

2018 Lenten Devotional

Presbyterians for Earth Care

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart."
Hebrews 12:1-3 NRSV



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Introduction

During communion recently, I was feeling a bit weary and confused as to what to do about it. This mind-set was built up over time, absorbing a lot of information about environmental disasters, watching my own community change and suffer from deforestation and pollution, and experiencing indifference in others and some in myself. Worn down, I sat in worship and listened to our pastor remind us that Jesus is the answer to my state and the state of things. Without him, I am unable, tired, and bewildered--not a good place to find yourself. What a relief to hear the good news afresh.

Did you ever see a drawing of Jesus when you were a child or young person? I remember these from Sunday School and Jesus was always doing something miraculous like healing a person, rescuing a lost sheep, feeding thousands with a little lunch or speaking to the sea. Jesus was a hero. So, during communion, I reclaimed him--the One who can do this earth care thing that I can't seem to sustain. Jesus can speak to hearts; he can confront; he can protect; he can conquer. I do try to stay close to Jesus, but it's hard as I get distracted, overly confident in myself, or afraid. Staying close to Jesus' hem is where I need to be. That way, I can hear his words, and receive his power to go out and do this work.

This year's devotional is about how we each hold on and stay in the ministry of caring for God's creation. It's about how we cannot quit. One special word in the scripture that day was that Jesus is the Source of our faith (HCSB version). I sat there, hearing Jesus speak directly to me through our pastor, John, telling me he is the answer. The only way I can do earth care is with him leading, giving strength, and providing comfort. Thank you, Jesus! :) You are still my hero!

Thank you to everyone who is reading and who contributed a devotion this year. May the peace of Christ be with you.

Tama Eller
Editor

Ash Wednesday Reflection

by Stephen A. Herring

“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” Ecclesiastes 1:2

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tells us that it is all emptiness, vanity, and striving after wind. I can tell you from experience that there are many days when that is exactly how earth care ministry feels!

It helps me to keep going if I see that earth care is about the way we make changes, good or bad, in both natural and human ecosystems. The changes we make, or fail to make, can have impacts upon the quality of life for us and for other living things. The work we do in earth care is about trying to make things a little better here or there for us, for other people, or for other living things. Our task is to do our little part and to trust God to manage the big picture.

We labor at a variety of worthy tasks with an aim to make things better for someone or something.

The long-term picture will be what it will be, and it is not our job to worry and fret about it. This subtle shift can take us out of the “*vanity of vanities*” mode, and into the mode of following Jesus who said; “*that you have done it for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, have done it for me.*” (Matthew 25:40)

What keeps me going in earth care is the belief that my labors serve the comfort of Christ. I love encouraging people and helping people to clean things up and to make things livable. This is a worthy task.

Earth needs our care. Earth needs us to care about our environment, our space, each other, and all the other living things with whom we share our space. If we care, we will help someone, or something. If we help, we are serving Jesus.

Prayer: *Dear Lord Jesus, help me to care for the small things in my world. Deliver me from exaggerated self-importance and help me to accept the tasks you have set before me. Help me to find grace in doing my small part. Thank you Lord Jesus. Amen.*



Rev. Stephen Herring serves as Stated Supply at Cobb Memorial and Nahalah Presbyterian churches in the Presbytery of New Hope. He is also a full time faculty member in religion, geography, and humanities at Edgecombe Community College in Tarboro NC. In his spare time, he owns and operates a recycling company called Creative Salvage Designs.

First Sunday Reflection

by John Ann Shearer

“Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.” Luke 4:40

Wildlife Biologists are optimistic people. We have to be. Otherwise, we'd never get past the first day! Even when optimism wanes, we must persevere because caring for our plants and animals and their habitats is the right thing to do.

It's easy to get on board when there is an emergency with our environment like an oil spill. That's like calling 911 or rushing someone to the ER. Caring for our earth and its inhabitants day after day through the constant and cumulative impacts of habitat destruction is more like caring for a loved one with a chronic illness or a disease. It's not glamorous and it's certainly not easy. Ultimately, they may not live. But, just as their life is worth fighting for, our wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend are worth fighting for.



