

This time of year, we are surrounded by beginnings. We start at new schools or with new teachers, new sports and activities begin, a new time of schedules and order at work. And so a reading about the beginning—creation of earth and all life—makes sense today and helps us to make sense of today.

There are two creation stories in the book of Genesis in that Bible. In chapter two is the story of Adam and Eve and in chapter one is the one we just read. In today's story God says, "It is good," and good is about being in relationship. On day one, God created light and darkness and separated them making day and night. God says, "It is good," based on the relationship, cooperation between two different things—day and night. In contrast on day two nothing is said to be good. Some would argue that's because it's a Monday but it is that the waters are separated from the waters, there isn't the cooperation of opposites so there is no, "it is good." This is important for us to hear because we are so individualistic, so focused on our wants and our gain. This story reminds us of the power and importance of relationship in our lives.

In this first creation story there is one time that God says creation is very good. It is on day six, when all of creation is working together for the good of creation. And it is in day six that God uses the word dominion to describe humans relationship with the rest of creation. For a long time we have interpreted dominion to mean dominate or control. As a child, and still today, if there was a word and I didn't know what it meant in a sentence or paragraph I use the context to help me figure out the definition of the word. The word dominion is in the context of creation where God says it is very good when all creation is working together for the good of the whole creation. How would you interpret the word dominion, based on the

context? Many places in scripture God reinterprets or broadens the meaning of a word. In Genesis when God gives us the command to have dominion over creation, it is a command to be stewards and to care for creation in a way that it continues to be very good, that this system we call earth continues working together for the good of all.

Part of that goodness is the order God creates and the boundaries—day and night, land and sea. Order is a good thing. Disorder comes when the boundaries are blurred. What would it look like to have the boundaries between land and sea and sky blurred? Standing in Key West right now I would think the boundaries between land and sea and sky are blurred.

We are just coming off of summer and spending time in creation—gardening, swimming, hiking, playing—as I have talked with many of you we have shared how we experience God in nature but nature isn't our God. Nature doesn't care, creation brings a three inch rain during your camping trip, creation brings hurricanes through peoples' homes and crops, the God of the Creation story creates and cares. People refer to natural disasters as "Acts of God" and that is exactly what they are not. The God we encounter in this creation story and in the whole of the Bible seeks good for all and to love all. It used to be that our understanding of science and the natural world was so limited that in order to make sense of it we attributed the entire workings of creation to God—natural disasters and all. But the God we encounter in scripture is an all-loving God that limits God's own power for the sake of relationship. There it is again relationship. God not only calls creation good when creation is in relationship together but God desires relationship with us.

Part of God's relationship with us is God giving us power, the power to be co-creators with God. As humans we have enormous power for good and a capacity to create in ways that make life better for all creation. But we are also individualistic, we refuse to see the larger consequences as long as we get what we want. Global Climate Change is the greatest example of this. God has made us stewards of creation and now because of our over consumption of fossil fuels we are disordering creation. There have always been hurricanes but as the oceans warm, the ocean's energy is increased, the hurricanes use that increased energy to become stronger, bigger, wetter.

God calls us to be stewards of creation. And we are doing some things: thanks in large part to our youth at Peace we no longer use styrofoam cups (styrofoam comes from oil), we have marked the light switches reminding people to turn off the lights before they leave and we are working with Hennepin County to get more recycling containers around the building. As individuals we can make a difference - carpooling, walking and biking more, conserving energy in our homes - but it is in relationship that we can make our biggest difference. We must be in conversation, attending public meetings and talking with elected officials. God has given us the power to be co-creator, called us to be stewards of creation, let us exercise that God given power.

The very first verse of the Bible talks about the Spirit of God brooding over the waters of creation. Like a mother hen God cares for us and directs us. It is that same Holy Spirit brought Jesus out of the waters of his baptism in the Jordan River. It is that same Spirit that calls, gathers and enlightens us. It is that same Spirit of God that stirs in us now creating our faith and empowering our action. We have a God that is always with us,

always working in us and through us for the sake of loving relationships.