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APRIL 2017

Let’s Celebrate Care of God’s Creation

*“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”*  **- Genesis 2:15**

God’s first directive to the first human beings (Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15) was to take care of the beautiful, wonderful creation that God made for humanity to live in. So that the earth would be fruitful and give us everything we need, God created the plants, the animals, the seasons, the sun and the rain, and God put everything into balance and harmony.

And then God told Adam and Eve to take care of it!

This is “stewardship” – taking care of something on behalf of someone else. God entrusted Adam and Eve with stewardship of God’s creation. Today that trust falls to us. We are stewards of the Earth, the one and only home to everyone who has ever lived and ever will live.

Of course, we know that our environment faces many challenges. Climate change is melting glaciers, raising sea levels, shifting the seasons, threatening extinction of many species and altering rainfall and growing patterns. Pollution sickens people and introduces chemicals into our environment that are harmful to people, animals and plants. What environmental problems worry you?

Because it is the month that ushers in the spring, April is the ideal month for God’s people to remember our call to take care of creation. As with Adam and Eve, stewardship of the Earth is still a primary responsibility for all of us.

Here are some suggestions for celebrating stewardship of God’s creation in our homes and churches this April:

**• Observe Earth Day**, Saturday, April 22 (or make April 23 Earth Sunday in your congregation!). Celebrate creation, spring and the renewal of life through prayer, song, education and activities for children and adults alike.

**• Study!** Explore what the Bible says about creation. Check out Christian environmental authors, such as Wendell Barry, Bill McKibben, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin or Joseph Sittler. Examine *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ 2015 statement on creation care. Watch a YouTube presentation by Katherine Hayhoe or Bill McKibben.

**• Bless the fields and orchards.** The farmers in your area are preparing for the growing season and praying for sun and rain in good balance. Join their prayers and support them.

**• Plant a produce garden** or expand an existing one in your home or on your church property. In gardening, we participate in God’s miracle of life! Share the produce with the needy.

**• Recycle!** Make it a congregational effort to recycle as much paper, plastics, glass and metal as possible, both at church and in the homes of members.

**• Cut out plastic!** Does your congregation use foam cups and plates, as well as plastic flatware? All that waste sits for years in landfills. Make it a goal to switch to biodegradables, or better yet -- reusable cups, plates and cutlery.

**• Advocate!** Public policy plays a huge part in caring for God’s creation. It was a Republican president that signed into law the Clean Water Act of 1972. Advocacy means keeping on top of public policy changes and asking our elected officials to continue our work for a cleaner environment.

**• Educate!** Learn how we as individuals and communities of faith can better care for God’s creation. Share that information in small groups, through temple talks and classes, and with one another.

Adam and Eve were the first stewards of God’s creation. The task now falls to us. Let’s make April the month we remember and renew ourselves to that responsibility.

*--Rob Blezard*

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