

## Word of God – Word of Life

Psalm 104 – *Bless the Lord, O My Soul*  
*Abundance of, Beauty of, Care of Creation*

Our core passage for May invites us to share in God’s delight in all his works created in God’s image; we reflect God’s own sense of splendor and majesty. What God finds beautiful resonates in our own spirits and we are not alone in praising God. *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy* (Psalm 96:11-12). We are also called to participate with God in the care of creation.

Some ways to begin our praise and meditation are:

- Read the Psalm prayerfully and, on the second reading, make note of specific verses that grab your attention. Return to those verses for several days, exploring the connections and images that come to mind.
- Choose a tree that you see every day; observe it’s coming to vibrant life and join with it in praising God.
- Ask God to open your spirit and all your senses to the beauty all around as the earth is again renewed.
- Call to mind a place of wondrous beauty and/or treasured memory. Think of God’s immense delight in the beauty of that special place.
- Do an Internet search for *images of Psalm 104*. Select some favorites and share with family and friends.
- Observe and list the fellow creatures that you meet in one day.
- Pray daily for the health of the environment, both nearby and throughout the Earth, our home.

For reflection:

*A great number of male animals, as all our most gorgeous birds, some fishes, reptiles and mammals, and a host of magnificently colored butterflies have been rendered beautiful for beauty’s sake.* – Charles Darwin

Scientists today are rethinking the extravagant splendor of the animal kingdom. Some engineering feats are impractical and waste energy. Brilliant colors may put an animal at risk. In other words, there may be exuberance, vitality, and beauty in Creation simply for God’s delight and ours.

## Word of Nature – Human Impact/Our Response

We are blessed to find delight in and to be sustained by the beauty and bounty of Creation. We are called to participate with our loving Creator in managing, sharing and sustaining our home, the Earth. Humans, however, both consciously and unknowingly have been wasteful and careless in this sacred task. Humanity’s wounding of Creation has two overlapping aspects.

The first includes specific impacts caused by exploitation and misuse:

- Algae blooms and ‘Dead Zones’ in Lake Erie and the Gulf of Mexico
- Micro plastics in the food chain
- Loss of habitat, deforestation, and overgrazing
- Pollution: think Flint water and Beijing air
- Strip mining damaging ecosystems and communities
- The unintended impacts of herbicides and pesticides
- Invasive species

Some notable corrections show the links among human activity, public policies, and species recovery. For example: acid rain; smokestack scrubbers in the Midwest and healthier trees in New England; or banning a specific pesticide and the flourishing of once declining bald eagles. A Google search of “wolves and Yellowstone” will yield an amazing and heartening example.

The second, more devastating, aspect is the global impact of climate change.

For reflection:

- What are your expectations and concerns about the impacts of climate change? For yourself? For your children and grandchildren?
- Have you taken any steps to reduce your own carbon footprint?
- What further steps might you consider?
- Where might you turn for reliable information about the impacts of climate change?
- What would you like to see happen at the level of public policy?

