



easter season
at redeemer

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The cover photograph of the ‘*Women at the Empty Tomb*’ (one of the center apse windows at the Church of the Redeemer) is by Cynthia Black. The window was the creation of the H.W. Young Company of New York and was installed in 1921. It was given in 1918 in memory of Harriet Bethiah Vail Cutler Lidgerwood, by her children (at the time this building was built).

EASTER IV – MORNING PRAYER

PRELUDE “Sonata 1 - Mvmt. 1” - Charles Ore

HYMN Joy Dawned (NCH 241)

1 Joy dawned again on Easter Day,
the sun shone out with bright array;
For when the Apostles hid in fear,
the Risen Christ to them appeared.

2 O Jesus, Savior, Gentle One,
come take our hearts to be your own,
That we may give you all our days
the willing tribute of our praise.

3 O Sovereign One, with us abide
in this our joyful Easter-tide;
From every weapon death can wield,
your own redeemed forever shield.

GREETING

Jesus Christ is risen today!
Alleluia! Thanks be to God!
Life is stronger than death!
Alleluia! Thanks be to God

COLLECT OF THE DAY

God is with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Life abundant, God of grace, you call us by name to live without fear;
in peace my we resist all who kill and despoil your people,
that their hearts might be turned to the only source of life;
through Jesus Christ, the gateway. **Amen.**

READINGS

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles- Acts 2:42-47

A reading from the Gospel according to John- John 10:1-10

*After each reading, the people respond, **Thanks be to God.***

REFLECTION

CREED

We be - lieve in God all - lov - ing Au - thor of all

things that be, Mak - er of the earth and heav - ens,

Keep - er of the sky and sea. We be - lieve in

God's son, Je - sus, now for us the gift of light, and the Spir - it

ev - er - pre - sent, bring - er of a - bun - dant life.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of love, you are with us in every transition and change. We recall your deep compassion, presence and abounding love. We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills with which you have blessed us. We thank you for the experiences that have brought us to this moment. We thank you for the work of others that gives breadth and depth to our own work. Be with us as we move forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another. God of mercy, God of peace, hear our prayer.

Through Christ's rising, we see new life. Help us be that life in a world desperate for healing.

God of mercy and peace, hear our prayer

Through Christ's rising, we own the responsibility to earth's lost, lonely and in danger. Help us work to liberate all those suffering because of war and all who are held captive.

God of mercy and peace, hear our prayer

We pray for the longings and needs of this parish family.

(Prayers of intercession may be added, silently or aloud.)

Through Christ's rising, we are moved to compassion. Help us still to reach out with your love.

God of mercy and peace, hear our prayer

We thank you for the joys given us within this parish family:

(Prayers of thanksgiving may be added, silently or aloud.)

Through Christ's rising, we grow in our trust in you. Help us to realize your vision in this time.

God of mercy and peace, hear our prayer

Holy One, even before we call, you answer; while we are yet speaking, you hear. We offer these prayers in the name of the Risen Christ. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ is always with you.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY

God, You Are My Refuge - Dvorak
Krista Donough – Soprano, Chris Henke - Piano

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Mother, our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Tender God, you have shown us though death is real, life is stronger.
Teach us to be lovers of humanity, compassionate friends of all creation.
Gracious God, hear us into speech; speak us into acting;
And, through us, recreate the world. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia!

RECESSIONAL

HYMN In the Garden (NCH 237)

1 I come to the garden alone,
while the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
the Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
none other has ever known.

2 He speaks, and the sound of his voice
is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that he gave to me
within my heart is ringing. [*Refrain*]

3 I'd stay in the garden with Him
though the night around me be falling;
But he bids me go; through the voice of woe
his voice to me is calling. [*Refrain*]

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is Risen.
Truly Christ is Risen Alleluia!!!
Go in Peace. Alleluia, Alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE "Sonata 1 - Mvmt 3"- Charles Ore

ANNOUNCEMENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The Serendipity Stitchers welcome you. 1st and 3rd **Tuesdays** at **1:30 p.m.** Our gatherings are always full of laughter, delicious treats, and plenty of good company. No experience necessary. Please get in touch with Veronica for more information.

The Book Group meets online at 7pm: April meeting - 4/27 **God of the Woods** - Liz Moore
May meeting - 6/1 **The Correspondent** - Virginia Evans
June meeting - 6/29 **Theo of Golden** - Allen Levi
July meeting - 7/27 **There are Rivers in the Sky** - Elif Shafak
Please support your local bookshop and Redeemer by ordering from our online Bookshop. <https://bookshop.org/shop/Redeemer>



Sunday, April 26th, 12-2 PM: Earth Day Good News mini-fair right here in front of the church! Redeemer has long been an active part of the community. Redeemerites are invited to attend, and of course *invited* to participate in this outreach event, in some role. We need you! Let's meet those walking by and invite them into some Earth-themed activities, tables, and church. Is there something you are passionate about related to Earth or environment and would like to share? You don't need to be an expert, just have passion, be friendly, and willing to share a few things about it. Please contact [Peg](#).

Our 1st Garden work session will be Saturday, May 2nd 8-11AM. We have a wonderful time growing veggies for the soup kitchen, or to donate to a food bank. Redeemerites of all ages are invited to be part of the Food Security Ministry in small or big ways, at different times. We do/will need:

- **Sticks and logs** less than 34 inches long
- People who live close to the church can easily **water** the garden once a week for a half an hour
- People who like to do the **hands on** of preparing, planting, harvesting, and a little weeding and tending
- **Compost Call:** bring to church: veggie/fruit scraps, coffee grounds, paper tea bags (minus string, tag, and staple,) flowers past their prime

See Peg on Sundays or email her [pegonplanetearth\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:pegonplanetearth(at)gmail.com)

Keep updated with all that is going on at Redeemer

Visit our website: <https://redeemermorristown.org/> for further information and to sign up for our newsletter.

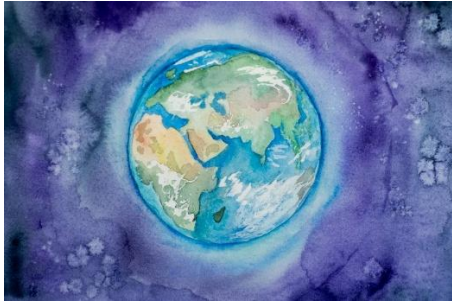
Please "like" and check out our Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/FBchurch> or follow us on Instagram - @RedeemerMorristown - <http://bit.ly/Instachurch>.

We are now on BlueSky -@redeemermorristown.bsky.social , <https://bit.ly/RedeemerBSKY>



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Or (can you tell we want to make it easy for you?!), go to: <http://tinyurl.com/RedeemerDonateNow>

From Rev. Willie J. Smith



This is the 56th anniversary of Earth Day —of the original in 1970. And this year’s Earth Day theme is, “Our Power, Our Planet which is both timely and pressing. As the effects of climate change continue to mount, the stakes and concerns are high.

What does the Bible have to say about all this? Quite a bit, as it turns out, from Genesis to Revelation.

The two creation stories in Genesis, different as they are, share a common central theme: humanity as the guardian and gardener of creation.

In the first story, we’re cast as custodians, created in God’s “image and likeness” precisely so we can be creatively hospitable to the world God has just creatively, hospitably made. Accordingly, God grants humankind “dominion” — but only in the context of this larger call to hospitality and care. “Let them have dominion over” may just as well be translated, “Let them have custody of...” or “Let them have responsibility for...” or “Let them generously, creatively host...” Literally, the Hebrew in [Genesis 1:26](#) is “Let them rule over” — but remember, the first 25 verses of Genesis have just laid out in vivid detail what kind of “rule” the story’s author has in mind: God’s graceful, generous creation of a beautiful home, a household of creatures meant to live and thrive. And this generous, hospitable God is the One in whose image human beings are made.

