

Creation Series: Sacred Earth—Sacred Work
“Creation as Blessing” Part I

Message by DD Adams
Kemptown Providence UM Church
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The Old Testament lesson is from Genesis, chapter 1 through chapter 2 verse 4.
This reading is adapted from Eugene Peterson’s translation, *The Message*.

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don’t see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God’s Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: **“Light!”**
And light appeared.
God saw that light was good
and separated light from dark.
God named the light Day,
he named the dark Night.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day One.

God spoke: **“Sky! In the middle of the waters;
separate water from water!”**
God made sky.
God separated the water under sky
from the water above sky.
And there it was:
God named sky the Heavens;
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Two.

God spoke: **“Separate!
Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place;
Land, appear!”**
And there it was.
God named the land Earth.
God named the pooled water Ocean.
God saw that it was good.

God spoke: **“Earth, green up! Grow all varieties
of seed-bearing plants,
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree.”**

And there it was.
Earth produced green seed-bearing plants,
all varieties,
And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—Day Three.

God spoke: **“Lights! Come out!
Shine in Heaven’s sky!
Separate Day from Night.
Mark seasons and days and years,
Lights in Heaven’s sky to give light to Earth.”**

And there it was.

God made two big lights, the larger
to take charge of Day,
The smaller to be in charge of Night;
and God made the stars.
God placed them in the heavenly sky
to light up Earth
And oversee Day and Night,
to separate light and dark.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Four.

God spoke: **“Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!
Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!”**

God created the huge whales,
all the swarm of life in the waters,
And every kind and species of flying birds.
God saw that it was good.
God blessed them: **“Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!
Birds, reproduce on Earth!”**
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Five.

God spoke: **“Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind:
cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds.”**

And there it was:

wild animals of every kind,
Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.
God saw that it was good.

God spoke: **“Let us make human beings in our image, make
them reflecting our nature.**

**So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,
And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.”**

God created human beings;

God created them godlike,
Reflecting God’s nature.

God created them [in gender-diversity].

God blessed them:

**“Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!
Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.”**

Then God said, **“I’ve given you**

**every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth
And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,
given them to you for food.**

**To all animals and all birds,
everything that moves and breathes,
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.”**

And there it was.

God looked over everything God had made;

it was so good, so very good!

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Six.

Heaven and Earth were finished,
down to the last detail.

By the seventh day

God had finished God’s work. **[Whew!]**

On the seventh day
God rested from all this work. **[Yes!]**
God blessed the seventh day.
God made it a Holy Day
Because on that day God rested from the work,
all the creating God had done **[and it was so very good].**
This is the story of how it all started,
of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

This is a Word of God.
Thanks be to God.
All creation is a word of God.
All creation speaks volumes of God.

(The 9:30AM reading is adapted from "The Message" and read by six readers and a narrator.)

Thank you readers for bringing God's word to life in a new and different way! In hearing God's word we recognize God's inherent goodness in all that God creates. We are also part of God's creation!

And interestingly enough, today we celebrate two boys embarking on their path with God. Cole Joseph Dodson was baptized. What a perfect way to begin life. God makes a promise to always be with Cole, and he initiates him into Christ's church. Baptism is a beautiful means of grace that indicates God's initiative in the process of salvation. Cole's parents, Mike and Angie promise to nurture and guide him and to accept God's grace, to profess their faith openly, and to lead a Christian life.

And Zachary Dodson, through confirmation has now affirmed his baptismal covenant by public profession of faith. Zachary is on his way! In all this, both Cole

and Zachary are a part of God's salvation story. And all this invites our celebration! We see the goodness of God and His goodness that bring us all together. It's a beautiful thing—that we—as believers in God—desire to create more goodness in the world because our Father God is inherently good.

Today, we worship and celebrate all that God is doing in Cole and Zachary Dodson's life. It draws our attention to God, to others, and to the world around us. Just as Cole and Zachary celebrate a specific part of their life today that begins them on a journey, we as well celebrate cycles and seasons of creation that are constantly moving and growing.

Everyone here, especially the adults, have experienced many aspects of life—the good, the difficult, the things we're thankful for and the grief and fear that we may be facing. Christ who is our Light is the center of our community! And when we face that light as we would face Christ, we see one another much more clearly. We see that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God. So when we come together, we see the light of God shine through.

Another path we travel on in life are dark paths. We recognize the pain in the world, but the good news is this—the pain coexists with the goodness of God. We hear the groans of the world, we see the suffering, and we grieve because we're part of creation. But with God beside us and leading us, we're able to pray on behalf of all those who suffer as we let go of our fear and trust our Creator.

The third path in our life finds its own special and unique way to call out how God expresses himself through us. We begin to create space to explore how God is working in and through us. With each moment we offer to God, we have an opportunity to express our very own God-gifted creativity.

During confirmation classes with Zachary, it was so wonderful to hear him talk about how God was doing this very thing in his life through baseball. You might call it, “creative collaboration with God.” Zachary talked about his experience and called it an “AHA moment.” The last path is the concept of how we embody compassion and power. As we include God in our lives, we embody peace and passion—compassion and power—because—all of us—whether we know it or not—we’re on a journey that desires to spread God’s goodness everywhere.

We do our best, and with God’s help, we continue to grow wherever God has planted us in His beautiful creation. Our goal now is to strive to be fully present and fully active in the world. Let’s join together and recite the Lord’s Prayer—that which joins us all as one in God’s Universal Church. Please join with me.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.