

flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. [NRSV John 3:1-16]

This is the Gospel of the Lord, ***praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.***

Sentence

The words you have spoken are spirit and life, O Lord; you have the words of eternal life.



Forest Sunday

We worship with creation in the forest

Year A

6th September 2020

Green

Prayer of the Day

God, our Creator, whose glory fills our planet, help us to discern your vibrant presence among us and our kin in creation, especially in the mysteries of all types of forests.

Lift our spirits to rejoice with the forest and all its creatures.

Help us empathise with your forest creatures who suffering because of bushfires and forest clearing.

In the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews all things in creation.

Amen.

A reading from the Book of Genesis,

Chapter 2 beginning at Verse 4b

'Born of Earth and the Spirit'; God creates humans from Earth and the Spirit and plants a forest garden to be a home for them with the rest of their kin in creation.

⁴In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up - for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground - ⁷then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. ⁸And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹²and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of

the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” ¹⁹So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

[NRSV Genesis 2:4b-22]

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God**

Psalm 139:12-16

‘Born from the womb of Earth’; The psalm writer confesses that he/she was created by God in a wondrous way (like Adam) deep in the womb of Earth.

¹² For you have created my inward parts;

you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹³ I will praise you, for you are to be feared:

fearful are your acts, and wonderful are your works.

¹⁴ You knew my soul, and my bones were not hidden from you:

when I was formed in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁵ Your eyes saw my limbs when they were yet imperfect:

and in your book were all my members written.

¹⁶ Day by day they were fashioned:

and not one was late in growing.

A reading from the Acts,

Chapter 17 beginning at Verse 22

‘Born to search for God’; In his famous sermon about the ‘Unknown God’ Paul claims that God created all humans with the same breath and inner impulse to search for God’s presence.

²²Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ [NRSV Acts 17:22-28]

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John,

Chapter 3 beginning at verse 1

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

‘Born of water and the Spirit’; Jesus invites Nicodemus to go beyond being born of Earth and the Spirit (like Adam) to also be born of ‘water and the Spirit’ in Christ.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the