



First United Methodist Church of Carson City
September 19, 2021 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Reverend Maggie McNaught
9:00 Lay Reader: Sue Linn
11:00 Lay Reader: Coco Crum
Chancel Choir Director: Judy Monson
Pianist: Katie Cardoza
Organist: Nancy Cardoza
11:00 AV Volunteer: Dave Mason

Prelude

Choral Introit *I'm gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

Welcome

Opening Hymn *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* UMH 89 vs. 1-4

An Ancient Word *Isaiah 24:1-13 and John 6:8-15, The Message*

Today's readings incorporate a reading each from the Hebrew Scriptures and Greek Scriptures. The Isaiah one is part of the collection of writings known as the Isaiah Apocalypse and contains many verses of doom and gloom including the passage for today. Isaiah establishes a connection between social morality and the condition of the physical environment as a result of the flood story in Genesis. In the Gospel reading, the emphasis is on the sharing of what one brings to feed the crowd and that nothing was wasted among them all—as more positive message about the power to caring for one another, outside of ourselves.

Isaiah 24: 1-13 The Message

1-3 Danger ahead! GOD's about to ravish the earth and leave it in ruins,
Rip everything out by the roots and send everyone scurrying:

 priests and laypeople alike,
....owners and workers alike,
....celebrities and nobodies alike,
....buyers and sellers alike,
....bankers and beggars alike,
....the haves and have-nots alike.

The landscape will be a moonscape, totally wasted.
And why? Because GOD says so. He's issued the orders.

4 The earth turns gaunt and gray,
the world silent and sad,
sky and land lifeless, colorless.

Earth is polluted by its very own people,
who have broken its laws,

Disrupted its order, violated the sacred and eternal covenant.

Therefore a curse, like a cancer, ravages the earth.

Its people pay the price of their sacrilege.

They dwindle away, dying out one by one.

No more wine, no more vineyards, no more songs or singers.

The laughter of castanets is gone, the shouts of celebrants, gone, the laughter of fiddles, gone.

No more parties with toasts of champagne.

Serious drinkers gag on their drinks.

The chaotic cities are unlivable. Anarchy reigns.

Every house is boarded up, condemned.

People riot in the streets for wine,
but the good times are gone forever—
no more joy for this old world.

The city is dead and deserted,
bulldozed into piles of rubble.

That's the way it will be on this earth.

This is the fate of all nations:

An olive tree shaken clean of its olives,
a grapevine picked clean of its grapes.

John 6:8-15 The Message

8-9 One of the disciples—it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter—said, “There’s a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that’s a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this.”

10-11 Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted.

12-13 When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted.” They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves.

14-15 The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done. They said, “This is the Prophet for sure, God’s Prophet right here in Galilee!” Jesus saw that in their enthusiasm, they were about to grab him and make him king, so he slipped off and went back up the mountain to be by himself.

Choral Anthem *For the Beauty of the Earth*

Sermon *Seasons of Creation: Waste Not, Want Not*

Perhaps you remember the story of Boyan Slat, the young man from Holland who devised a machine to clean up the plastic in the ocean. Since then he has gone on to create a company whose total focus is to remove plastic from the ocean and the rivers that contribute to this pollution.

According to a report from the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research about 10 rivers are responsible for all that floating debris and so Slat’s company has created a machine called an interceptor. This interceptor cleans the plastic out of those rivers before it gets to the ocean and in the process improves life for those who count on the river for their food supply. The goal of this project is to tackle the 1000 most polluted rivers in 5 years including some in the United States. One could say that Slat and his company specialize in massive waste treatment.

You may not believe this but waste is an important topic inside our scriptures. This morning I want to lift up a few ideas out of Scripture that contribute to a theological interpretation of waste because I believe that our attitude to waste can reveal our attitude to God and God’s creation.

Dealing with waste is something the scripture encourages us to think about and become involved in.

In Isaiah 24:1-13 we find a disturbing image “The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.” (*Isaiah 24:3-5*).

How could this be, we might well ask? We need to recognize that God’s temple is not just the Temple in Jerusalem. God’s Temple is all of God’s creation and the wonder of all life on it - in fact the Cosmos, the Universe! These words are a harsh reminder that we could bring destruction to God’s “Temple” through things we do or may do such as a nuclear holocaust or continuing to burn fossil fuels which will bring about the extinction of life as we know it on planet earth.

Isaiah warns us of the consequences if we continue to be disobedient to God and break God's covenant with us which says we are to care for and look after God's creation.