Habitat loss is the number one reason that species become endangered in our country. Any one parcel of habitat that disappears may not be significant, but it adds up. Saving habitat is important, but when it has been lost, there is often an opportunity to return it to the way it was. As a wildlife biologist, I have the privilege of working with landowners who want to restore their lands and create habitat for the benefit of rare species or migratory birds. I restore habitats like the longleaf pine ecosystem where towering pines look down on a carpet of grasses and wild flowers, where woodpeckers work their way up the pine bark and fox squirrels pick apart cones. Funny, there are so many things I am not sure about when it comes to knowing what God wants of me, but about this, I am sure. (continued on next page)

First Sunday Reflection (continued)

by John Ann Shearer

Prayer: *God of all Creation, Help us to love our earth the way we love one another and to care for it the way you have called for us to care for each other. May we remember that your creation is a gift that you've entrusted to us.*



John Ann Shearer has served as the state coordinator for the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in North Carolina since 1999. Prior to this she worked at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama, Upper Souris Refuge in North Dakota, and Mattamuskeet Refuge in North Carolina. She has an undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's degree in Wildlife Management from West Virginia University. John Ann is an ordained Presbyterian elder and serves on the Worship and Earth Care Committees at Western Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Raleigh.



Second Sunday Reflection

Two by Two in the Midst of Wolves

by Nancy Corson Carter

“After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.’” Luke 10: 1-3

This passage from Luke is included among the events and teachings recorded about Jesus when he has “set his face” to go to Jerusalem. Jesus sends messengers ahead to prepare the way but is met by unwilling villagers and would-be helpers’ excuses.

Then “the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come.” As I read this text, I want to see myself in one of the faithful duos marching out to bring in the Lord’s plentiful harvest. But I know how scary this path may be to travel.

Those wolves may feed upon my own fearfulness and the ways in which *I* make excuses not to

follow Jesus when he calls. In eco-justice terms, the wolves may be polluters, those who claim others’ land and resources as their own (e.g. Doctrine of Discovery usurpers), climate change deniers—all whose acts and intentions desecrate the wonder of God’s creation and impede the harvest of his love.

Why two by two? Common sense suggests numerous reasons: safety, companionship, the multiplied impact of two witnesses to the presence of the kingdom. In my own ministry, I learn over and over how much, “in the midst of wolves,” I need my faithful friends, my congregation, and groups of kindred spirits like Presbyterians for Earth Care to keep up my courage and my determination.

Prayer: *Holy God, I thank you for so many wonderful partners in ministry in my life—I name them before you. Let me trust that I am not alone, that you are always with me, Emmanuel. Amen.*



Nancy Corson Carter, Ph.D., a founding member of the Shalem Society for Contemplative Leadership, leads retreats and workshops in eco-spirituality and literature. She facilitates an Earth Care Committee at the Church of Reconciliation, an accredited PC(USA) Earth Care Congregation in Chapel Hill, NC, and is a publishing writer.

Third Sunday Reflection

by Dick Gibson

“The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” Psalm 24.1

Praise God for the creation, this day and every day.
Give glory to God who made our garden home.

During this Lenten season, we do not focus on what we can give up, but look for what we can do to be faithful: peacemaking, respecting others, caring for the earth. Give God the glory with your daily routines.

Saving creation takes time. Our Synod pastors had meetings in the late ‘80’s and 90’s to talk about earth care, exploring what we could do. Many were ahead of us. Changing light bulbs, insulating windows and buildings, planting rain gardens, preventing oil and waste in our sewers- little things each one could do to care for our garden home.

Now some thirty years later we are still at it. We helped to clean a small neighborhood stream so salmon could flourish. We changed our laws to keep tour boats away from the Orcas. Our church

and community are forming teams to reduce our carbon footprint with a program called “Taming Bigfoot”.

