

## ***God Creates***

Jason Boyd; May 30, 2010

St. Paul's UCC; Seattle, WA

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; John 16:12-15

I'm home. I'm home. What an amazing and incredible moment it is for me to be standing here with you now, to share what God might be saying to us this week. I have difficulty believing it has been nearly 4 years since I left here – left physically that is, you have never been out of my heart or prayers. The last Sunday of August, 2006, my “last Sunday” – quotes emphasized – the day I would take off dragging the U-Haul east.

Jennifer Brownell was here that day, and during the talk with the kids she made me come forward and put a stole on me – no, it wasn't this one -- and wouldn't let me take it off throughout the rest of the service. I don't believe I stopped crying throughout the entire service. As much as I knew that I was doing what God had asked of me, it was hard to leave. The next week, that first Sunday morning knowing I couldn't just walk out my front door and be at St. Paul's in about 5 minutes, was tough. That seems like another era, and yet when I walk in this building, when I see all of you, it's like I never left. I came to the pancake breakfast yesterday and it was coming home to eat with the family. I look at some of the kids and based on how much bigger they are when from when I saw them last – well, yes I have been away – but I know I am home.

When I left here for seminary, I had to reconcile with the fact that I might never live here again, that all of you who have sustained me might continue to be accessible by phone and email and even Facebook, but that I couldn't just jump in the car and meet up with you at Red Mill or Romio's or go watch the Seahawks in Kathy & Robin's living room. I couldn't have gone to seminary in good conscience if I hadn't made peace with that. Our Still-Speaking God is amazing; all along God had planned for me to come back to the only part of the world that has ever been home for me – and while I won't be seeing you on Sunday mornings, my spirit and soul are here as much as they have always been, you are my family as much as you have always been.

You know that on Tuesday, I begin my first call, as Pastor of the Kirkland Congregational Church. That does make for an amazing journey, from my arrival here on Easter Sunday 2003 to already wondering what my first Easter Service is going to look like next spring! I figured that since this is happening, you might wonder if I'm actually up for this. You might have some questions – like “well, Mr. Andover Newton Master of Divinity, did you actually learn anything in New England?” “You sure you're ready for this?” “So you're now a graduate of the world's first and oldest graduate theological institution, do you know anything?” and of course – “you're not going to turn into one of those east coast frozen chosen are you?”

So I thought that since Tim was so gracious to invite me to preach today, I would take the opportunity to prove to you that I am indeed ready, that I possess the knowledge necessary. And I am going to do so by reciting the Bible to you. In its entirety. That should do it, right? Oh don't worry – I'm going to do it in 50 words or less. Are you ready?

God Creates, Adam Ate

Noah Floats, Abraham's Oath

Jacob Schemes, Joseph Dreams

Bush Lit, Sea Split

Law Spoken, Tablets Broken

Judges Appointed, Kings Anointed  
 God Forgotten, Rulers Rotten  
 Kingdom Broke, Prophets Hope  
 Mary Favored, Baby Savior  
 Crucified, Jesus Died  
 Third Morn, World Reborn  
 Spirit Glows, Love Grows  
 Earth Awaits, God Creates

And there you have it – the Bible. And OK, I didn't write it – it's from a bookmark of all things. But I think it sums it up – yes, the 50 word version leaves a few things out, but it gets something right – something very important. The story begins and ends with God creating. God always creates, for us, through us, with us, and in us.

The words from this morning's reading from Proverbs remind us of this, remind us that our Still-Speaking God is also a Still-Creating God. They remind us that our own existence is a point of pride and joy for God. Listen to those words again – "To you, O my people, I call and my cry is to all that live. The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts long ago." Certainly God had and has much more to accomplish, but our own place on earth is part of how God intends to create and keep creating. There are so many ways that this is true for us, we can easily think about the needs of God's people and what God needs us to do in order to create that world God wants. I want to tell you about how you've done that for me.

It has been just over 7 years since I first came to St. Paul's. I know as much as I know anything that coming here was part of what God needed to happen for me to become a minister. God had things in mind, things I needed to see and do and experience – things I needed to come to understand. And God was creating all of this through you. The writer of the verse from John began by saying, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." That day I was not ready to hear all that God had to say to me, but that would come, that Spirit, that truth, and it would all come with you as an instrument of God's creating.

I remember so many things. I remember the incredible welcome I got on that Easter Sunday in 2003, that first time I walked in the doors of St. Paul's. Tillie once told me she doesn't remember this, but I remember her being the greeter at the door that day, and I've never forgotten the welcome she gave me. I remember where I was on my life's journey then, and I know that this was something I needed in order for God's call to begin to take root, and I know that something which may seem so simple to many of us is so much deeper and has so much more meaning – I think about what might not have been created in me without it.

I remember my own thrill as I discovered the progressiveness of many UCC churches, but that had not been part of my own past experience. I know that sometimes God's children need to see things in order to come to understand them. I remember of my first worship services here, and when it came time for the offering to be received, in one aisle was Tillie in her Sunday best, in another was Katie Johnson – then sporting a blue Mohawk. And in the center aisle were Kathy and Robin, holding hands as they moved toward the front of the sanctuary. I thought to myself, "Wow, this is what the people of God look like." God was creating at that moment. God was creating so much that I would carry with me, and that without it, I couldn't be a minister. We humans are too often so good at rejecting the beauty of what God creates. And I was seeing St. Paul's showing me something else, which I know now is a cornerstone of faith, the true celebration of all God's creation including all Her children.

God is doing this in you, dear people of St. Paul's. As I stand here before you today, a product of how God has created through you, and knowing that the ministry that begins in Kirkland on Tuesday would not be happening without God creating through you. You must be listening, because you've done this before. God knew what Jennifer Brownell needed to become the minister God needed her to be, and God knew what Ann Eidson needed to become the minister God needed her to be – and to accomplish these magnificent works of creation, God called on you. And then here I am. Whatever I accomplished for God back at the First Congregational Church of Natick, Massachusetts, whatever is to come in Kirkland, whatever God might decide upon further into the future than I can yet imagine ... God chose you as the instruments of creation, and for me, none of this would be happening without your own openness to allow God create for us, through us, around us, with us, and in us. For myself, I thank you for your love and support from the very bottom of my heart and soul.

I pray that you will continue to be open for what is new to come, for what cannot yet be envisioned, for what may not be even in your lifetimes but that still finds God needing you to accomplish it. This is how God continues to create, constantly putting that comma where others have placed a period ... through all the actions and all the parts of the community you are and all that you share, the story – your story – God's story -- goes and goes, and *grows* – God creates.

God Creates, Kathy Moderates  
 Gospel Professed, Animals Blessed  
 Choir Voices, Congregation Rejoices  
 Pledges Confirmed, People Affirmed  
 Labyrinth Contemplating, Sam Bogar's Graduating  
 Garden Sifted, Prayers Lifted  
 Potlucks Consumed, Spirit Booms  
 Jesus Embraced, Fears Erased  
 Friendship Stirs, Pilgrim Firs  
 Candles Lit, Fellowship Fits  
 Council Discerns, The Auction Returns  
 Homeless Fed, Couples Wed  
 Babies Born, Losses Mourned  
 Rummage Sold, Emma Kate's How Old?  
 Tim Leads, Love Succeeds  
 Peace Passed, Faith Lasts  
 Recovery Carried, Cindy's Getting Married  
 Coffee Sipped, Pancakes Flipped  
 Kids Baptized, Hope Realized  
 Souls Bared, Communion Shared  
 Musikgarten Taught, Justice Sought  
 Bible Uncovered, Serenity Discovered  
 Covenant Seeking, God is Still Speaking  
 Much More Awaits, God Creates

God always creates. Amen.