By contrast in John's gospel there is the wonderful story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, a story of sharing. A young boy who had five barley loaves and two fish was willing to share, so five thousand were fed. And nothing was wasted. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

How do we understand the meaning of this story today: Share, and do not waste! What was that old saying "Waste not, want not?"

When God fed the Israelites in the desert with bread from heaven, God told them to gather as much as each of them needed. "Those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage. The story underscores that God provides for our needs, but not our greed. Moses told the Israelites "Let no one leave any of the manna over until morning". "But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and the manna bred worms and became foul." (Exodus 16:18-20).

In today's world, we are encouraged to acquire and hoard. We also don't share. Forty percent of food is thrown away every day, while two billion people go hungry, because of the way we market food and the way it is controlled by multi-national corporations.

God calls for equity and justice. Our present economic system encourages inequality and heightens injustice. This may be an opportune moment to support our local farmer's market, to take a class on growing our own food—hyponically, using small flowerpots, converting to vegetables—let your imagination go wild.

Our quest to reduce waste in the way we live our lives never ends. Look at nature—there is no waste in nature—it is all utilized and becomes food for animals, insects or humus for plants.

On the other hand we have developed so many products such as steel, cement, glass and tin which take a long time to break down. And as we know one of the worst products we have developed is plastic. We know we all have to do what we can to lessen or eliminate the use of plastic.

Let's get creative about how to reduce waste. Here are some examples:

Akshar School in Guwahati has made headlines for a very unique reason. The school has launched a first-of-its-kind fee structure - students bring with them bags full of plastic waste and give it to the school in place of financial fees. Cool, huh?

The organizers of the London Marathon took a constructive step towards combating the use of plastic bottles. They replaced around 200,000 plastic water bottles with innovative water pods made from edible, biodegradable seaweed and gave them to the runners.

Researchers at Purdue University have devised a new chemical technique that can re-purpose polypropylene. This is the plastic used for everything from toys to chip packets. The process uses superheated water to convert the waste plastic into liquid fuel similar to petrol and diesel that could be used in modern day cars and the great news is: the fuel is clean.

A British company by the name of Waste2tricity company has patented a method of heating plastic waste, including bags, bottles and more, in a furnace until it gasifies into hydrogen. The resulting hydrogen can then be used to power vehicles as a zero-carbon emission, completely clean fuel that releases only water as a waste product. Wow, sign me up!

In 2016 Japanese scientists researching landfill sites made the first discovery of a new strain of bacteria. The new species of bacteria, Ideonella sakaiensis, breaks down the plastic by using two enzymes to hydrolyze PET eventually yielding basic building blocks for growth.

As Chai Jing, journalist and environmental activist asserts: “The strongest governments on earth cannot clean up pollution by themselves. They must rely on each ordinary person, like you and me, on our choices, and on our will.”

Check out the resource page that comes with the reflection questions. Make it a point that once every 6 months, that you will go on these websites and select a few things to put into practice. There are scientists from all over the world who are looking at these problems and coming up with solutions daily. Let’s help the world out and practice these crucial steps as part of our Christian responsibility to care for the Earth, our home. Amen.

Hymn *For the Fruits of This Creation* UMH 97 vs. 1-4

Prayers and Praises & Pastoral Prayer

Action Steps

Hymn *Fairest Lord Jesus* UMH 189, vss. 1-3

Blessing

Choral Benediction *May God Bless and Keep you*

Postlude

1 Joy-ful, joy-ful, we a-dore You, God of glo-ry,
 2 All Your works with joy sur-round You, Earth and heav'n re-
 3 Al-ways giv-ing and for-giv-ing, Ev-er bless-ing,
 4 Mor-tals join the mighty cho-rus, Which the morn-ing

Lord of love; Hearts un-fold like flow'rs be-fore You,
 flect Your rays, Stars and an-gels sing a-round You,
 ev-er blest, Well-spring of the joy of liv-ing,
 stars be-gan; God's own love is reign-ing o'er us,

O-p'ning to the sun a-bove. Melt the clouds of
 Cen-ter of un-bro-ken praise; Field and for-est,
 O-cean depth of hap-py rest! Lov-ing Fa-ther,
 Join-ing peo-ple hand in hand. Ev-er sing-ing,

sin and sad-ness; Drive the dark of
 vale and moun-tain, Flow-'ry mead-ow,
 Christ our Broth-er, Let Your light up-
 march we on-ward, Vic-tors in the

doubt a-way; Giv-er of im-
 flash-ing sea, Chant-ing bird and
 on us shine; Teach us how to
 midst of strife; Joy-ful mu-sic

mor-tal glad-ness, Fill us with the light of day!
 flow-ing foun-tain, Prais-ing You e-ter-nal-ly!
 love each oth-er, Lift us to the joy di-vine.
 leads us sun-ward In the tri-umph song of life.

