**Green Blades Preaching Roundtable**

Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

[Psalm 31:9-16;](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2031%3A9-16&version=NRSVUE) [Philippians 2:5-11;](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A5-11&version=NRSVUE) [Matthew 26:14-27:66](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A14-27%3A66&version=NRSVUE)

Hymn suggestion: ELW 342 There in God’s Garden

Rev. Luke Lekander, Outing, MN

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, at 10:30 AM, the worship committee meets in the basement conference room here at Our Savior’s. There are usually some small business items to cover but the main purpose of our small but dedicated group is to select hymns and songs for upcoming worship services. It’s often thankless but important work. The usual debate at these meetings sounds something like this, “You know pastor, we need to pick familiar hymns so the congregation can really sing out.” I don’t begrudge this sentiment. I know these lovely folx hear it when someone criticizes a lesser-known hymn. Nevertheless, they have become more and more daring when it comes to hymn selections. We’ve even integrated *All Creation Sings* into the regular repertoire. I am thankful for their willingness to try new things.

This cautious willingness came in handy when SundaysandSeasons.com recently integrated a new feature into their Music module. Our committee puts the site up onto a large screen for our meetings. At one such meeting we all noticed these strange codes alongside each of the hymns and songs. Right away, one of our team asked me, “Pastor, what do those letters mean?” *1R, HG, PS, and 2R*. It didn’t take too long to figure out. These were lectionary readings! *1R* represented the first reading, *PS* the Psalm, and so on. As soon as we figured that out, I exclaimed, “This is so cool!” And it is cool. This added another impetus to be brave and to select hymns and songs that may not be familiar but that are deeply connected to the themes of the day and, as a bonus to me, songs that can preach!

With that, I want to begin my reflection in the suggested hymn for the day, *ELW 342 There in God’s Garden*. This is a hymn that preaches. The first verse establishes Jesus as a tree in God’s garden. What happens to this tree in subsequent verses is horrific yet true to the way Creation is treated yet today. Depicted in song are scars upon the branches, scars of suffering. This is followed by perhaps some of the most graphic lyrical phrasing, “see where the tendrils of our human selfhood feed on its lifeblood” (verse 2). “Thorns not its own are tangled in its foliage; our greed has starved it, our despite has choked it” (verse 3). Then the final three verses exclaim the gospel, all this contextualized in the Passion of our Lord! This hymn masterfully opened up for me that Jesus’ Passion is for all Creation. Give it a try. This hymn preaches.

Once I connected the Passion to all Creation, I couldn’t help but hear our Psalm in a completely different way. I imagined the words of this lament Psalm as being cries from the earth itself. Could this psalm be from an abandoned strip mine or from a lone, remaining tree where once there stood a forest? Perhaps these are thoughts from the last few living members of a quickly diminishing species. Is humanity the enemy? Where we were meant to be stewards, has sin twisted us into the enemy called out within this Psalm? Perhaps a message of repentance lies here. Is this our own betrayal of Christ? Tough stuff, to be sure. Still, if done well, this could tease out another dimension of Christ’s Passion that many may have missed to this point.

I will wrap up my reflection both in our Philippians and Matthew texts. I’ve been re-reading one of my favorite books, *The Wisdom Jesus* by Cynthia Bourgeault. In her chapter titled, *The Passion*, she helps us better understand the concept of kenosis, or self-emptying love. Perhaps the most famous words depicting this self-emptying love is found in our Philippians text beginning in verse 7:

[Jesus} emptied himself,  
  taking the form of a slave,  
  being born in human likeness.  
 And being found in human form,  
  8he humbled himself  
  and became obedient to the point of death—  
  even death on a cross.

