

The Lutheran Churches of

St. Peter's Brodhagen
St. Peter's Zurich
Trinity London
Trinity Windsor

present

Shared Worship Sunday



WELCOME

In the name of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, welcome to our worship service for July 11th celebrating the Seventh Sunday in the season of Pentecost.

You are in the right place for our Shared Worship Service with the congregations of St. Peter's in Brodhagen, St. Peter's in Zurich, Trinity in Windsor, and my congregation of Trinity here in London.

I am Pastor Steve Johnston, and with my pastoral colleagues Laura, Nadine, and Mike, we are glad you are with us today.

Each of our Shared Worship Services will include the four congregations with readers, music, a worship leader and the hidden but essential one ... the video and audio editor.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

And also with you!

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Let us pray.

Gracious and glorious God, you delight in the creation you have made and you invite us to share in your delight. May we see what you see, may we love as you love, may we rejoice with your heart. Connect us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

Reading: Psalm 104 (selected verses)

A reading from the poetry of Psalm 104 using The Passion Translation.

- 1 Everything I am will praise and bless the Lord!
O Lord, my God, your greatness takes my breath away,
overwhelming me by your majesty, beauty, and splendor!
- 2 You wrap yourself with a shimmering, glistening light.
You wear sunshine like a garment of glory.
You stretch out the starry skies like a tapestry.

- 3 You build your balconies with light beams
and ride as King in a chariot you made from clouds.
You fly upon the wings of the wind.
- 4 You make your messengers into winds of the Spirit,
and all your ministers become flames of fire.
- 5 You, our Creator, formed the earth,
and you hold it all together so it will never fall apart.
- 6 You poured the ocean depths over the planet,
submerging mountains beneath.
- 7 Yet at the sound of your thunder-shout
the waters all fled away, filling the deep with seas.
- 8 The mountains rose and valleys sank
to the levels you decreed for them.
- 9 Then you set a boundary line for the seas
and commanded them not to trespass.
- 10 You sent springs cascading through the valleys,
flowing freely between the mountains and hills.
- 11 You provide drink for every living thing;
men and beasts have their thirst quenched because of you.
- 12 The birds build nests near the tranquil streams,
chirping their joyous songs from the branches above.
- 13 From your kindness you send the rain to water the mountains
from the upper rooms of your palace.
Your goodness brings forth fruit for all to enjoy.
- 14 Your compassion brings the earth's harvest, feeding the hungry.
You cause the grass to grow for livestock,
along with the fruit, grains, and vegetables to feed mankind.
- 15 You provide sweet wine to gladden hearts.
You give us daily bread to sustain life,
giving us glowing health for our bodies.
- 16 The trees of the Lord drink until they're satisfied.
Lebanon's lofty trees stand tall right where you planted them.
- 17 Within their branches you provide for birds
a place to build their nests;
even herons find a home in the cypress trees.

- 18 You make the high mountains a home for wild goats
and the rocky crag where the rock badgers burrow.
- 19 You made the moon to mark the months
and the sun to measure the days.
- 24 O Lord, what an amazing variety of all you have created!
Wild and wonderful is this world you have made,
while wisdom was there at your side.
This world is full of so many creatures, yet each belongs to you!
- 25 And then there is the sea! So vast! So wide and deep—
swarming with countless forms of sea life, both small and great.
- 26 Trading ships glide through the high seas.
And look! There are the massive whales
bounding upon the waves.
- 27 All the creatures wait expectantly for you
to give them their food as you determine.
- 28 You come near and they all gather around,
feasting from your open hands,
and each is satisfied from your abundant supply.
- 29 But if you were to withhold from them and turn away,
they all would panic.
And when you choose to take away their breath,
each one dies and returns to the dust.
- 30 When you release your Spirit-Wind, life is created,
ready to replenish life upon the earth.
- 31 May God's glorious splendor endure forever!
May the Lord take joy and pleasure in all that he has made.
- 33 I will sing my song to the Lord as long as I live!
Every day I will sing my praises to God.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.
Thanks be to God.**

Homily

Pastor Steve Johnston, Trinity Lutheran, London

Meditation on Psalm 104 (The Passion Translation)

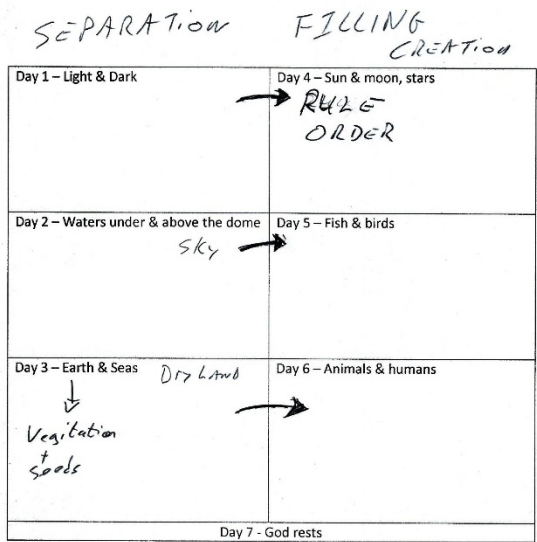
"GOD DELIGHTS IN CREATION"

(This is a transcription from the recorded sermon)

Our scripture for today is Psalm 104, A title that came to me as I read the psalm is, "God delights in creation", and I thought, I'm sure I've got some photographs that might go with that title, "God delights in creation". I decided to ask the other pastors and invited them send me a photographs of how they also see how, "God delights in creation". I'm going to use those throughout the sermon as visual footnotes.

In many ways, Psalm 104 itself is a great big footnote for the first creation story. As I read through Psalm 104, I kept hearing Genesis chapter 1, that first creation story where God creates the world in six days. Throughout my reflections this morning, you're going to see which of those six days I was thinking about. But weren't there seven days of creation? It's a seven day story, but in six days, God created the heavens and the earth and everything that was in it, and on the seventh day, God rested.

Psalm 104 is this incredible poem about God delighting in creation, and it links back to the Genesis 1 and the first creation story. I also see the Genesis 1 creation story as poetry. For me, it's more poetry than it is a recipe. And I'm going to display a table here.



You'll see that on the left hand side, it's all about separation.

So in DAY 1, God creates and separates light and dark; and DAY 2, God separates the waters from under and above the dome; on DAY 3, Earth and sea are separated.

Now on the right hand side, they kind of map from; DAY 1 → DAY 4 where God fills the separated Light & Dark with the sun and the moon, "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." *Genesis 4:17-18.*

You can see in the other days that the waters are created and sky are created, and God give fish and birds to fill

those separated waters. DAY 2 → DAY 5

And then day 3, the Earth is separated from the seas, and what does God put on the earth? Well, he puts us and all the other animals. DAY 3 → DAY 6

So with Psalm 104 it is like large footnote to Genesis 1.

Psalm 104 opens up with praise and wonder at God and the overwhelming majesty and beauty and splendor. Verse two is fascinating when it gets into light, and it's this whole story of light. God wraps God's self with a shimmering, glistening light. This is wonderful poetry in Psalm 104. God uses light, almost as clothing, or a tapestry on which the starry sky is gets put. I'm sure if you've ever been out in the countryside away from the city lights, you too have seen the tapestry of the heavens. I'm thinking of **DAY 1 in Genesis.**

The translation of Ps 104 today is from **The Passion Translation** version of the Bible. Author Brian Simmons wrote this in his introduction to the passion translation; "The purpose of the passion translation is to reintroduce the passion and fire of the Bible, to the English reader. It doesn't merely convey the literal meaning of words, it expresses God's passion for people and his world by translating

the original the life changing message of God, for modern readers."

In Psalm 104 verse 3 reads, "you fly upon the wings of the wind." When I hear that, I hear the **Genesis 1 (DAY 1)** when a spirit hovered over the water, God's Spirit, God's wind. The word "spirit" in Hebrew is "ruah" which means, God's Spirit, God's wind, God's breath, all of those things are combined into that one idea, "You fly upon the wings of the wind". In the spirit, God creates.

