

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week May 14, 2023

Piano – Dorothy O’Neill

Sound/powerpoint/livestream – Linda Malott

WELCOME & Prayer – Pastor Andy

SONGS – I worship you Almighty God, This is the day

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Rita Vriesema

PRAYER – Rita

SONG – When Mothers of Salem

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Bible study books available

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS – Mother’s Day

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 1:3-25

Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. 6 Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” 7 And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. 8 God called the space “sky.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day. 9 Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. 10 God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation— every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. 12 The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And evening passed and

morning came, marking the third day. 14 Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. 15 Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. 16 God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, 18 to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day. 20 Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” 21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day. 24 Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. 25 God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

MESSAGE – Pastor Andy

One thing that we need to understand and get out of the way before we look at this is the fact that the Creation story is not as much about history or science as it is about God. We see the face of God, we see his character in the six days of creation. The beauty and complexity of creation is a reflection of a good, good Father.

Before we get into that, we need to talk about the obvious question. Did creation actually take place over six 24-hour periods? Or did it take place over six periods of time that were much longer? For most of history, the church and the culture accepted what was written. But then came the Enlightenment and the industrial age and we turned more to science to understand the human condition. In the Western world (Europe and North America) God has been replaced with science and reason. The creation story over six days is commonly understood as myth.

There are two sides in this debate and they don't see eye to eye. The irony is that both sides hold some truth. God gave us minds and the ability to explore and learn. Understanding all of that actually brings me closer to God because I have deeper appreciation for everything that went into Creation. At the same time, I truly believe we were created in God's image. As a result, I do not believe that the human race evolved gradually from molecules that landed on Earth in an asteroid 3.5 billion years ago. If we were created in God's image, we did not evolve from other species. The second thing is that it did not happen by chance. Everything points to intelligent design. And the intelligence is God. So whether God took his time or if He did it in six 24-hour periods doesn't matter. God was behind it. God made it happen – it didn't happen on its own.

Consider the fact that in the Kingdom, there is no concept of time as we understand it on earth. A day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day, we are told in 2 Peter 3:8 and for God, a thousand years are as a passing day in Psalm 90:4. It could be that God described creation to the author of Genesis in terms of six days as a way of illustrating it in human terms. That said, I point to Christ, who said in several places in the Gospels that "with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27, Mark 14:36) and "all things are possible for one who believes (Mark 9:23). Because that's true, then if God wanted to create the world in six 24-hour periods, He could have.

The creation story is not science or history. Rather, it's about showing us the character of God. This is the first place where God reveals Himself. We see at least three elements of His character.

First is power. The ultimate sign of power in this world is the ability to make things happen. Imagine someone with a very large staff. It's the CEO. He or she sits at the head of the board room table for the weekly executive meeting. There are a half dozen senior or executive vice presidents along each side of the table. Set back from the main table are the executive assistants for those senior VPs. When a decision is made, the CEO simply says the word. Everyone else takes notes. The CEO also happens to chair the board, so there's no person to whom he reports – other than the shareholders (but that's another story.)

This picture is reflected in scripture in the wonderful exchange between Jesus and the Centurion: “For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” (Matthew 8:9) All Jesus has to do, as the Son of God, is say the word, and his servant will be healed.

This is the definition of power, in my view. The person holding the power doesn't have to take notes, because his executive assistant – who likely had an administrative staff of her own – will keep all of his records, including his daytimer. All the CEO has to do is show up.

You see the same in politics. It doesn't have to be a cabinet minister or the head of government. Whenever you see a local Member of Parliament or Legislative Assembly, they will have at least one assistant trotting behind them, taking notes or feeding information to their boss.

To reduce God to human terms is not the intent. Rather, it's to put a human face on what God does. God simply said the word – because He can – because He has the power. He says the word and all of the elements were created. It came about instantly. That's the first principle -- power.

The second is light. A careful reading of the Genesis creation story in Genesis 1 finds that the sun, as we know it, was only created on the fourth day. Yet on Day 1, God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day’ and the darkness ‘night.’ ” The presence of day and night without the presence of the sun, moon and stars does not make it less believable because the light on the first day wasn't physical. It was spiritual. God appears as light. And in his absence, dark. It's why we say the light of God shines from some people. And why we can say that darkness surrounds others. Light is more than a physical substance; it also has a supernatural aspect. Proof of that is found in Revelation 22, when John describes the new heavens and the new earth, there won't be any sun or moon because God Himself will be the light. There is also the story of God's people as they attempted to leave Egypt. God sent darkness to the land. This

could be understood as more than the absence of sunlight; it could also be the absence of God's Spirit.

Third thing is the fact that beauty and order came out of chaos. There's no question that the planet Earth in its original form, completely natural and without the destructive and polluting activities of the human race, would have been wonderful to see and feel. Creation is in contrast to what came later (the human race) and what existed prior. What's important here is what preceded Creation. Let's go back to the opening two verses of Genesis 1, "in the beginning" in which the earth as "formless and empty and darkness covered the deep waters." Formless means no shape. Empty means just that – devoid of anything. Darkness was literal (no sun, stars or moon) and spiritual (God's light did not shine in what we know of Creation.) Formless, empty and dark is the absence of God. It might be what hell is like. It's chaos. "for all the earth is the Lord's," we read in 1 Samuel 2:8, "and He has set the world in order." Last week, I told you how scripture interprets scripture and each part of the Bible supports the rest. This is a good example. So not only Samuel witnesses God's desire for order in creation, so does Christ, who tells the story in Matthew 12 and Luke 11 about the person who had evil spirit in them. When the spirit was removed, the person (the host) was "Empty, swept and in order." When the evil spirit returned to the person, all of that went out the door.

There's one word which appears several times in the creation story – "good." "And God saw that it was good" appears six times. God sat back and took in each day or period of creation. If you picture God as an old man with a white beard, you can see Him nodding his head in approval. A good day's work.

Put all of this together as you get the image of a master craftsman or builder, someone with great creativity who can see things we cannot see. In human terms, it's the person who can make something useful out of otherwise useless parts. Or the gifted cook who can open the fridge and cupboards and simply use what they can find to make something amazing. Except in God's case, He does not use pre-existing elements – He makes it all from scratch. It just appears.

This is the essential character of God: power, light, order – and it's really, really good.

You may have noticed that something is missing from the Creation story. It's people. It's significant that the human race was not created alongside the animals. There's a reason that everything else was created first. That's more than just a teaser for next week. It's something to think about – deeply. The nature of Creation tells us about God. The order of creation says a lot about the human race and our relationship to God. Creation happened because God loves us and wanted to create a temporary, earthly home for us. It's a thing of wonder and beauty. Let's sing about that.

HYMN – 338 Let all things now living

BENEDICTION –

PRAYER -- requests may be sent to the pastor, either for sharing or in confidence. If a need is not listed here it's because the family has opted for privacy.

NEW PRAYER

For commissioners preparing for General Assembly, to be held in person in Halifax from June 4-7. Pastor Andy launched a 28-day Renewal Fellowship prayer initiative this week leading up to GA and he will be at GA to head up the RF Prayer Room.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Cindy Brewer, Becky Desjardine, Bill Eves, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Mary Whitson, Sandra Whitson
2. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
3. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression
4. Karen Northcott – thanks for good biopsy results but continue to pray.

There are many whose names are not listed here – God know who they are and what they need.

Recent losses -- For Dan (Julie) Shaw's family, especially his sister Peggy Munro, after the sudden passing of his brother-in-law John Munro.

Seniors and shut ins – Jennie Atherton, Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk, Ross Fuchs at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Joyce MacTavish at The Waterford Home in Barrie, Bill Lozon at Copper Terrace, Aubrey Butler at home.

Session – Mark Labadie (clerk and representative elder), Cindy Brewer, Sheila Eves, Andrew Neely, Mark Richards and Julie Shaw.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Paul Vandenbogaerde (treasurer), Will Brewer, Ross Fuchs, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WHAT'S UP:

Pop can fundraiser – Bring your pop cans to church! Leave them in the bin behind Rutherford Hall.

DATES

May 17 – New Testament challenge at Evangel Pentecostal Tabernacle 7 p.m.

May 23 – Board of managers 7 p.m.

May 24 – New Testament challenge 7 p.m. at Evangel

May 31 -- New Testament challenge 7 p.m. at Evangel

June 4 – Mary Pat Elliott preaches – Pastor Andy at General Assembly

GIVING:

E-transfer to pcvan1313@gmail.com. Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer's mailbox. Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0. Put it in the mailbox at the home of treasurer Paul Vandenberg. 1313 North Street, Dresden.

Telephone number 519-683-6194

GIFT CARDS – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. **Next deadline May 28.**