By itself, one may struggle to connect these words to Creation Care. We humans do tend to be quite self-centered after all. But, if we connect this to Matthew’s depiction of the Passion, particularly to Jesus’ prayer in the garden at Gethsemane, then a preacher may be able to describe kenosis as something meant for all Creation. I would certainly play up the natural beauty of a garden here. It could be helpful to posit upon why Jesus chose such a place for this prayer to take place. I would definitely point out that Jesus protects the garden from the interlopers who come to arrest him although this tidbit is depicted more clearly in John’s gospel. Still, within this beautiful and heartbreaking prayer, we find a connection to Creation. At the end of his prayer, Jesus says, “your will be done.” Then, as if to accentuate this specific part of his prayer, Matthew’s gospel depicts Jesus repeating this part of his prayer a second time. Bourgeault describes this as Jesus’ final realization and acceptance that his kenosis was about to be completed. This kenotic climax is easy to connect between Philippians and Matthew, but the beginning of this self-emptying love, it’s very genesis can be cloudy. We may assume that it begins with the incarnation, and there is nothing wrong with that, unless we view Christ’s kenosis as being strictly for humankind. To help avoid that trap, we can find a clue here in the garden that may help us better understand kenosis as being meant for all Creation.

The end of Jesus’ prayer harkens back to Creation itself. This translation, “your will be done” is but one possible translation. It could just as easily as the Latin does, “Let it be.” These same words are those which call Creation into being in Genesis. All of Creation is God’s will be done. Humanity is only a part of God’s great, “Let it be.” We aren’t even the beginning of God’s great, “Let it be.” All of the Created world came before us. And now Jesus’ own, “Let it be” is his self-emptying, his giving himself over to be subject to God’s will both here in the garden and at Creation. The Passion is for all of Creation, humanity inclusively but not humanity exclusively. And that, my friends, is good news. Without the woods and the waters and the beasts of all kinds, without clean air and natural seasons and specific temperatures, all these things we take for granted, all these things on which we are wholly dependent, without them we are lost. But Jesus’ self-emptying love is for the salvation of all Creation! Now we are freed and empowered to do the same. My friends, let it be. Give yourself over to God’s will. Let go of all the fear, let go of the ego, empty yourself as Jesus does so that we may love one another and love all of Creation as ourselves.

A person with a beard and mustache

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Pastor Luke Lekander serves in the lakes and forests of Outing, MN at Our Savior’s Lutheran. Luke also serves as a member of Together Here Ministries (www.togetherhere.org). Luke and his wife Donna have been enjoying & stewarding God’s creation together for many years. “We raised our children to love the natural world as much as we do. Our very sanity is directly linked to the wellbeing of creation. We must all do our part to combat climate change, especially for those who suffer the worst of its effects.”

**Green Blades Preaching Roundtable**

Easter Year A

April 9, 2023

Acts 10:34-43**;** Jeremiah 31:1-6 (alternate);Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Matthew 28:1-10**;** John 20:1-18(alternate)

The easter readings are loaded ecological imagery. A few motifs are especially fertile:

**The day.** *This is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it* (Psalm 118:24). The ecological layers required to calculate the date of Easter are beautifully deep! First, we wait for earth’s renewal at ***springtime*** (beginning with Jerusalem, therefore also throughout the northern hemisphere). Then we watch for ***equinox*** – when the plane of the earth’s equator directly intersects the sun, so that night and day are held in balance throughout the entire earth. Then we watch for the next ***full moon*** – mystically holding in balance night and day – a moment that also marks the beginning of passover. Then we wait for ***Sunday*** – the first day of creation and the day of resurrection – which, according to the most ancient way of counting time for Jews and Christians, begins with ***sunset*** on Saturday evening. St. Augustine wrote that all of these layers of meaning are to be understood sacramentally, the entire cosmos participating in the meaning of Easter (Letter 55 to Januarius 1.2). How can preachers resurrect the sense that easter is – centrally – an event for the entire cosmos?

**The tree.** *They put Jesus to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day* (Acts 10:39b-40a). Here preachers may draw on the profound tradition of interpreting the cross as the tree of life, God welcoming the exiled world to return to Eden. See Gail Ramshaw’s chapter on “Tree” in her *Treasures Old and New* and James Cone’s contemporary classic, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*: in the work of these scholars preachers are challenged to engage both the scars of radical evil and the flowering of revolutionary promise embodied in the symbol of the tree of the cross.

**The land.** *The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness… Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit* (Jer 31:2, 5). Passover – intimately connected to Easter – has roots in an early barley harvest and in a migration to spring pastures, with both events proclaiming the goodness of the earth both *here* (barley harvest) and *there* (migration to spring pastures). Preachers can embrace the joy of earth’s renewal near and far, through the power of God in natural springtime cycles and through environmental justice victories won.