Likewise, in the second creation story we’re cast as gardeners, created by God expressly so the Garden of Delight may flourish (“Eden” likely means “delight”), full of fruit trees and countless other creatures. The story of humanity’s fall away from God, then, is the story of our fall away from our calling as creation’s gardener. Think of it this way: according to Genesis 2-3, a primary consequence of human sin is our loss of this original role, this “tilling and keeping” of the earth Genesis 2:15. And salvation means our return to it!

The Noah story, at its heart, is a reprise of creation itself, a “do-over” precipitated by the fact that the world had become “filled with violence” Genesis 6:11. For the authors of Genesis, accounts of a primordial, devastating, divinely-caused flood were all over the Near Eastern world, and so the existence of such a flood was taken for granted. The open questions were: *What does the flood say about God? About creation? About us?*

To ancient eyes and ears, three things would have stood out about how the Noah story answers these three questions. First, that the waters rose not because God loves violence, but on the contrary, because God was so aggrieved by the epidemic of violence on earth. Second, that after the flood, God makes a covenant with the earth and all its creatures (including but not limited to humanity), forswearing such destruction forever.

And third, that the human role in the drama is a decisive return to our original calling: to serve and protect God’s creatures, building an ark to house them, gathering food to feed them, and thus preserving the world’s biodiversity — in short, “to keep them alive with you... so that they may abound on the earth”.

But wait, there's more! When the authors of Leviticus and Deuteronomy envisioned the Sabbath day and the sabbatical year, they included domestic and wild animals, and even the land itself, as beneficiaries of these times of rest. Likewise, the Psalms are full of passages underscoring that the earth and its many creatures belong to God, and that God delights in them and cares for them every day.

Jesus, too, picks up these themes: every creature, he insists, even the wildflowers and the smallest sparrows, are under God's active, loving care ([Matt 6:25-29](#); [Luke 12:6](#)). Jesus repeatedly warns against the perils of hoarding money and possessions, arguing that what money is for (and by extension, what economies are for) is building up the health of the wider beloved community. And finally, near the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus completes and sums up his public teaching with a vivid, haunting, famous parable.

What Jesus doesn't say in this parable is telling. He doesn't conclude his years of teaching by saying, "In the end, the distinguishing mark between the sheep and the goats will be that the sheep have all the right theological opinions," or that "the sheep are generous to their inner circles of friends and family," or that "the sheep attend church twice a week." Instead, he says the sheep do six specific things: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome foreigners, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit people in prison ([Matt 25:31-46](#)). Theological opinions and kindness to family and attending worship each has its place, but in the final analysis, what matters most is doing these six specific things, serving these six groups. As Matthew tell it, that's the note Jesus ends on, the final chord in the concerto.

And the climate crisis, if we allow it to continue, will devastate each of these six groups — indeed, it's already doing so today. Extreme weather, famine, and disease threaten the impoverished and disenfranchised first of all and most of all. We are currently living through a refugee emergency around the world, but the climate crisis promises to create waves of desperate migration that will dwarf today's challenges — and that, in turn, will intensify authoritarian politics, incarceration rates, and the likelihood of conflict. When it comes to "the least of these," the climate crisis is indeed the perfect storm. Taking Jesus seriously means confronting the crisis with vigor, resolve, imagination, and commitment.

Finally, near the end of the Book of Revelation, the prophet poetically describes a "new heaven and new earth" — but strikingly, the vision isn't of somewhere else, some new paradise set apart from the planet we know and love. Rather, the vision is of *heaven descending down to earth*. The "New Jerusalem" doesn't entail leaving the old one behind. God made and dearly loves the Earth, and made us to help protect it, to help serve it, and ultimately, by God's grace, to help restore it: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
CELEBRATING LOVE. DOING JUSTICE.