

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE



"Praise to the One Who Stretches Out The Heavens"

By Pastor Lyn Linde, Norton/Almena First United Methodist Churches

Let all that I am praise the Lord. O Lord, My God, how great you are.

You are robed with honor and majesty. You are dressed in a robe of light.

You stretch out the starry curtain of the heavens. Psalm 104:1-2

Psalm 104 reflects on God's greatness by reflecting on the wonders of creation. While we could definitely use more rain, some areas of the Midwest are turning green and some fields of golden grain are preparing for their transformation. As we see the glories of this world even in its fallen state, we glimpse the infinitely greater glory of God and cannot help but lift our voices in praise. "Let all that I am praise the Lord," writes the psalmist, "O Lord, My God, how great you are!" (Psalm 104:1) I encourage you to read Psalm 104:1-35 to entertain your own taste of God's wondrous glory through creation.

The psalmist uses the natural world as a kind of mirror to see God in his glory. He begins, sensibly enough, with the wonder of the skies. While earlier this month some of those skies were tainted and gray dropping tornados in Nebraska, God is still in control and has since provided sunshine, rainbows, and starry nights. God is "dressed in a robe of light," shining brighter than the sun. (104:2) He "stretches out the starry curtain of the heavens" (104:2.)

Some translations have

God stretching out a tent (ESV, NRSV < NIV). Indeed, the Hebrew word used here yeri'a referred either to a curtain or a tent, which was made of curtain-like material in ancient Israel. The point is that God created the stars and put them in their place.

Sometimes I gaze up at the brilliant specks of light and the gauzy whiteness of the Milky Way and try to imagine the size of what I am seeing. My brain can say the words, "light years," but I really cannot comprehend what that means. Then I am reminded of the fact that God created

all this, so immeasurably vast and glorious. For moments I sense in a new way God's own grandeur and glory. With the psalmist, I exclaim, "O Lord, My God, how great you are."

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

When have you been struck by the greatness of God? What places in the world help you to glimpse the glory of the Creator?

In whom do you see the image of our Creator?

Where do you go to see the splendor of God in all His glory?

PRAYER: Praise to the Lord,

the Almighty, the King of creation!

O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!

All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near; Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who over all things so wondrously reigneth,

Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!

Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever have been

Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully, wondrously, made thee;

Health hath vouchsafed and, when heedlessly falling, hath stayed thee.

What need or grief ever hath failed of relief?

Wings of His mercy did shade thee.

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;

Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.

Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,

If with His love He befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!

All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.

Let the Amen sound from His people again,

Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Amen.

On Your Mark



Her toe is on the mark... her eye is on the goal. Whether or not they win their race, every athlete is already a winner, for they are positively facing life's challenges. When we have faith in God, we can face life's challenges... we can prevail over them and emerge intact. Visit your house of worship this week. When your heart and mind are focused on the Creator, you will emerge victorious. You will be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

Weekly Scripture Reading

Isaiah 6:1-13	Isaiah 61:1-11	Isaiah 62:1-12	Joel 1:1-20	Joel 2:1-17	Joel 2:18-32	Joel 3:1-21
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Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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