**The garden.** *Supposing him to be the gardener* (John 20:15). The Gospel of John marks Christmas with the entire cosmos being born, describing Jesus as the Word through which the universe is created (John 1), and celebrates Easter in a garden in which Jesus is perceived – not necessarily mistakenly! – as a gardener (John 20), recalling Jesus’ earlier saying, *unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit* (John 12:24). As the imagery appears in liberation movements across the planet, *they tried to bury us, they forgot we were seeds* (phrase likely adapted from a poem of Dinos Christianopoulos).

**The earthquake.** *Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it* (Mat 28:2). The boldness of the resurrection earthquake and the sassiness of this angel is a wonderful counterpoint to the gentle seeds sprouting in John’s resurrection garden. What mountain needs to be moved, what interstate highway needs to be swallowed into the earth, what revolution needs to take place for God’s beloved earth to rise to flourishing life again? Preachers seeking inspiration to imagine an easter earthquake might search for before-and-after photos of the restoration of the Cheonggyecheon stream in Seoul, where a multilevel highway was broken apart in order to resurrect a buried river and create a park in the heart of the city.

Blessings on your preaching this Easter – may the green blades rise among your people as the Word is proclaimed!



Rev. Dr. Benjamin M. Stewart serves as Pastor to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Two Harbors, Minnesota, and as Distinguished Affiliate Faculty at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. A recent migrant to Duluth, Minnesota, Ben is a member of the North American Academy of Liturgy and contributes to its Ecology and Liturgy Seminar. He is author of *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth’s Ecology*(2011). A former village pastor to Holden, he now serves on the Holden Village Board of Directors.

**Green Blades Preaching Roundtable**

2nd Sunday of Easter Year A

April 16, 2023

Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Logan Strike McLean, Florence, Oregon

These days, we are learning more about trauma-informed care. Many life experiences qualify as traumatic, as we define it as any enduring emotional response that results from living through a distressing event. Trauma unsettles a person’s sense of safety, self, and ability to regulate emotions and figure out one’s relationships. It affects how one thinks about the future, the possibilities that lie ahead. As a hospital chaplain and pastor, it’s hard not to read Thomas through the lens of trauma. And there isn’t much to read, as Thomas is mentioned hardly at all in the Fourth Gospel.

There are at least two notable instances that show us a little of Thomas’ nature before the trauma of the crucifixion. Thomas was willing to go with Jesus into dangerous territory so that he may die with him (John 11:6) while other disciples wanted to run in the other direction. Before the happening of Jesus’ death, I like to imagine Thomas as one with courage, hopefulness, loyalty, commitment to Jesus. Later in John 14, Jesus speaks of preparing a place for his followers. Thomas responds in verse five, saying: “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Thomas shows curiosity, confidence in Jesus and his strange words, and a desire to know the path to follow him. Why would this man suddenly need to see and touch his friend in order to believe? Not even the testimony of his close friends, those who experienced the happening of Jesus’ death, was enough to persuade him. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe," says Thomas (20:25). This reads to me like a trauma response. Jesus grants his wish—but not without a word about belief: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (v. 29)

What are we to believe about Christ? We are not given the opportunity to see and touch Jesus in the same way Thomas and the other disciples did. We may have access to Christ, but the fact remains that belief in God is not without vulnerability and risk. We can still have confidence in Christ’s promise of resurrection and seek to know him, but it requires us to let go of something we think we know about God. Belief isn’t about head-knowledge, it is also about heart-spirit-body knowledge, too. Our unique lives that often include a dimension of trauma changes the way we approach and believe in Christ. Each of us long for safety and fullness of life, but we often settle for something less. Often because we do not know what lies beyond. We only know the life that we have, the life we see others have. Thomas provides an example for what happens for us when we experience the risen Christ. When we follow Christ to that place beyond our knowing. When we get to know Jesus for ourselves, and allow ourselves to be taken into the hope beyond imagining: resurrected life. Thomas couldn’t make his way out of his own personal shadow-lands without help from Jesus. Death had stumped him. Trauma caused him to withdraw and alter his functioning. The only thing that brought him to belief in the resurrection was Jesus himself. Jesus met him and changed him, right where he was at. In the midst of his trauma and grief did hope spring. Unexpectedly so! We can expect the same in our own unique time and place.

