

God of Creation

Relational God: Part 1 “God of Creation”

Rev. Cameron D St. Michael – January 22, 2023

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Genesis 1:1-2:3; John 1:1-5

Reflection: Psalm 24

Greeting: The Lord is merciful and compassionate. The Lord is very patient, and full of faithful love. The Lord is good to everyone and everything. God’s compassion extends to all his handiwork! (*Psalm 145:8-9*)

Prayer: Lord, our guide and our guardian, we pray that you will shelter us and lead us as we join together today in worship. May we remember the wonders of your creation each and every day. May we remember that we are a people of your great promise. May we recall your steadfast love that has been revealed to us. May we know that you are with us in all things old and new, and that you are there in every transition. We pray that you help us to face any change with faith and perseverance because you are with us. May we worship you in spirit and truth this hour, and may we proclaim the love of our savior is for all people. And it is in Jesus’ name we pray this day. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, for he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. (Psalm 24 NRSV)*

We read the words of the 24th Psalm and we hear God’s creation. We hear of all that God is and all that God has done. That we can celebrate God in our lives. How do you celebrate God in your daily life? Do you give thanks that you are blessed by the Lord? How do you share in those blessings? How do you share the good news of Jesus Christ with those around you? How has your life changed because of God? How can we help others to experience the joy of Christ in their lives?

Prayer: O God, help us to remember all that you are for us. May we always celebrate your steadfast love in all the ways that we experience it. May you bless us in your love and your peace so that we may share that love and peace with others. Help us to show love to each other as a sign of our love for you. May we show the compassion and mercy that has been shown to us through Christ our Lord. As we reach out to you with our joys and our concerns, may you build us up in your mercy and grace. May you lift us up in both laughter and tears that we may always find comfort in you. And may you strengthen us in our celebrations and our sorrows, knowing that you are with us always. And it is in Jesus name that we pray. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our first reading for today comes from Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 through Genesis chapter 2 verse 3.

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living

creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 1:1-2:3 NRSV)*

Our other reading for today comes from John chapter 1 verses 1 through 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. (John 1:1-5 NRSV)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

I wanted to give a little bit of an introduction to this series, because I was looking at the Transfiguration and realized that there were a lot of different parts to the picture it paints. It makes for quite a bit of information to put into one Sunday. So, I decided to use a few Sundays to introduce some of the other concepts that go into it. As we move through the Transfiguration, we will also be moving through the first chapter of John. Doing so, we can relate Christ to all of our readings. In them, we can also relate each week to a different aspect of God. We begin with the God of creation. For this, we turn to our creation account from the first chapter of Genesis. We pair this poetry with the poetic opening of John’s Gospel. The reason I paired these is because when we tie John into it, it gives us another aspect to relate to in creation. We hear of creation itself in John. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. And all things came into being through him. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overtake it. The poetic language of John blends perfectly with the poetic language of Genesis. It helps to tell a story that answers a question. Much of what Genesis is doing is answering a set of basic questions. How did we get here? What brought us to this point? And through those questions, we hear about the character of God.

One of the main things we see in this account of creation is God bringing order to chaos. That God gives purpose and meaning to creation by giving it order. It speaks to God's character, that God tames the chaos and is a God of order. That God sets things in motion so that they work, and they are good. Some would argue that it isn't poetry, but I use that language intentionally. I use it because it can help us to understand that the creation narrative isn't about giving us science. We are so ingrained in a fact versus fiction modern perspective that we can trick ourselves into a false narrative. The false narrative is that if something isn't historically accurate that it contains no truth. Which would be incorrect. Because the text was never written as a science textbook. It exists to tell us about God. When we look again at the question being answered, the question is not just "how did we get here?" but includes "who is God?" Who is this God that we follow? Who is the God that brought us together as a people? What purpose does God have for humankind? I say this because we can get hung up on all the wrong parts of God's creation. People will debate the scientific accuracy and end up missing what we are being shown, because they miss what Genesis tells us about the nature of God. When we start pushing questions onto the text it wasn't meant to answer, we are going to have to invent answers. And I'm more than happy to sit down and have a longer discussion of this with any of you. But what Genesis does tell us is that God sees the goodness of creation. That God sees chaos and brings order. That when God sees darkness, he brings light. And the light was good. And we get our first day, with God separating day and night. God has ordered our days that we may have a time for work and a time for rest.

As we continue on, we see further order out of chaos, with above and below made through separating the waters. We get sky and dry land with every kind of plant and seed. We see life and it's good. We see stars, the sun, and the moon placed so that there's order, so that there's light. We can make sense of the lights and they can guide us, and again, they give us order. And it is good. We see the waters bringing forth all the living creatures to cover the earth. All the things needed for a complete ecosystem are there and it is good. Order from the chaos. We see this pattern repeat over and over again. God gives order to the chaos, and it is good. God gives purpose to the land and it's good. God gives purpose to all life on Earth, and it is good. We can recognize all that God has done and know it is good because we can look around and see God's impact. We can look around and see all that God has done. We can look around and feel God's presence. But we can also see something else. The reason I included that part of John is that we can see all that came into being through the Word. Because in the beginning was the Word, and John tells us Christ is the Word. Through the Word comes order. Through the Word comes care and love. And we see that because it's not just that things are made and they exist, but they are good. They are appreciated. They are loved. Then we get another major part of Genesis. God makes humankind in his image. Male and female, he created them. And God blesses them. Through God's Word we are blessed. Through the Word we are blessed knowing that the Earth has been ordered that we are given purpose through God. And God finishes work on the sixth day, and then rests on the seventh. God sets and example for us yet again. That we are a beloved and blessed part of creation and God wants us

to know that we should rest. That we can be thankful for all that God has done and we honor God in our rest. That we understand God better because we understand God's love for us. That we are to know that we are not just cogs in a machine, but that we are a beloved and blessed people. That we can know that we matter to the creator of all.

I started with this because when I looked at the Transfiguration, I wanted to go back to creation so that we could see God's character from the beginning. That the God of the Transfiguration is the God of creation. When I read the account of creation, I see a God who cares about everything around us. I see a God who cares about us. I see Christ in every part of creation. I see a God who loves his creation and loves his people. We see a God who blesses his people that they may be fruitful in the earth. A God who cares enough about us to want to rest and take care of ourselves and each other. A God who wants us to understand the world around us. That our God is one of order from chaos. That we can see day and night as signs of God's care. That we can look at everything around us and we too can create order from chaos. And that because we are loved we can love. That creation is not in opposition to us but in harmony with us. And that wherever we go, God is with us. And wherever we go we see Christ, because all that came into the world came through the Word. That we know the Word made flesh to walk among us, to teach us, to guide us, to lead us, and to remind us of that blessing in love that God showed us. It is the blessing and the love that God shows us each and every day. So let us never forget this story so that we never forget all the goodness that surrounds us. May always know that God is with us. And may we remember that we are blessed, surrounded by all that God has for us. That we are walking in the love that God will always have for us, so that we may grow in it and we may share it and we may live it. Because we know that our God is a God of Creation. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Relational God

Our current series takes inspiration from the story of the Transfiguration. Each week we look at a different relational aspect of God and move through the first chapter of John. We look at Abraham, Moses, and Elijah and finish with the story of the Transfiguration of Christ.

January 22nd – *God of Creation* – Genesis 1:1-2:3; John 1:1-5

January 29th – *God of Declaration* – Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22; John 1:10-13

February 5th – *God of Revelation* – Exodus 33:12-23, 34:4-9, 27-29; John 1:14, 16-18

February 12th – *God of Transition* – 2 Kings 2:1-14; John 1:6-9, 19-21

February 19th – *God of Transformation* – Matthew 17:1-9; John 1:29-34

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Eric Veach	Ed & Verna Titus
Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Tricia Adkins
Don Stewart	Ronnie Winstead	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gabel
Tom Finley	Laura Carlen	Rosie Chancellor	Chuck Hogan
Brittany Gilbert	Jackie Potter	Phil Hawickhorst	Ray Carr
Jane Williams	Alice Sherwood	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks
Steve Carlen	Emily Blade	Tim Schnauz	Donna Carlen
Ernie Peters	Jess shoot	Alberta Darling	Family of Janet Dixon
Stanley Kiser	Family of Kyle Lehman	Corrine Howard	Stacy Janes
Family of Ann Pennington	Don Gilmore	Griffin Neidigh	Shirley Jester
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Sue & Bob Smyser	Larry Thompson
Nick & Leana Ochoa	Evelyn Sue Icenogle	Kristen & Zach Morecraft	Greg Williams
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Lavon Figgins
Janet Freeman			

Rev Camron D St.Michael

<https://stmichael.pw>

cdstmichael@outlook.com

(316)530-3182 (call or text)

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

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