

Our congregation is at the beginning of a spiritual journey that is re-forming our liturgy, theology, consciousness, and way of life as the Body of Christ. We're exploring the ancient roots of a much-forgotten creation-centered spirituality. If God, as 1 Corinthians 15:28 says, desires to be all-in-all, how do we live in such a way that mirrors that image on earth, as in Heaven?

On the one hand, this is no big deal. That is, if all we're talking about is creating a "theme of the year", or merely encouraging folks to recycle, compost and drive electric vehicles, then such activity really isn't worth making a fuss about it.

But we're exploring deeper changes than that. We're exploring how to move our worldview and thought patterns, our priorities, actions, and attitudes, away from dualistic thinking and into a more integral, holistic understanding of our role within an interdependent, web of life. None of us are experts in such a change. But we are desiring to live in such a way that seven generations from now our descendants will be grateful for the example of our lives.

- We're talking about learning the language of the rest of creation (plants, creatures, the air, soil, and water). How do we hear its cry? How do we see its assets and capacity for cooperation? How do we become friends?
- We're talking about moving beyond our normal materialistic and self-centered (human centered) ways of life. How can spirituality lead us into a life of "enough"?
- We're talking about rethinking our values, attitudes, desires, worldview. What does it mean to be an eco-disciple of Christ?
- What alternative practices help us move from head-to-heart, from thought-to-action, from aspiration into the will power to start experimenting with personal and societal changes?
- How do we read the Bible from a creation-centered view? If God is not an object out-there, but is actually a life that emerges from within, how do we re-learn the faith dynamics we have been taught? How do we pray with creation, itself a living partner of God, in mind? What rituals empower us to know ourselves as part of the web of life, rather than as outside the Web? What new liturgical language do we need to develop?

- How do we develop the mystic vision of God as all-in-all? How do we live into this? How do we bridge the distance between our experience of being a separate self with the aspiration to become a “webbed self” connected to all?
- What are the practical implications for the way we worship? For the way and the why of our gatherings? What are the implications for our building and grounds? For Safe Parking, and for all of our ministries and ways of being Christ in the community?
- And how does such a spirituality impact the public realm of politics, peace and justice?

Phyllis Tickle gave a broad-brush typology of Church history positing that Christianity goes through a paradigm changing conversion about every 500 years.

500CE Christianity, a persecuted minority, became the dominating religion of the Empire.

1000CE The medieval age was the age of Christendom in Europe. But the expression of Christianity had little to do with the teachings of Jesus. The monastic movement was a response to this accommodation to culture.

1500 CE The “protesting re-formation” of Christianity became an alternative to an increasingly bureaucratic, corrupt, soul-less Church. The Enlightenment was a consequence of this civilization-change.

2000CE Our current age is characterized by corrupted leadership, and an often incomprehensible and incoherent connection between the life of faith and scientific reality. The Enlightenment worldview is in decay leaving us in the anxiety provoking not-yet of what’s next.

Tickle believed that we are living in a time of endings, which also means a time of beginnings. The status quo is dying, but what is being born is not yet clear. We trust, and we feel, and we glimpse that the Spirit is redesigning and re-creating, but as scripture says, we see through a glass dimly.

As a Greening Congregation we live at the beginning of a great new turning. Creation itself is under increasingly tragic assault. The **prophetic actions** of our

time call us to hear the voice of the created order so as to articulate a new conversion of humanity towards our original calling of partnership with the earth. Our **priestly actions** are to enact this connection through liturgy, ritual, and discipleship following Jesus in the care of creation. And our **pastoral actions** are to include all, to gather up all together, to love all of life, to build a cultural ecosphere where the land and its creatures have inherent rights.

That's a tall order. And we are just beginners. But as you see and feel incremental changes in our congregation's expression of the Gospel, what you are seeing and feeling is a group of Christians trying to deepen its faith, hope and love.

Let our prayer be:

*God of all creation,  
Come, and show us the way.*

*"For in Christ all things in heaven and on earth were created, ...all things have been created through Christ and for Christ. ... In Christ all things hold together."*  
(Colossians 1:15ff)