Jesus was angry with the money-changers and animal sellers in the Temple courtyard. They were not giving glory to God. They had been there for a very long time, but on this day he made them leave, angry, he drove them out. It was a teaching moment. It was setting an example, asking people to focus on God. Jesus planted a seed, showing us how to think about our values and what it means to give God the glory. (John 2:13ff)

So for us, the work and witness to our values goes on, one step each day, persistence pays off as there is less carbon, cleaner streams, more fish, cleaner air. And we keep at it, day after day, year after year. The Earth IS the Lord’s. It is God’s gift to us, to care for in our day, minute-by-minute, year by year.

Prayer: *Lord God, give us the strength to hold on to our values. Help us to stay steady over many days and years. We praise you for giving us all good things in our garden home. Guide our steps as we plant one tree, heal one stream, enable one butterfly. Use our hands, feet and voices to proclaim your praise, as we witness for your creation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*



Rev. Dick Gibson is a retired minister, having served in Oregon and NW Coast Presbytery. Dick has been a member of the GA committees on the Self Development of People, Hunger, Peacemaking, Fossil Free PCUSA and a Hunger and Earth Care Advocate. Dick and his wife, Christine, live in Lynnwood, a suburb of Seattle, and enjoy time with their children and grandchildren when not traveling or watching their carbon footprint!

Fourth Sunday Reflection

We Might Not Be Perfect, But We Can Be Better

by Joy Williams

*"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28*

I cannot pretend that I walk with Jesus as closely as I would like for any reader to think. I can say, however, that Jesus is a significant part of why I get up in the morning and try to be a better person than yesterday. I strive, but am not perfect. I have broken relationships all around me, from family, friends, old employers—and as much as I want to say that I am OK with this level of brokenness, I am not. I hurt. One of my favorite bible passages that calls me back into communion with God is Romans 8. There I find that no matter what passes me by, it will be for my good (Romans 8:28). I also find that as I groan for healed relationships in my life, the earth groans for a reconciliation back into

God's perfect order. I can only hope that my choices, although modest and humble compared to those of greater riches, but maybe in excess compared to those of less resources, will both edify others, care for the earth, and bring healing to me. In spite of my personal hardships, the only option is to move forward, that is not the question. The question, rather, is will I move forward with joy. And to that, I say yes. Paul tells us to rejoice, and rejoice always. So as I figure out how to repair the brokenness found in my relationships, in the earth, and in myself, I do so with one choice at a time, starting with God's love for me, and the redemption that came through the cross.

Prayer: *Dear Gracious and Merciful Creator, thank you for loving us even when we don't love ourselves, each other, or your creation fully. Forgive us, for we know not what we do. Have mercy on us, for we need that too. Give us your grace to realize where we fall short, and give us your Holy Spirit to teach us to move forward. Offer your mighty hand to soften our hearts, so we are willing to humble ourselves and pray.*



Joy Williams is a Master of Divinity Student at Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, NC. There she is turning a family home into a living and learning homestead, for herself to serve as a reminder of what it means to live simply, off the land, and striving in harmony with God, the earth, others, and oneself.

Fifth Sunday Reflection

by Paul Heins

“Don’t let it escape your notice, dear friends, that with the Lord a single day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a single day.” 2 Peter 3:8 CEB

It is often said that we should not lose the forest for the trees. Don’t get mired down in the minutiae, or lost in the details. Focus on the big picture. There is wisdom in that. Retaining a sense of the overall beauty of the forest is key.

But it’s not the whole story.

It’s easy, when we are too focused on the forest as a whole, *to lose sight of the beauty of each tree.*

For those who are committed to the wholeness of creation, it’s easy to be overwhelmed by the size of the forest. We see how far we have to go. We wonder if we will ever be able to make it through. Despair and weariness can seep in. But the forest belongs to the creator, and its final restoration belongs in the divine hands.

Stop from time to time and examine the beauty of each tree along the way: the small steps forward, the brief moments of healing, the experiences of getting something done. When we stop and celebrate each tree, it will occur to us how many of them there are! And that’s a good thing.



Plant a tree. Notice the wonder of a tree that has stood for many years. Protect a tree that is in danger of being pulled down. Each is an important part of the forest.

On the journey toward wholeness, a single day can seem like a thousand years. On the other hand, *each day is also filled with a thousand years of wonder and beauty.* May each day fill you with blessing.

Prayer: *Loving and Faithful God, on the long journey toward sabbath peace, our legs often grow weary and our vision fails. Empower us to keep the vision of wholeness for all creation before us. Give us the faith to celebrate each moment of wholeness and healing along the way. Amen.*



Paul Heins’ love for God’s creation has grown on the beaches, woods, mountains, and waters of California, Hawaii, New Jersey, Utah, and Washington where he now pastors a congregation in the town of Port Townsend. His concern for God’s creation has grown as he has witnessed our growing ecological crisis. He loves working with his congregation, his colleagues, and his neighbors on bringing healing to the environment and on nurturing a healthy relationship with all life. In his study of environmental ministry, he has discovered the rich resources the Christian faith offers in this work.

Palm Sunday Reflection

by Tama Eller

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

"When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

'Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey,

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'"

Matthew 21:1-9 NRSV

This story is one of my favorites! It is sweet because Jesus is heralded with branches and people's coats on the ground, that he has a parade given, a welcome and blessing.

Lately, God is working on me to be positive--stop complaining and recounting all the environmental sins--and think on God's deeds in earth care. This discipline is coming along. It has been tough as our community is undergoing a lot of people growth, widening roads and building.

Early one morning, I was looking outside and could hear silence and then birds and then abruptly, saws. The forests are coming down all around our home, old trees, saplings, shrubs, etc. It is despairing. On that morning, God showed me Psalm 83. Verse 12 speaks about our enemies "who said, 'Let us take the pastures of God for our own

possession.'" The psalmist ends with, "Let them know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth." I am encouraged in this praise, as too often I forget who our God is. The next day, God continued in Psalm 84. Verses 6-7 explain how as the people of God go through the valley, they make it a place of springs; "They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion." To keep going as stewards of God's creation, we must read about, listen to, tell one another, and visit God's wonderful deeds, not the stark results of the enemy. We must be busy spring-making and singing.

Jesus was praised with "Hosanna!", which is an expression of joy and hope for salvation through the Messiah. Jesus teaches us through his entry into Jerusalem, to rejoice and cry out to God to be O Most High for us. *(continued on next page)*

Palm Sunday Reflection (continued)

by Tama Eller

Prayer using Psalm 9:1-2 A Psalm of David

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;

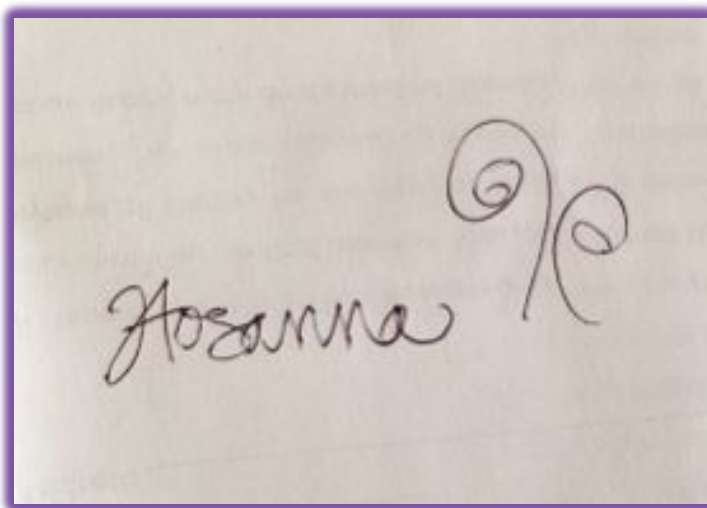
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

I will be glad and exult in you;

I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

We pray in the name of the One who came for us. Amen.

Tama Eller is a free-lance educator focusing in the stewardship of God's creation. She studied at the University of South Carolina, majoring in political science and minoring in science; and Union-PSCE and Columbia Theological Seminary, focusing in educational ministry and earth care. Tama is enjoying serving on the Steering Committee for Presbyterians for Earth Care.



