

Science and Technology Sunday Prayers

February 16, 2014

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, we come before this day in awe of the grandeur and complexity of your creation. We thank you for your gifts of curiosity and analytic minds, and for our eagerness to explore what we do not understand. Be with us now, we pray, as we open ourselves to the unfolding wonder of your creation. Amen.

Prayer of Reflection:

O Stillspeaking God!

You, Transcendent One, create the Helix, the dance of life which builds and keeps creating!

You, Immanent One, create us in in your image,
within that dancing Helix with you and all of life.

You dance through space and time at one with all you have made;
combining, re-combining, making all things new;

You act both IN history and THROUGH linear time...
Past, present and future come together in new steps.

We cannot fully understand, O Ultimate Mystery, but we dance with you through space and time,

Taking a part in your creative work which goes on and on.

On this Science and Technology Sunday,
We covenant with you and with the church in all its settings
to serve you boldly and dynamically, Stillspeaking God,
To join your dance of life, and share in the co-creation of
a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

And to this call we respond:
Amen. Let all the people say:
AMEN!

Prayer of Confession:

Pastor: Amazing God, the more we learn of your creation,
the more we are filled with awe and wonder.

People: Yet sometimes we fear what we do not know.

Pastor: We benefit from many technological advances in our daily living.

**People: Yet we fear that our sophisticated scientific knowledge will cause us
to doubt your role in creation, and even your existence.**

Pastor: Forgive us, we pray, for thinking you are small and irrelevant.

People: Help us not to limit you, but to find your guiding presence and reflection in all that we do not understand.

Assurance of God's Love:

Pastor: God created us in God's own image. At each step into the unknown, God says to us, "Do not be afraid." We are forgiven. Amen.

Opening Prayers for Science and Technology Sunday were written by the Rev. Elizabeth Colton, Pastor of St. Paul Congregational UCC, Oskaloosa, Iowa, for UCC's Worship Ways.

Song Suggestion: *The Universe is Bending in Sing! Prayer and Praise, # 88*

UCC Faith, Science and Technology Sunday

It is with collaboration and theological imagination that many UCC churches are joining with ecumenical and interfaith partners who celebrate "Evolution Weekend" in the month of February connected to the Clergy Letter Project:

The UCC formally designated Faith, Science and Technology Sunday in February 'closest to Darwin's birthday on the 12th that does not conflict with another named Sunday.' So, for example, upcoming *in 2016 it will appear on the UCC Desk Calendar on Sunday, February 7th*. Of course some will celebrate earlier or later in the month. And we wanted to take a broad view to celebrate all the sciences, so the day is designated for **all** sciences and tech, and those who study and teach them.

Advocacy related to science and health and faith, environment, economics, etc, etc. needs to be lifted up far more than once a year; and preaching far more frequently.

The United Church of Christ's decades-long advocacy for engaging faith, science and technology inspired a full year of church wide study with the pastoral letter *A New Dawn Arising: Faith Engaging Science* <http://www.ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive/pdfs/pastoral-letter.pdf>, a powerful meditation inspired by a long time UCC thinktank on science and technology. The pastoral letter can be used as a follow up to worship, and in adult and youth education forums.

Connections between spirituality, science and technology continue to be sparked by the work of the late UCC Physicist, Nobel laureate, and Templeton award winner Charles Townes; the groundbreaking late Ian Barbour --as well as many chemists, tech and medical folks, engineers, neuroscientists, biologists, sustainability and ocean science, to name a few, and those who are passionate about the intersections in the religious imagination! We hope a designated Sunday will inspire more exploration!

"Science and technology is a gift to our religious imagination. It took a while for many in the church to understand, but contrary to what many believe, science and technology is a gift from God. Science does not undermine faith; to the contrary, it is revelatory. Like any other gift that God has given, science can be used to accomplish good or evil. Science can be properly used, misused or abused. It all depends on the motivation and intent of the user. As with all other gifts received, we, the recipients bear the responsibility to choose how we use all the sciences and technologies --to build up, to welcome, to help, to heal, to reflect deeply, and care for God's creation and the world." --The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black