As believers in the resurrection and advocates for creation care, we have moments of heartache and hardship. We often encounter stories of trauma or experience it ourselves. We may wonder at times: will Jesus come and meet us in our struggle? May Thomas remind us that hope is ours, too. It is even within our grasp. How are you resting and connecting with the Risen One in order to find healing and solace? How might dwelling in God’s creation remind you of resurrection? What stories of resilience and perseverance are you witnessing in the land, water, and air around you? No matter where you are at this day, you would do well to follow Mary Oliver’s advice and “keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable[[1]](#footnote-1).”

*Logan Strike McLean lives on the Oregon coast with her spouse Paul and their puppy, Beans. She graduated from Yale Divinity School in 2020, and served her internship in Duluth, Minnesota. Recently ordained, she is serving her first call as Lutheran pastor at Florence United Methodist Church. She also serves as a hospital chaplain. She enjoys knitting, ocean adventures, cycling, and is an aspiring forager.*

**Green Blades Preaching Roundtable**

Third Sunday of Easter/ Earth Sunday

April 23, 2023

FROM DUST ‘TIL DAWN

Emily Meyer, Minneapolis

Rev. Emily Meyer retraces the Lenten journey - from cosmic stardust to the dusty road to Emmaus - and invites us to wonder, learn, root, and go, stepping out gently to bless the earth.

Care for Creation Commentary on the Revised Common Lectionary

Readings for ELW Third Sunday of Easter, Year A (2022/2023)

April 23, 2023

[Acts 2:14a, 36-41](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=41#hebrew_reading)

[Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=41#psalm_reading)

[1 Peter 1:17-23](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=41#epistle_reading)

[Luke 24:13-35](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=41#gospel_reading)

Hymn suggestion: Touch the Earth Lightly, ELW #739

Song suggestions: [By Breath](https://sarathomsen.com/track/1917029/by-breath) & [Where Did Jesus Go?](https://sarathomsen.com/track/1907935/where-did-jesus-go), Sara Thomsen

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Holy One is coming, it is near… (Joel 2:1; Ash Wednesday)

YAHWEH God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15; 1 Lent)

Now YAHWEH said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1; 2 Lent)

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as YAHWEH commanded. (Exodus 17:1; 3 Lent)

YAHWEH said to Samuel, "... Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite...." (1 Samuel 16:1; 4 Lent)

The hand of YAHWEH came upon me; God’s spirit brought me out and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. (Ezekiel 37:1; 5 Lent)

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples… (Matthew 21:1; Palm Sunday)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. (John 20:1; Easter)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19; Easter 2)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem… (Luke 24:13; Easter 3)

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The first verse of the Hebrew text for every week in Lent - and then the first verse of the Gospel reading for Palm Sunday through today - sets its story in a very particular place: grounding God’s people in a specific land or location - and alternately imploring them to literally dig in, root, and grow there, or calling and anointing them to ‘go’. Given the journey theme of Lent, this is not remarkable or surprising. What I lift up today is the land itself and our human need to be connected to the soil of a place.

Ash Wednesday, some of us may have incorporated the idea of stardust into our imposition of ashes. This trend invites us to look beyond this earth, to wonder about the enormity and wonder of the cosmos, to ‘lift up our eyes’ in such a way that we cannot mistake the hand of God in the glory of the cosmos - and therefore in our own wondrous makeup.

In the ashes/dust of Ash Wednesday we remember both our mortality and our longevity - whether dust of the earth or stardust, returning to dust means returning to oneness with the entirety of creation. The fact that science now confirms this spiritual truth only lends credence to its holy wisdom. We also bow our heads in humility, approaching the Divine in awe and penitence.

At 11:15 last night, my 81 year-old mother and I learned that the Northern Lights were visible overhead. We dashed outside in our pajamas. They weren't the google-image photo display or CGI-splendor caught on film; we made no attempt to capture them, confident no photo could do them justice. They were subtle - and yet, I immediately thought, “This is why people believe there are angels. This is why ‘heaven’ is described as having streets of gold and a radiant throne.” The lights were a dim but urgent undulation of pale, cosmic green - almost white; cloud-like and filmy - but pulsing and wafting and flowing through the heavens; racing sporadically from west to east then east to west across the whole vast expanse of starlit sky. We viewed it through the upper branches of spruce and pine. It was a moment to treasure, my mom and I, in the middle of the night, freezing, and seeing this sight that so few other humans get to see.