And it continues in V4 with, "you make your messengers into the winds of the Spirit, and all your ministers become flames of fire". What wonderful imagery, that everything is flamed up by the oxygen of the wind, and creates more fire. That's what God's message is about; creating, distributing all of its glory and all of this creation, to us and to all of the cosmos.

In V5, "You, our creator formed the earth, and you hold it all together so that it will never fall apart." That for me, this means the wonderful creation and the design that God has put into the cosmos, the universe and everything that is. When the scientists look at the Big Bang theory about how our Earth was formed, one of the remarkable things is that life on Earth wouldn't exist, if it wasn't in the exact position that it is away (distance) from the sun to give us enough heat and light, but not too much. The earth is tilted by 23.5 degrees which gives us our seasons. And without that exact number, again, we wouldn't have sustainable life on our planet. I always hear in this, that God the architect, God the designer of the cosmos of the universe, designed it so they would all hold together (V5) and in V 19, "The moon and the stars and all of those things, and the sun are all given. and they give us order and structure for our day."

If you look up the time the sun will set tonight, the tables will give you an exact time down to the minute and seconds. Next year it will happen exactly the same time. It's very predictable, precise and orderly. It is all held together by our Creator (V5).

Genesis 1 tells us that there was chaos and was void of everything. God separated light and darkness, with a voice, with a command, and here in Ps 104:7 with a word, with a "thunder-shout". And all the waters fled away and filled the deep with the seas. Earth, dry land was created.

In verse 9, "you set a boundary line for the seas and commanded them not to trespass." God shaped the coastlines. You can imagine all the fiddly bits around every coastline are determined by sea level. That was God's design to create inlets creates seawater mixing with freshwater to give ways for life to form. But seawater is not enough for the world. If all water was salty seawater, we wouldn't have life on Earth as we know it ... Verse 11; "you provide drink for every living thing, men and beasts, their thirst squinched, because of you." Without fresh water, we wouldn't exist, we wouldn't be able to sustain ourselves, we need fresh water.

Which is why when we talk about the crisis of climate change, fresh water is one of the major commodities that we need to take care of. We need fresh water, for the earth, for the seeds for the creatures for us.

Now, the verses from 10 through 18, continue this idea of God's care for creation. We hear about (verse 12) the birds making nests near tranquil streams and their joyous chirping. We're just a little past the longest day of the year, but maybe at five in the morning, you've heard the chirping of the joyful songs of the birds. And we're headed into the major harvest season for our fruit and for all the good things; V13, "Your goodness brings forth fruit for all to enjoy."

So God has provided the structure, and again I am thinking about the seeds that come spring up in Day 3, to feed all the creatures and the creepy things and everything that is in the world that showed up on DAY 6 .

God created food, and not just any old food, but also sweet wine. Here I imagine that sweet wine is intended just for us, the ones who God has made in His image, you provide sweet wines to gladden hearts, and you give daily bread to sustain life.

God didn't create wine, God didn't create bread. But God created the ingredients for those things, and created us wonderful people with imaginations, brains and curiosity, then we took all of those ingredients and turned them into sweet wine and daily bread. God gave us the gift of chemistry and I would say that chemistry is a thing exists within the human mind more than anywhere else; that we take product A and product B put them together, add heat and water and do this and that, and you end up with sweet wine, or you end up with daily bread. Hmm ...there's another connection to us as Christians. Where else do we see wine and bread coming together to give us life?

One that I found kind of strange is the reference to the high mountains. When we think of high mountains and the biblical text, that's often where God appears from up in the mountains. When Moses went up the mountain he had an encounter with God. But in verse 18, the high mountains are a home for the wild goats. I'm sure you've seen video images of goats leaping from craggy ledge to craggy ledge and not falling down even on almost on sheer cliffs. And then there is "the rocky crag where the rock badgers burrow." There is a thing called a rock badger and it can live to up to four kilometers above sea level. That's pretty thin air up there. Not many mammals can stay warm and can live with that height. But even the rock badgers are cared for?

And if we're going to talk about even the 'weird stuff', let's go down to verse Ps104:25. "And then there's the sea so vast, so wide, so deep swarming with countless forms of sea life, both small and great." I hear DAY 5 in this. There's that line in Genesis 1:21 where God creates everything in the sea, even the sea monsters. So the good stuff, the stuff that's tasty to eat, like salmon, all of those are created by God, and even the weird ones like the sea monsters.

And if we slide along to verse Ps104: 26, here is another reference to us very clever humans, "trading ships glide through the high seas." This poetry we read in the Psalms, was written somewhere between the ninth and the fifth century, BCE. So somewhere in that time period, we (clever humans) already had ships. God didn't make ships, but rather God provided us with the wood, God provided us with the ingredients for us to make tools, God provided us with imagination, with intelligence with curiosity, so that we can work out how to fashion boats, out of wood and how to make them float. And they're not just any old ships, these are trading ships, they have a plan to go from point A to point B to move goods around.

As I think about human technology, often when I'm sitting with people, and in times of medical, distress or recovery after health major events, I often pray and give thanks for the miracles of modern technology. I'm pretty sure most of us, at some point, have taken medication for something. Imagine the creativity that it takes to find products and ingredients, working out how to synthesize them together and make tiny pills that will do you good. I have a regime every morning of taking certain pills that keep me alive. Many of us do. Without human creativity, without human imagination, we wouldn't get these things. This too is God's gift of human intelligence, curiosity, and imagination.

But in verse 27, and 28, we also need to remember that if we started with absolutely nothing, we could

never create all the things that is in the world. "All the creatures wait expectedly for you to give them their food as you determine. You come near and they all gather around feasting from your open hands." That is not a literal description, as if God said, "I've plucked some food for you."

But all of this creation happens because of God's design and God has given us an abundant supply. This also makes me think of the climate crisis that we are experiencing. God has given us an abundant supply but also given us a duty to look after it. This makes the climate crisis a theological issue. It's God's creation and we have been given a helping role in keeping to be abundant.

Our time on earth is temporary. Each of us as individuals have from age zero to age, maybe 90, maybe 100, or maybe less than that. "And when you choose to take their breath away, each one dies and returns to the dust." (V29) I hear in this verse, 'to dust you will return' which is very Lenten image. But it also means that what God created, God also doesn't take away on a whim. But God gave us a lifespan, God gave a spirit within us that is full of imagination and full of creativity to play our part in God's good and wonderful creation.

(V31) "May God glorious splendor endure forever." And here is really where the title of my sermon comes from; GOD DELIGHTS IN CREATION. "May the Lord take joy and pleasure in all that he has made."

How do we respond? We sing:

I will sing my song to the Lord as long as I live every day.

I will sing my praises to God. (V33)

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

{A brief silence}

Gracious God, you give the Holy Spirit to your church, filling it with many and varied gifts. In the church throughout the world, strengthen us in our visioning and dreaming, that it may discover anew the Spirit's creative work.

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

God of life, your mighty works are too numerous to count. The earth is full of your creatures, living things both great and small. Open your hand and give them the necessities of this life. Send your fresh Spirit over the face of the earth.

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

God of the nations, at the sound of the rushing wind, people speaking different languages proclaimed and heard together your deeds of power. Fill the leaders of nations with your Holy Spirit, so that they exercise your gracious will in the lives of people.

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

God of faithfulness, you tend to the needs of your people, even the sighs of our hearts. Hear

those who cry out to you in distress. Restore to wholeness all who are in any need this day as we each name aloud or silently those within our own congregations and those who have a special place in our hearts. *{long pause}*

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

God of love, fill our congregations of St. Peter's, Brodhagen | St.Peter's, Zurich | Trinity, London and Trinity, Windsor ... with gratitude for the gifts we have received from you. Renew our ministries, heal our divisions, and open us to the needs of our neighbours.

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

God of hope, those who have died in you raise their eternal song of praise. We give you thanks for the many gifts of your people and rejoice in the witness of your saints.

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

The Lord look upon with favour

and give you peace.

DISMISSAL

Worship is over, and service begins.

Go on your way rejoicing, to love and serve the risen Lord.

Thanks be to God!