One aside, at some point years ago I started drawing a little “praise doodle” in my bible study and prayer notes. It’s a little swirl on a post that is an ink palm of sorts. There is also a beautiful plant here as I write that is bobbing with the typing as if to say, “Thank you, Jesus, for being here for our Lenten devotional and season!”

Maundy Thursday Reflection

Caring for God's Creation

by Willem Bodisco Massink

*"And God took the human being (man/adam) and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it."
Genesis 2:15*

I have been a gardener of some sort for a long time. I have tilled the land in a variety of places: The Netherlands (birth place), the Caribbean (banana plantation manager), Curacao (Netherlands Antilles), Upstate New York and Fuquay-Varina, NC. Any of these places had its own unique type of soil, requiring its own special way of keeping it to produce good vegetables, fruits and flowers. Indeed, tilling the land and keeping the land is hard work and it can also be quite frustrating and test your farming skills especially when you thought you did the right things and therefore expected good harvesting results, but the yield was only mediocre or even poor. Lately there have been moments when I wanted to throw-up my hands and bury my spade. Enough is enough. But I go on.

The same with doing earth care in a congregation. When the Earth Care Ministry Team was formed at the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian in Cary, NC in 2011 there was great enthusiasm. Many individuals joined the effort. Filling out the first Earth Care Congregation's certification application was fun and a learning experience. During the last seven years, however, this enthusiasm has waned. Maintaining membership on the Ministry Team is a chore. As chair of this Ministry Team there have been moments lately when I have wondered if the efforts were worth it. Is it time to throw in the towel? But caring for God's creation is ongoing to educate people that tilling and keeping the land is God's will for "the earth is the Lord's." And so, I go on, doing this ministry, hoping that the work in the end will bear fruit.

Prayer: *Creator God, we praise and give You thanks for the gift of the land that brings forth the food for all Your living creatures. Forgive us when we forget to be good stewards of the land and guide us in caring for all Your creation.*

Rev. Willem Bodisco Massink is an Honorably Retired Presbyterian pastor who lives in Fuquay-Varina, NC. He is a Parish Associate at the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian in Cary, NC. He is, among other things, the chair of the Earth Care Ministry Team at this congregation. In the 1980s and early 1990s Rev. Willem Bodisco Massink was Chair of the Board of the Eco-Justice Project at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. During those years he worked closely with the Rev. Dr. William Gibson, the Director, and they collaborated together on a number of Earth Care and environment related overtures to the GA of the PC(USA).



Good Friday Reflection

by I. Lehr Brisbin

"Then the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was torn in two." Luke 23:45 KJF



Photo by Mark Vukovich

The above passage might well describe an event similar to the United States' most noted natural phenomenon of the past year. The alignments of the sun, earth and moon caused a path of total solar eclipse to move diagonally across the country on August 21, 2017. The path of totality of that eclipse moved almost exactly across the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Fellowship Camp and Conference Center of the Trinity Presbytery in Laurens County, South Carolina. This occurred only a few weeks after this presbytery had voted to establish this site as the independent Camping Ministry of the Carolinas (CMC). The purpose was to establish a church-based program there of environmental research and education to provide for a better understanding of, and concern for, God's creation here on earth.

As one of its first undertakings, this ministry

hosted a gathering of prominent scientists as well as the lay public from across the state and around the world, to view the totality of this eclipse at this site and hear a lecture by Dr. Morris Aizenmann, a retired former director of the U.S. National Science Foundation's program in astronomy.

