



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 12-18, 2021

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon Title: "A New Creation"

<p>Notes from sermon on 4/11:</p>	<p>To pray for this week:</p>
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Family Focus Question

Describe what a "groaning" creation (Romans 8:22) sounds and looks like.

Questions for Small Groups

1. Do your best to describe what this world will be like ultimately. How will that happen?
2. How does the creation around us suffer because of our sin?
3. Why should the people of God be for the environment? If you disagree with the statement offer some biblical understanding for your perspective.

Monday, April 12: Read Romans 8:18-25

In the first horrific weeks of the pandemic, an interesting news story gained attention: dolphins were spotted for the first time in decades in the ports of Venice, Italy. We have since learned that lockdowns decreased electricity demand by 30% in many countries, including the United States, traffic congestion has been reduced by 50% in areas such as New York and Los Angeles, and the dissolved oxygen content in the Ganges River, India, has increased by about 80% (Mousazadeh, M., Paital, B., Naghdali, Z. *et al.* Positive environmental effects of the coronavirus 2020 episode: a review. *Environ Dev Sustain* (2021)). While no one can deny the human and economic devastation caused by the pandemic, this silver lining gave many of us pause. Could we, perhaps, envision a different future for our environment, and greener habits for ourselves and our communities?

Last week, we explored the "new start" available to us through the power of the resurrection and the implications of this ability as we reemerge from the pandemic. This week, we will be challenged to think beyond what we want for our own lives and examine what we envision for creation as a whole. We will read scripture passages describing God's original intent for humanity and nature together, as well as God's ultimate plan for its healing and harmony. Yes, we have suffered, and we have lost much. But as we read today, God has incredible plans for us and our world. "The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth". For what has it been waiting? What "rebirth" are we anticipating today?

Tuesday, April 13: Read Revelation 21:1-5

We can live every day in joyful expectation of the new heaven and new earth where everything is made new. As followers of Christ, we are agents in the manifestation of this kingdom. As supported by scripture, the healing of the relationship between humanity and nature is a central part of God's kingdom. How will Reveille be agents for this healing and transformation? How will we spread positivity, hope, and a sense of agency in this work, rather than pessimism, judgment, and doom? What big ideas can we share? What small steps can we take?

Wednesday, April 14: Read Genesis 3:1-19

We must acknowledge the role we have played in breaking the relationship God intended us to have with creation. As we revisit the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, we recognize the "enmity" we have with so many of God's creatures and the "curse" that seems to affect our ability to make a living in a way that's harmonious and cooperative with nature. Our own greed causes us to question God's natural laws and take from the earth things we should not. If the Bible ended right here, we would have every reason to feel hopeless. As children of Easter and the resurrection, however, we can both recognize our guilt and have hope and joy in the promises of redemption.

Thursday, April 15: Read Revelation 22:1-5

Today's passage paints an exquisite picture of Eden restored, with water flowing in the river of life "clear as crystal" through the middle of the city, available to everyone. There is no longer a "curse" between man and nature, and everyone works in harmony to serve God and God's creation. What would this look like in our modern world? How can we be workers to bring about this new "city"? Where does water need to be cleaner or more available? How can we help areas "cursed" with deforestation, pollution, desertification, litter, urban blight? What is one way in which Reveille could take leadership this upcoming year to improve the relationship between Richmond residents and their environment?

Friday, April 16: Read Psalm 8

God's plan for the healing of humanity and creation transcends politics or policy. It isn't about who should be our leaders, it is about who we choose as our King. It is about praising God and recognizing God's handiwork in the heavens, all flocks and herds, all animals in the wild, all birds in the sky and fish in the sea. It is about magnifying God's name and shining a spotlight on the beauty and majesty of God's creation. It is about not only reading or speaking the words of today's psalm, but finding our own place within it. Let us all rejoice in the new creation God is calling us to in 2021 and has enabled us to have through the gift of Easter. Let us be the voice of love, empowerment, and optimism as we take the lessons from the pandemic and the message of Easter to our church, community, and world.

Saturday, April 17: Scripture Memorization: Romans 8:18

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing
with the glory that will be revealed in us." (NIV)

Sunday, March 18: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Gracious Lord, you have offered us a beautiful vision of what this world will be when you recreate it. We confess that our eyes have failed to appropriate your future beauty. We have not lived to make this world as it will be. We have lived for ourselves and forsaken those who will follow us in this our home. Forgive us and by your grace lead us into a better place of stewardship of this your creation for we ask it in the name of Jesus. AMEN.*