Just the night before, in our Wednesday Lenten gathering, we had talked about how fragile so many of us have become: we are swallowed up in despair, depression, anxiety, stress, confusion, doubt, trauma - the list is lengthy. We wondered if our lack of connection to the cosmic - blocked out by city lights and the need to sleep inside solid structures and the fear of going out in the dark - hasn’t deprived us of an essential gift, tool, and vaccine for woe. Wonder, awe, amazement - even the simple awareness of and chance to view a full and glorious night sky - aurora borealis or no - allow us to grow in the awareness that we are, by virtue of our biology and creation, part of an astounding reality.

Laura Alary picks up on this in [Here: The Dot We Call Home](https://paracletepress.com/products/here-the-dot-we-call-home) (Paraclete, 2022), in which a child’s wonder broadens her perspective on home, neighbor and connection - which leads her to expand her sense of home outward, eventually, to include the entire planet. And though, “overwhelmed by the mess that humans have left behind”, her newly developed sense of wonder and connection lead her to determine that the only thing she can do is “start where she is”.

Without wonder, we lose our sense of belonging to something profound, beyond our small self. Without awe, it is hard to develop humility. Without humility, hubris takes over. And hubris, our ego, is a very, very fragile thing.

adrienne maree brown wrote extensively and prolifically on this in their year-long blog for Yes! Magazine. ‘Murmurations’ includes numerous worthy reads. ‘[Returning to the Whole](https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2022/06/29/murmurations-healing-inner-accountability)’ states that, “To heal ourselves, we must remember that we are a small part of a much greater whole.” (Yes! Magazine; 06.29.22).

Hummus, humans, humility: we are dust and to dust we shall return.

Yet, if humility is an antidote to despair, awe is not God’s only gift.

From ashes to mud to dust: our Lenten journey alternately grounded us in place and urged us out into the world. These texts take us back to and trace the arc from our origins as stardust - and the soil of this planet, lighting on dirt and water to open our eyes, then touching down on the dusty road to Emmaus. Along the way the bonding agent of oil - of anointing - returns again and again. The fruit of the earth blesses us to go, blesses us to lead, blesses us to see with new eyes, blesses us to live a New Life.

Grounding in place cannot become a crutch, an everlasting refuge from reality, a quagmire of apathy. We have to get out there, out on a trail, a path, any walkway available. We need to wander through the earth to learn it and learn from it. We need to be in and with creation for our own healing, and to discover how we can participate in creation’s self-healing.

adrienne marie brown’s separate article, ‘[How the Wonder of Nature Can Inspire Social Justice Activism](https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2018/02/01/how-the-wonder-of-nature-can-inspire-social-justice-activism)’, reveals how, “The complex systems of the natural world can open our eyes to a new way of being”. (Yes! Magazine; 02.01.18)

“Participating with” the “complex system” is a key element. Every step of the road to Emmaus is a point of connection, returning the disciples to their place of origin - both in the going out and in the returning: the disciples connecting with one another in their grief; the Risen Christ connecting the disciples to their own story, to scripture, to the Resurrected One, and to their beloved community of fellow followers of The Way.

It’s what binds us together that gives us life. From the molecular to the cosmic, connection - some kind of binding agent - is essential.

This has been a parallel arc in our Lenten journey, drawing us toward Christ’s New Life: Isaiah 58 (Ash Wednesday) reprimanded us for fasts that divide and commended to us fasts ‘to humble oneself’, ‘break every yoke’, and ‘share your bread’ (58:5-7)[[2]](#footnote-2); 1 Lent in the Garden, the soil of which we were originally commissioned to ‘till and keep’; and again in 4 Lent with the healing of the person born blind - through the combination of dirt and spittle, washed with water from the pool of Siloam (Sent/anointed); and finally, now, at Emmaus, in the breaking of the bread - powdery wheat flour bonded with oil and water - New Life is brought to its fullness in the community of journey and conversation and meal.

MNIPL Director of Faith Networks Buff Grace joined me for The Ministry Lab’s first-ever Commentary Conversation. Buff began our ~45 minute discussion with a disclaimer that novice creation care preachers may want to stick to a more concretely illustrative set of texts for Earth Day sermons. This year’s assigned texts are a bit of a ‘heavy lift’ for preachers - and/or congregations - new to creation-centered preaching. He offers a few alternate suggestions; you can access the whole conversation [here](https://vimeo.com/theministrylab/commentary-conversation1).

Within the story of the road to Emmaus, though, Buff is reminded of Jesus’ self-identification with bread, wine, grapes, and oil. His fascinating insight that these were the most essential commodities, i.e., central economic elements of Jesus’ time, was new to me; I’m still grappling with it.[[3]](#footnote-3)

It speaks to this theme of basic, essential elements - dust/soil, water, and oil/breath - being part and parcel of our journey; healing, sustaining, and bringing us together; opening our eyes in wondrous ways to perceive the risen Christ.

There’s something to be said about New Life showing up on a dusty road.

We are blessed to share and steward a small portion of lakeshore in Minnesota’s Northwoods. In my earliest years, the road was a two-rut track. This eventually widened to a gravel road. In 2010 family members were pit against family members and neighbors against neighbors when the county decided to pave it. Our little gravel drive is now a two-lane tar county highway.

The day before demolition began, I invited my neighbors to walk the gravel road one last time. Only two joined me, and each of them separately and on their own. I walked the road alone - barefoot, placing one foot directly in front of the other for five-and-a-half miles. It was prayer - beseeching the road to bless my feet as my feet blessed the road. I wept a bit, but mostly I expressed my gratitude and my grief; I looked for grace in the flora and fauna; I asked for forgiveness for myself and all those who did not know what they were doing. I grounded to this place: I learned this place by looking more deeply and I let this place learn me more fully.

Activist, author, scholar, and Cherokee descendant, Randy Woodley, (Keetoowah Band) offers “meditations and ideas for reflection and action” in [Becoming Rooted](https://www.broadleafbooks.com/store/product/9781506471174/Becoming-Rooted?utm_campaign=BL%20New%20and%20Noteworthy&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=201995497&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_NEamztMWbCnhBngXz9xPmevCi6KbyPKlb64nEIdds29JJqEuuaRBGFvjNOhSQ77AiKU6Ar4V78BS68Km2R0VuolTCp-dBUTU-gpPaRuDWKZh3Me8&utm_content=200645918&utm_source=hs_email): One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth (Broadleaf; 2022), an opportunity to “get in touch with the water, land, plants, and creatures around us”. And, like Alary’s “[Here](https://paracletepress.com/products/here-the-dot-we-call-home)”, it encourages growing in relationship with, “the people who lived on that land for thousands of years prior to Europeans' arrival, and with ourselves. In walking toward the harmony way, we honor balance, wholeness, and connection.”

The road to Emmaus - dusty and familiar - brought two disciples from grief into healing, from despair into new awareness, from loss into a new relationship with the Risen Christ, and with that new awareness, into a renewed connection to their true community of followers of The Way.

As much as our eyes are meant to lift to the skies in wonder, our feet are meant to trod the ground with grace, rooting us to place, grounding us in God’s goodness and presence in our particular here and now; connecting us with creation and one another. This is the fulfillment of the Lenten journey: New Life springing from the soil of our grounding place; New Life flowing through connections in community; New Life bubbling up within us - anointing us - to step out, again, to bless the earth.

Originally written by Rev. Emily P.L. Meyer; originally appearing in Green Blades Rising Preacher’s Roundtable.

ministrylab@unitedseminary.edu

Find more from Emily Meyer at [www.theministrylab.org](http://www.theministrylab.org).

A person taking a selfie in the snow

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1. A line from Mary Oliver’s collection of poems titled “Evidence.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See The Rev. Wil Gafney, Ph.D.’s [‘Hood Theology](https://www.wilgafney.com/2014/02/09/hood-theology/) sermon for more on Isaiah 58 and the essential nature of breaking apart non-liberative bondage while building up relational bonds. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Commentary Conversation: MNIPL Director of Faith Networks and Rev. Emily Meyer, Executive Director of The Ministry Lab discuss Earth Day, 2023, RCL texts. Learn more and access the video [here](https://theministrylab.org/portfolio-item/fresh-free-resources/). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)