

Devotion Week of May 8, 2022 – Fourth Week of Eastertide

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

Genesis 1-2

I've been working on an overview of the 2022-2023 PW Bible Study, "Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight." I thought about this last Sunday afternoon as I followed my standard routine: reading the Sunday paper and taking a nap. It was Mother's Day, so we also had a nice meal, cards, and presents.

Sabbath means "rest." That's sometimes hard for pastors who have prepared for the service on Sunday morning and quite frankly, are generally a little worn out after the service is over. But I try to get in that Sunday afternoon of rest – reading the paper (especially the comics!), and then taking a nap.

When I went back and read the Genesis account of creation – the first story – of 7 days – I was struck by God exclaiming at the end of each day that "God saw everything that he had made, and it was good." On the sixth day, when God finally creates humans, God pronounces that "indeed, it was very good." Very good – not just good. We were made in his image and we are the culmination of that creation.

Then God decides he's done and he rests on the seventh day. He just rests. God, who's not like us, getting tired after doing some enormous task, just rests. And then God blesses this day of rest and makes it holy, because resting from work is holy.

God knows when to stop. Do we? How often do we run around on Sunday afternoons doing errands we didn't have time to do during the week? Genesis reminds us that rest is holy, and that we should delight in that rest. The coming of Shabbat on Friday evening in the Jewish tradition is ushered in with candles and a communal meal. Shabbat is greeted like a bride – with joyous celebration. I hope we can remember to do that too on Sundays. May you have Sabbath rest and delight this week.

Jeanne