

LIVING HOPE - "ABUNDANT LIFE"

Ordinary Time

Genesis 1:2-4

A Sermon Preached and Danced by
Pastor Amy Roon
University Congregational United Church of Christ
Seattle, Washington 98105
September 10, 2017

Pastor Roon's sermons often are as musical and kinesthetic (i.e., sacred dance) as they are verbal, in that she performs her message. In the sermon of September 10, for example, while the Genesis Creation story was read by our lay liturgists, Pastor Roon danced each day to illustrate the creation and the emotional reaction to the creation.¹

Scripture:

Genesis 1:2-4²

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void 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 God 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 God 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 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

¹ Note provided by Mary Kollar in email communication dated 9/13/2017.

² The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). 1989.

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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 humankind 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 humankind in God's image,
in the image of God, God created them;
male and female God 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 God 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. And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Pastor Roon ended her sacred dance on the creation of the Sabbath, curled in sleep at the foot of the altar.

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Pastor Amy Roon

Note: Because the recording equipment failed, we provide the following summary by Jeff Keith.³

Amy began with interpretive dance as the scripture was being read. Then posed the question we have looked at, "Where do we find hope?" At Seabeck Camp this summer, the definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic hope were explored.

Extrinsic hope: "I can see where we are going, and we will be all right despite whatever is going on around us."

Intrinsic hope: "Life is in itself Hope. The part each of us carries that no one else can take away."

Yet, after the news and events over the past week those words seem feeble. Amy read a list of places hit by monsoons, tsunamis, heat waves, earthquakes and tremors around the world. We are feeling the pressures of these events as they affect our friends, neighbors, loved ones, and so many with whom we empathize.

Amy shared of her own challenges balancing visitors, friends, neighbors, immediate family, pets. The new and big challenge of providing loving care, support, and laying a foundation of what it means to be loved into the "hard wiring" of baby Desiree. These are times and experiences that baby Desiree may never remember as she is a foster child, and that means she can be separated from them as a family member in a short time.

As she spoke of the abundance of love, using her own foster infant and her son as examples of love's expression, she embraced an imaginary child and broke into song, a lullaby she often sings to her children. Even the repetition of the lullaby from dulcet to wakeful volume expressed the movement of love between a parent and a growing child.⁴

But inside Amy herself is the always and constant reminder that she is loved. Can that be enough for this day?

She shared of her college experiences at Oberlin, which had begun its music conservatory many years ago to provide a foundation in spiritual music for future church music leaders. Over the ensuing years they have become a more secular institution which provides music education and foundations for vocalists, instrumentalists and future music educators of all types. When she performed "Hold-a My Hand" for a studio recital offering at Oberlin she was "coming out" to her classmates and teachers as a person of faith. This was done from a place of fear and nerves.

And for the congregation, Pastor Amy sang the spiritual "Hold-a My Hand" with feeling.⁵

The prophet had said, "Fear God!" But she learned that she could touch an audience, large or small with her music. That made her experience real. – Amen!

³ Jeff Keith, in email dated 9/10/2017.

⁴ Mary Kollar, op cit.

⁵ Jeff Ketih, op cit.

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Edited by Beth Bartholomew

10/05/2017