose to use our time and talents, and yes even our money in ways that do not reflect our faith in Jesus.

In John's gospel, the author chose the greek "logos" to describe Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things came into being through him."

All things came into being. Listen to the language of abundance in today's readings! Each of us has been gifted with life, with the capacity to love, with individual skills and talents. We have also been gifted with choice. How will we choose to use those gifts? Will we adopt a philosophy of scarcity and use our gifts only for our own benefit, or will we follow the example of Jesus Christ and allow our gifts to multiply?

I am going to borrow a tradition from lent and invite you to a Holy season of Creation.

Over these next few weeks carefully listen to the readings and prayers, and the hymns, reflect on all the blessings gifted to you, praise God through worship and by adopting or continuing actions that demonstrate your gratitude for all of creation.

Allow this season to re-new your faith, to re-fill you with God's unending love and compel you to willingly allow your cup to overflow. Amen.