



Find your identity, Live Purposefully

2018 Theme: Building our Future Together: Returning God to the Center of Life

First Afrikan Liturgical Season:

LIFE:

Multidimensional Sanctification

Ujima

Memory Verses: *Trust in the LORD and do good; live in the land and be safe. Seek your happiness in the LORD, and God will give you your heart's desire (Psalm 37:3-4 NRSV).*

The second liturgical quarter at First African is entitled Life: Multidimensional Sanctification. Once one is born and initiated into a spiritual house, she or he is expected to govern her or his life in ways that are consistent with the spirit of that house. This is what is meant by “sanctification.”

From a Christian perspective sanctification is the process of becoming more and more godlike. The Creator sets those who believe apart from those who don't, not because believers are better; but because believers are obligated to live for the Creator's sake, not their own. In John 17:16-17 Jesus says: ¹⁶ *They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.* ¹⁷ *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* In John 17 Jesus prays to the Creator for his disciples and by extension, for us also. He asks the Creator to *sanctify them* (his disciples) *in truth* then states (God) *your word is truth.*

As verse 16 indicates, it was never Jesus' intention that his followers be separate from the world. To the contrary: he wanted his followers to be profoundly engaged in the world for God's sake – doing good, seeking and preserving life, speaking truth.

Behaviors like “doing good, seeking and preserving life, and speaking truth” make sanctification *multidimensional*. Sanctification is not simply personal piety. It is the dynamic, positive and affirming presence in and engagement of the lives of other people as well as environments.

Historically, Afrikan people have striven for Ujima (unity) and Ubuntu (human dignity and cooperation). These are the African dispositions and practices that make multidimensional sanctification achievable.

We color this period Gold. The Adinkra symbol that typifies this period for us is . It is named *Mmusuyidee* and symbolizes the “presence and spirit of goodness.”

Life: Multidimensional Sanctification
Sermon and Study Series
Ecological Justice and Creation Care
Elder Carvel Bennett: Noonday Teacher
Pastor Lomax: Evening Teacher

Sunday, April 8

Bible Verses: Psalm 37:1-4, 10-11 *Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,² for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. **Trust in the LORD and do good; live in the land and be safe.** Seek your happiness in the LORD, and God will give you your heart's desire. Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.* (NRSV)

Sermon Topic: Living Safely in the Land

Preacher: Pastor Lomax

Sunday, April 15

Bible Verses: Genesis 9:1-17 *God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ²The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life. ⁶Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind. ⁷And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it."⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"**As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.** ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." (NRSV)*

Sermon Topic: God, Humans and the Created Order

Preacher: Pastor Lomax

Wednesday, April 18th and Sunday April 22 (Earth Day)

Biblical Verses: Deuteronomy 11:8-17 ⁸ Keep, then, this entire commandment that I am commanding you today, so that you may have strength to go in and occupy the land that you are crossing over to occupy, ⁹ and so that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ For the land that you are about to enter to occupy is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sow your seed and irrigate by foot like a vegetable garden. ¹¹ But the land that you are crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, ¹² a land that the Lord your God looks after. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

¹³ If you will only heed his every commandment^[b] that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul— ¹⁴ then he^[c] will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; ¹⁵ and he^[d] will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill. ¹⁶ Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshiping them, ¹⁷ for then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit; then you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.

Sermon Topic: TBA

Preacher: Carvel Bennett

Wednesday April 25th and Sunday April 29th

Biblical Verses: Romans 8:19-23 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (NRSV)

Sermon Topic: Human Impacts on God's Creation

Preacher: Pastor Lomax

Wednesday May 2nd and Sunday May 6th

Biblical Verses: Psalm 24 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; ² for he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. ³ Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴ Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. ⁵ They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation ⁶ Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah. ⁷ Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ⁸ Who is

the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah

1 Corinthians 10:26 *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.*

Sermon Topic: The Earth and Everything in it, Belongs to God

Preacher: Pastor Lomax

Wednesday May 9th and Sunday May 13th

Biblical Verses: Isaiah 65:16-18 *Then whoever invokes a blessing in the land shall bless by the God of faithfulness, and whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of faithfulness; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my sight. ¹⁷ For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.*

2nd Peter 3:3-15a ³ *First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died,^[a] all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" ⁵ They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, ⁶ through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. ⁸ But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you,^[b] not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.^[c] ¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening^[d] the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³ But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.*

Sermon Topic: New Heavens and New Earth

Preacher: Pastor Lomax

Resources:

Bredin, Mark. *The Ecology of the New Testament: Creation, Re-Creation, and the Environment* Foreword by Richard Bauckham (Indiana: Inter-Varsity Press), 2012.

Harris, Melanie L. *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths (Ecology and Justice)*. (New York: Orbis), 2017.

Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2014.

Reading the New Testament in the Environmental Age

David Rhoads

Professor of New Testament

Lutheran School of Theology

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Articles/rhoads.html>

Preaching on the Environment

Holmes Rolston, III

Colorado State University, Fort Collins Colorado

<https://dspace.library.colostate.edu/bitstream/handle/10217/37204/Preaching-on-Env.pdf;sequence=1>

Living Faithfully in the Cosmos: Environmental Reflections for Disciples of Christ

Dorothy Jean Weaver

https://a74b3dad-a-62cb3a1a-s-sites.googlegroups.com/site/letallcreationpraise/LivingFaithfullyintheCosmos.pdf?attachauth=ANoY7co4FUV96T4eFDxRsCy5qYR01tI8vWwviyQQFioM07-1KRpfx1F1Wu8TmJ8ChBIkjUV6U3e-Jp8OYJ4u5KzAvQ6GIbJ6gmDg4s3ZICK1dwtDGiMdPAL_KEOOOrJWMZDN0drTc4lzuUDGts69ncSbrIYsNuBbFgIuCZzNvnhd-7pssHcy0DMR3TLiftzrOeaH-tfO2OMablidz8QMWBdacCisgWVfNsvd5FbYZvHBm_DVX7L4OQ6kJsHPXPtiIVq4WluJzlaPz&attredirects=0

Presbyterian Church (USA) Policy Brief

(Excerpted and expanded from the Christian and Citizen Election Year Resource)

<http://www.pcusa.org/washington/christiancitizen/studyguide0908.pdf>

http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf