

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
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JANUARY 8, 2012

SERMON: CREATIIVITY!

TEXT: GENESIS 1: 1-5

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ,the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”

I’ve seen Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, Raphael’s Madonna, Donatello’s Mary Magdelene and much more and I have to ask... has there ever been an artist that has been able to match the raw creativity of God revealed in the great act of creation?

Personally, I’ve always valued creativity. My little sister has more creativity in her little finger than I have in my entire body. You never know what she is going to come up with next! One just stands prepared to be surprised and dazzled in random moments when it pops out like a lightning bolt! One time she helped me preach a story on creation! She stood behind a large white sheet suspended across the chancel and painted the creation story as I read it and talked about it. You could not see her but her brush strokes appeared almost magically.

This morning we are here to give some thought to creativity. It is the most original of godly attributes!

To begin with, we should acknowledge that God started with a void! A deep dark void. The definition of “void” is emptiness.

That reminds me of the old story about some scientists who boldly told God that they could create life – just like God had out of the dirt of the earth. God appeared and accepted their bet. The scientists said, “Ok, now first we will take some of this common dirt...” God cut them off and said, “That’s mine - make your own dirt!”

Now, this isn’t an anti-evolution rant – far from it – but I wanted to emphasize that God started with a void. Well...it actually says the earth was a “formless void.” The

Hebrew word is “tohu wabohu” Perhaps my lack of creativity is showing - I can't picture either a formless void or a well formed void. Maybe you help me with that after worship??

I consulted the Interpreter's Bible Commentary on Genesis and it said, “The formless void is neither ‘nothing’ nor an undifferentiated mass; the earth, the waters, the darkness, and the wind are discrete realities.”

Let's double check with scripture!

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ,the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.”

Yep, they are all mentioned, but since we are not here to dissect creation and have neither the intelligence or information necessary to do so, let's leave that for later conversations.

What we can remember is that God was drawn to a blank canvas and when God was finished splashing it with creativity it was full of wonder, glory, and life. For which we are all thankful – no matter what processes or timeline God used.

Our scripture doesn't go beyond light and dark, day and night, but God was just getting the creative juices started!

- ❖ dry land
- ❖ seas
- ❖ vegetation: plants, trees, herbs, shrubs
- ❖ stars
- ❖ the sun and the moon
- ❖ birds of the air
- ❖ water based creatures
- ❖ land bound creatures
- ❖ Even insects
- ❖ Of course, Adam and Eve

If you believe the Irish folk song, even Unicorns – but the silly creatures wouldn't get on Noah's Ark so they all drowned. How sad! Also, depending on your theology, God also created dinosaurs or...the first big joke on humankind.

One thing is clear, that all creativity flows from God. Satan is never described as being a creator. If it is on the face of the earth God created it. And when Good looked on the creation God said, "It is good." And Satan started planning how to corrupt it. Consider:

God populated the earth with broccoli, cauliflower, and spinach, green and yellow vegetable of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives. And Satan created McDonald's. And McDonald's brought forth the 99-cent double-cheeseburger. And Satan said to Man, "You want fries with that?" And Man said, "Super size them." And Man gained pounds.

God created the healthful yogurt, that woman might keep her figure that man found so fair & desirable. And Satan brought forth chocolate. And woman gained pounds.

God said, "Try my crispy fresh salad." And Satan brought forth ice cream. And woman gained pounds.

God gave us fresh fruits, grains & nuts. And Satan gave us simple carbs like breads, sweet potatoes & Krispy Kreme!!

God said, "I have sent your heart healthy vegetables and olive oil with which to cook them." And Satan brought forth salad dressing & chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And Man gained pounds and his bad cholesterol went through the roof.

God brought forth running shoes and treadmills and man resolved to lose those extra pounds. And Satan brought forth cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil to change channels between ESPN, Spice, and ESPN2. And Man gained pounds.

God said, "You're running up the score, Devil." And God brought forth the potato, a vegetable naturally low in fat and brimming with nutrition. And Satan peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fat fried them. And he created sour cream & refried bean dip to boot!! And Man clutched his remote control and ate the potato chips swaddled in cholesterol. And Satan saw and said, "It is good." And Man went into cardiac arrest.

God sighed and created angioplasty, quadruple bypass surgery and Lipitor. And Satan smiled and created HMOs.

And the battle still goes on! God keeps creating and Satan keeps trying to corrupt. We know who is going to win in the end but...we are not in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter yet!

Of all that God created – Man and Woman are said to be made in the Creator’s image – mirroring, though dimly, God’s character. So we are God’s creative creatures – creating tools, society, weapons, towns, art, music, government, politics, math, science, ethics, nations. There are lots of ups and downs on that list – lots of good things that have also been corrupted in various times and places.

But what about us? We have some pretty creative people right here. We are blessed by their creativity continuously.

Some create art and music,  
    Others loving families and stable homes,  
Some security,  
    Others opportunities,  
Some faith nurturing environments,  
    Others welcome and hospitality,  
Some ministries to the needy,  
    Others organization for chaos.

Considering all the creativity that is sitting in our pews...what shall we create for God this year?

Let’s assume that this year is not going to be a carbon copy of last year. Let’s assume that it is going to be filled with unique opportunities, challenges, hardships, and blessings. Either we will respond to those changes or miss the opportunities but get run over by the challenges.

As a church, we look both at the changing needs of our members and of our community as well as our changing resources. Either we can ignore those changes and keep trying to do exactly what we have always done in exactly the way we have always done them – or we can get creative and find new opportunities, new methods, and new partners in God’s work.

In the coming year, let’s leave room for a dose of godly creativity concerning how we “do” church. Maybe this could be the year we create something excellent!