African American Heritage Hymnal 120

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933, alt.

Tune: HYMN TO JOY, 8 7 8 7 D; arr. from Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827, by Edward Hodges, 1796-1867

1. Fair-est Lord Je-sus, rul-er of all na-ture,
 2. Fair are the mead-ows, fair-er still the wood-lands,
 3. Fair is the sun-shine, fair-er still the moon-light,
 4. Beau-ti-ful Sav-ior! Lord of all the na-tions!

O thou of God and man the Son,
 robed in the bloom-ing garb of spring:
 and all the twink-ling star-ry host:
 Son of God and Son of Man!

thee will I cher-ish, thee will I
 Je-sus is fair-er, Je-sus is
 Je-sus shines bright-er, Je-sus shines
 Glo-ry and hon-or, praise, ad-o-

hon-or, thou, my soul's glo-ry, joy, and crown.
 pur-er, who makes the woe-ful heart to sing.
 pur-er than all the an-gels heaven can boast.
 ra-tion, now and for-ev-er-more be thine.

United Methodist Hymnal 189

WORDS: Minister Gessingbach, 1877; trans. Joseph August Seiss, 1873

MUSIC (ST. ELIZABETH 568.558): Schöneleber Volkslieder, 1842; arr. by Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

For the Fruit of All Creation

1. For the fruit of all cre-a-tion, Thanks be to God.
 2. In the just re-ward of la-bor, God's will is done.
 3. For the har-vests of the Spir-it, Thanks be to God.

For good gifts to ev-'ry na-tion, Thanks be to
 In the help we give our neigh-bor, God's will is
 For the good we all in-her-it, Thanks be to

God. For the plow-ing, sow-ing, reap-ing,
 done. In our world-wide task of car-ing
 God. For the won-ders that a-stound us,

Si-lent growth while we are sleep-ing, Fu-ture needs in
 For the hun-gry and de-spair-ing, In the har-vests
 For the truths that still con-found us, Most of all, that

earth's safe-keep-ing, Thanks be to God.
 we are shar-ing, God's will is done.
 love has found us, Thanks be to God.

This tune in a higher key, No. 218

Baptist Hymnal 1991 643

WORDS: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-; © 1970 by Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
 MUSIC (AR HYD Y NOS 8.4.8.8.8.4.1): Traditional Welsh Melody; harm. Luther O. Emerson, 1820-1915

Questions for Reflection
Alone, with a Friend, or in a Small Group
September 19, 2021

1. When you hear the word “waste” what images come to mind or what do you think about?
2. Why is waste a Christian concern?
3. Read Isaiah 24:1-13, The Message and John 6:8-15, The Message
 - a. What is one thought or idea from these scriptures especially intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenge, encouraged, warmed, warned, helped, or surprised you?
 - b. The images in Isaiah are really stark, what is your reaction to that?
 - c. Why do you think the Isaiah passage is in the Bible?
 - d. How does waste violet what Isaiah calls the sacred and eternal covenant with God?
 - e. How is waste a sacrilege?
 - f. What stands out to you in the John passage?
 - g. Name all the benefits of sharing that you can think of.
 - h. How can sharing help us eliminate waste—be creative?
4. Check out the list of websites dealing with the elimination of waste.
 - a. What are some of the ideas you would like to try? You encouraged to try some of these for six-months at a time.
5. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed that we could follow all of Jesus’ teachings if we remembered these three simple rules:
 - a. Do No Harm
 - b. Do all the good you can
 - c. Stay in love with God
 - i. How have you practiced living by these rules in the last week?

Resources to Reduce Waste

1. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/delaware/stories-in-delaware/delaware-eight-ways-to-reduce-waste/>
2. https://ampleharvest.org/top-5-tips-reducing-food-waste/?gclid=CjwKCAjw8cCGBhB6EiwAgORey1-xi5T8T6QroT2ymj35kvgCXldQqQUWg1pkOJsgMjmQ_drM1XmCQxoCTDIQAvD_BwE
3. <https://www.madeleineolivia.co.uk/blog/30-ways-to-reduce-your-waste>
4. <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-waste-what-you-can-do>
5. <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/family-life/ways-to-reduce-waste-at-home-even-if-you-are-exhausted/>
6. <https://www.boyanslat.com/--> Check out more on Boyan Slat—story told during sermon