However a study describing the motivations of other individuals, including Thomas Edison, who traveled west in July, 1828 to observe a solar eclipse in Wyoming and Colorado, revealed that of equal importance to what many of them actually saw and learned was *who they saw the eclipse with!* That surely was the case with the disciples and women who watched Christ's crucifixion from the darkened crown of Golgotha, as described by Luke. May we too come to see how that event not only transformed the rest of their lives, but our own as well. *(continued on next page)*

Good Friday Reflection (continued)

by I. Lehr Brisbin

Prayer: *May the natural phenomena which draw our attention with awe to the grandeur of your creation here on earth also cause us to realize and appreciate the importance of our being with others with whom we may share that awe. May the relationships which are thus created bring us closer to an appreciation of your magnificent presence in all our lives whether that be manifested through the crucifixion of your son or the continuing movements and alignments of the celestial bodies with which you surround our earth.*



I. Lehr Brisbin, Ph.D. majored in biology with a minor emphasis in Old Testament theology as an undergraduate at Connecticut Wesleyan University. He then obtained graduate masters and doctoral degrees in “Zoology (Ecology)” from the University of Georgia in 1967. He then moved to the University of Georgia’s Savannah River Ecology Laboratory in Aiken, South Carolina, a position from which he retired in 2002 to become a Senior Research Scientist Emeritus. Dr. Brisbin is a Ruling Elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Aiken, South Carolina, and since 1996 he has served the Trinity Presbytery of the PC(USA) in a position which was first entitled, and still functions as, the presbytery’s Restoring Creation Enabler. In this position he also sits as an Ex-Officio member of the Board of Directors of the newly-formed Camping Ministry of the Carolinas. The above meditation represents the latest step in a process initiated by Dr. Brisbin during his undergraduate studies. This process was formally defined in 1979 by the publication in the *Georgia Journal of Science* of Dr. Brisbin’s manuscript: “The Principles of Ecology as a Frame of Reference for Ethical Challenges: Towards the Development of an Ecological Theology”.¹

¹Dr. Brisbin’s paper is available upon request: pec@presbyearthcare.org

Easter Sunday Reflection

by Colleen Earp

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:19-31 NRSV

It can be so hard to believe that climate change is really a serious issue. I’ve experienced snow pants weather and t-shirt weather within the same week so far this winter, but I have snow pants and t-shirts, and blankets and fans, and hot tea and cold, clean water. I carry enough privilege that I don’t have to feel the worst effects of climate change. It is difficult news, and I am privileged enough to ignore it if I want to.

Thomas heard from the other disciples who had seen Jesus. Even though they had seen and experienced Jesus, Thomas had not, and refused to believe it until he saw the wounds on Jesus’ body. *(continued on next page)*



Easter Sunday Reflection (continued)

by Colleen Earp

I think this is sometimes true for those of us not living and working in places directly affected by our collective sins against the planet—I can't see the cracks in the dry soil! I didn't see the river swell to historic heights, full of mud washed away from the land! I haven't seen these giant garbage patches in the middle of our oceans!

Jesus forgives us, not only for our ignorance and denial, but for our complicity in the problem.

It would be easy to become disheartened and lose perseverance in my environmental work, but I

find great hope in the community I do this work with. Like Thomas, I once didn't really understand the gravity of the situation. But forgiven, and with his community, he came to learn, and go out and work for God's glory. I am so grateful for my colleagues in ministry: in camping and conference work; in peacemaking; in education; in advocacy; in so many other places. While I am hardly living on the forefront and seeing the absolute worst of our environmental destruction, I have "my people" who encourage me and hold me accountable to use my knowledge and privilege to stand up and work for those who are suffering the most.

Charge: *Peace be with you. Find your people, have faith, believe, and get to work!*

Colleen Earp serves as Director of Environmental Ministries at Camp Hanover in the Presbytery of the James. After a BA and MS in Geography, she is pursuing an MDiv at Union Presbyterian Seminary. She is passionate about environmental education and conservation, and loves to explore, whether it's around the corner or around the world!



Prayer: *Thank you, God, for Lent! Thank you for being with us in our thoughts and actions throughout Lent and for encouraging us. Thank you for Presbyterians for Earth Care and the opportunity to learn about you and your creation, be with other disciples, and to advocate together on behalf of your amazing creation. Thank you for the gift of spring and the new season of Easter. Help us to magnify you in the work you give us.*

We pray in the name of the Resurrection and the Life. Amen.