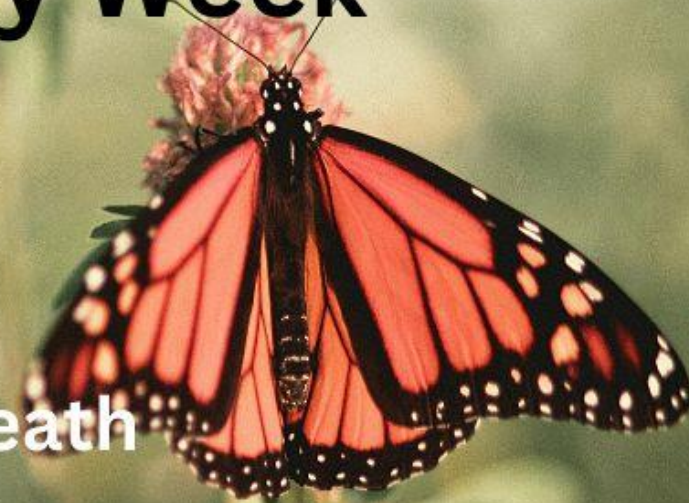


Holy Ground: The Earth as Participant in Holy Week

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Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

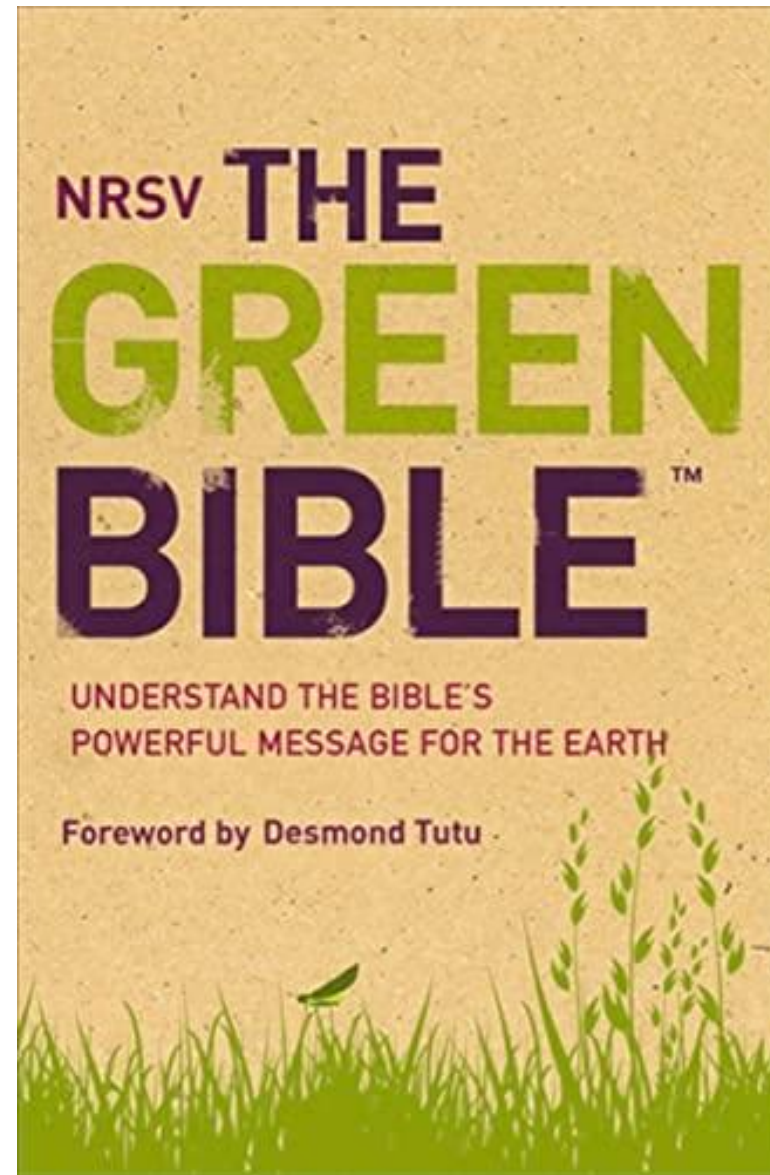


Goals

- 1) Theological orientation to importance of the earth in Scripture and in worship;
- 2) Provide Practical Commentary on planning worship that recognizes the importance of the earth for worship service from Palm Sunday to 1st Sunday of Easter:

Part 1: Seeing the Earth in Scripture

2009 Color-Coded edition of the Bible helps us to recognize the Earth's central role in Scripture.



Theological Claims

- 1) Christian Faith as Incarnational
- 2) Scripture as Witness of Peoples with Awareness of Seasons and Cycles of Nature
 - a) Role of Religious Festivals
 - b) Pilgrimage

Lent as an Opportunity
to Cultivate Awareness
of God's Presence in
Creation

Holy Week Structure:

Thursday: Water

Friday: Trees

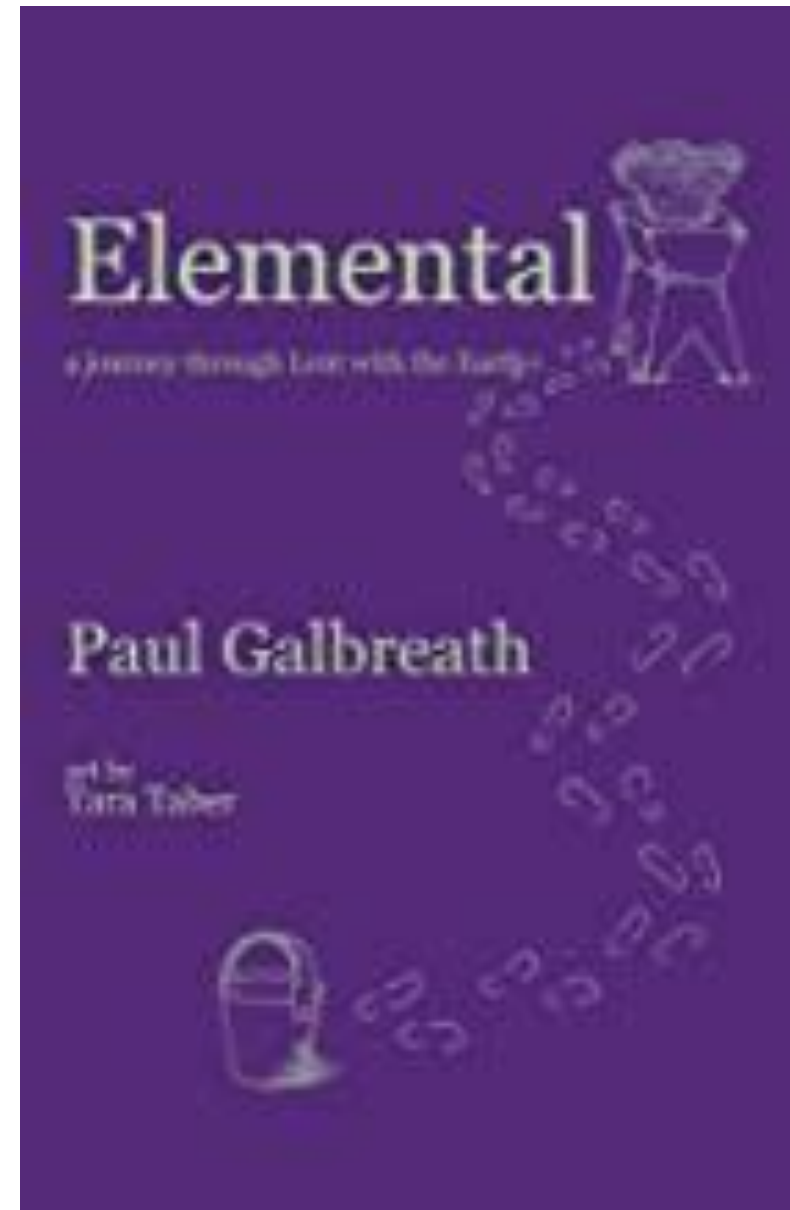
Saturday: Stone/Rocks

Sunday: Grain/Bread

Monday: Sky/Sun

Tuesday: Wind

Wednesday: Earth (from Ash
Wednesday)



Part 2: Role of Earth in Holy Week Texts

Palm/Passion Sunday: Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem – Crowd greets Jesus riding on a donkey with clothes and tree branches (Matt 21:8)

Reference to Psalm 118:26-27 – Sanctus; *“Bind the festal procession with branches”*

Note the role of Nature in praising God (esp. in Psalms)

Psalm 96:12 – Then the trees of the forest shall sing for joy;

Isaiah 55:12 – the trees of the field shall clap their hands;

Eco-Palms vs. Local Foliage

Passion Text Readings

- 1) Matthew 26: the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
- 2) Judas' betrayal – and his payment used to purchase land – the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners (Matt 27:7)

Interesting to note the relationship between blood and land (particularly in light of the growing awareness around the Doctrine of Discovery and the Church's treatment of Indigenous people)

Maundy Thursday

John 13:5 – Footwashing – as central to text and worship practice;

Cultural practice of Jesus' time – those who walk on dusty roads during the day – as they enter houses - role of servants to wash their feet;

Importance of clean water – assumes access to clean water;

What to do with this cultural practice in worship today?

Note the associations to baptism;

Good Friday

John 18-19: Central role of the cross made from a tree;

Holy Saturday/Easter Celebration (Vigil/Sunday)

Matthew 28 – women visit the tomb; earthquake (earth participates in the event); Stone is rolled away;

Risen Christ pictured as a gardener/one who tends/cares for the earth;

Resurrection Meals – Luke 24 and John 21 in which the breaking of the bread and sharing of a meal is a sign of presence of the risen Christ;

From Awareness to Action

“Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?”

Anglican Church of Canada – Baptismal Vow (optional)

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