In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.

The Sunday after Pentecost is always Trinity Sunday, the day we praise God as Father/Son/Holy Spirit, or, as John Wesley would have said, God/Christ/Holy Ghost, or as we often say nowadays Creator/Redeemer/Sustainer. One God, God-in-three-persons as one of our favorite hymns sings it, Blessed Trinity.

This is all poetic language, really, our human attempt to put into words the majesty and wonder of God that, of course, goes beyond what words can contain or capture. Remember that the early church started with their manifold and sometimes mysterious experience of God and then, in the early 3rd century, tried to put that into words that we now receive as the doctrine of the Trinity. Father/Son/Holy Spirit, Creator/Redeemer/Sustainer is the church’s shorthand way of recognizing and celebrating the ways we experience God as Creator of all that is, God as redeemer and savior of us all, God as the sustaining spirit of all life.
Today we're going to focus on God as Creator, but even so, if you listen carefully, you can hear all three Persons of the Trinity woven through the story. This morning we zoom back in time all the way to the beginning. In the beginning, God… we heard Kate read from the 1st Chapter of the Book of Genesis, the book of beginnings. This is where we begin, where we should always begin. We begin back at the beginning, this generative, loving, expansive beginning that propels us forward to all the new beginnings that become possible each and every day. From the beginning to new beginnings. This is God's Creative Spirit putting it all in motion.

“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” Ah…a wind from God...do we not feel again now the wind of the Holy Spirit that filled the church with life on Pentecost when they were all gathered together in one place? God’s Creating Spirit is breathing life into the whole of creation in the Genesis story. With intention and will, God speaks the creation into existence. God calls forth life in a very inclusive, invitational, and participatory way. God says, day by day, “let there be, let there be, let there be…Let there be light. Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters to separate the waters and called the dome Sky. Let the waters be gathered together and the dry land appear.

Let there be lights in the dome to separate the day from the night. Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures. Let the birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky. Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.

And then God said: Let us make humankind in our own image and give unto them dominion, stewardship, of all living things. Day and night. Sun, moon and stars. Plants and trees and animals that crawl and creep and fly and run on all fours. And creatures that walk on two legs, in “our” image, God says, and it will be their job, their duty to steward and care for it all.

In the very beginning, we are created as partners with God, to share power with God, to share creative responsibility with God, to nurture and care for the earth and all that is within in. And God saw that it was good. That it was all good. God creates all this wondrous diversity and calls it “Good.” The Creation—in all its abundance and potential. In all its glory and splendor. God blesses it all and calls it “very good.” The diversity of creation is God’s delight. It is God’s joy. It is God’s gift. And each and every one of us has a precious and beautiful place in God’s magnificent creation.

God’s Creating Spirit is still at work in the creation and in each and every one of us. And how we need it now, don’t we, in these transitional times? We’re gradually emerging from a year+ with COVID, step by step, with as much wisdom as we can glean from developments around us. We’re all on different timelines and in different comfort zones in this process. We’ll no doubt
need a full measure of patience with ourselves and with one another as we make our way into a new chapter of life together.

And in addition to life beyond the pandemic, we’re facing into serious and divisive social and political issues as a nation, as well as increasingly urgent imperatives to address climate change, now called by many “the climate crisis.” How do we do our part to restore God’s originally intended goodness to it all? How do we go from the beginning to the new beginnings of these days?

Essayist David Brooks, addressing the Boston College Class of 2021 last week, invited the graduates to think about their deepest values and priorities and dreams as they begin now to take off the physical masks we have all worn in these last fifteen months. What other masks might we take off, psychological or relational masks that hide our truest selves? “You are entering a world that’s been interrupted,” he told them. “You have an opportunity to create a different and more humane way of life—a life without masks.”

It seems to me that in these transitional times, that it behooves us all to be still and listen for the voice of God. Listen for the Word of God speaking over the waters, drawing forth new life. Listen for the breath of God re-animating the whole creation. Where do you see God’s creating Spirit at work? How does God give life and breath to us? How does God renew the creation? How is God’s love and mercy expressed through the Creating Spirit? Are we open to all the possibilities now of beginning again?

This is a time to wait upon the Lord. In the words of this morning’s Offertory, which Barbara Smith and Vera Lugo will sing for us in a few moments: “I waited for the Lord, he inclined unto me, and heard my complaint. O bless’d are they that hope and trust in the Lord.”

Blessed are they that hope and trust in the Lord. Blessed are they. Happy and glad are they. Joyous are they. Hallowed are they. Let us this day praise God in three persons, blessed Trinity, present with us as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, offering new beginnings this day for our mind and our soul and our heart, new beginnings for the living of these days.

Amen.

Notes: