



*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,
and the earth was without form and void*

So begins the creation story we hear most often,

which goes on to tell of God creating everything that is by God's words alone.

Less often, we hear the story we read today, of God creating the first human –

adam in Hebrew, the earth creature, formed from the *Adamah*, the earth.

And when we do, we are often rushing on the get to the creation of Eve,

and then the story of a snake in a tree and the disruption of creation.

But today we are going to linger right here, with this powerful image of a God

who reaches into the soil of the earth and gets God's hands dirty,

creating a body as an artist sculpts clay –

and then breathes God's own breath, God's own Spirit, into this body
to create a living being.

This is such a tender story of creation.

There is such a feeling of hope, of care, in the way God creates this first human.

I love this image by Jack Baumgartner because it portrays a God full of creative energy and power – and also because of the tenderness of the image.

Do you see, not only the breath moving between them,

but the tears that fall from God's eyes onto the face of the adam?

Such longing, such hope in this image of God creating the first human creature.



The story of Genesis 2 tells the story of the interdependence of God's creation.

God creates the human earth-creature from the earth,

and sets them the task of caring for the land.

And very quickly, God realizes that it is not good for this earth-creature to be alone.

God is in relationship with them –

but God knows they also need others like them.

So God will go on to create all the other living creatures, the animals,

but none is quite right.

Then God will create another human, and it is only here that the earth-creature *adam*
becomes a man – the Hebrew *ish* – and a woman – *ishah*.

Here begins the human community,
where humans are intimately connected to other another
and to the creation – the garden – where they live and work.



Today we are beginning a new sermon series called “I’ve been meaning to ask...,”

which focuses on this very need for community and connection
that is hard-wired into us.

In an age where isolation and loneliness are near epidemic,
where social media and AI offer alternatives to real human connection,
this series explores –

What does it mean for us to be in relationship with one another?

What does the church have to say about building relationships?

The series title, *I’ve been meaning to ask ...* carries a message of thoughtfulness in it,
for we utter these words when we’ve been thinking of someone.

I’ve been meaning to ask ...

How is your family?

How did your test go?

Did you get that promotion?

How was your vacation?

Such questions express care and hope for connection,
the way we carry people in our hearts,
or the curiosity which comes with new acquaintances.

The first question we ask together is, “Where are you from?” –
often a question we ask when getting to know one another.

Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, another series creator, shares this story:

“In the middle of the November 2020 US election season, my next-door neighbor walked out to his front yard one day while I was planting shrubs in mine. Political signs for different candidates loomed like silent silhouettes behind us. Though we’ve shared lots of small talk over the years, on this day, my neighbor leaned on the fence that divides us and, after complimenting my rhododendrons, asked, ‘So, do you have family in the area?’ I talked about my cousins who live nearby, about my parents who quit their jobs to move to the mountains as newlyweds, about the many generations before me who had spent summers here, making it a temporary and permanent home. And he told me about his large family, the many cousins and siblings who have called these same mountains home. After a while, he went back into his house and I

returned to my shrubs. Our conversation did not unite us or reconcile our differing worldviews. But he essentially said to me, 'I've been meaning to ask. . . where are you from?' And through curiosity and listening, we remembered that we are born of the same dust to which we will one day return.

This series alone will not heal our deep divisions or unify us in perfect harmony. But, perhaps one question at a time, we will remember how to stay curious, to keep asking, to keep listening, and to keep seeking the face of God in each other."



Where are you from?

The story of Scripture begins by telling us that we are from God.

Genesis chapter one tells us we made in God's image.

Genesis chapter two tells us we're literally filled with the breath of God.

God is the source of life and God's breath, God's Spirit, fills each one of us.

This is true for us – and for all other people as well.

Our neighbors and everyone we meet throughout the day.

The people whose names fill the news

and unnamed people whose stories and images of suffering surround us.

Immigrants and ICE agents, unhoused people and billionaires,

all shades of skin, all sexual orientations and genders,

all languages and cultures –

all are created from dust and filled with God's breath of life.

How does that truth inform the way we live in the world –

the way we understand our interdependence with one another and creation?

How does that understanding of interdependence affect

the way we use our resources

and the way we vote

and the things we post on social media

and the way we treat strangers throughout our daily lives?

In the coming weeks we will explore ideas of connection and care for one another.

We will share images, poems, and short videos about community and care.

We begin today with an ice cream social following worship,

where we will be invited to meet new people,

or have new conversations with old friends.

I hope you will join us, after worship and throughout these weeks,

as we explore what it means to be created for interdependence,

for connection, for community.

Created to be in relationship, not only with God, but with one another.

I've been meaning to ask – where are you from?

It matters.

You matter.

Amen.