God form in us your love of the world. Amen.

Job helps me know that loving the earth—and loving God, for that matter—is not some automatic, casual, shoulder shrugging posture. Job’s safari with God helps us know that loving the earth and loving God is a bold, cataclysmic, life-changing experience. Climate change is making increasingly clear that the earth needs for us to have this experience.

I am afraid that when it comes to humans living in creation most people know only one word from the Bible. DOMINION. And while that word is in fact in the Bible, in this critical juncture in the life of our planet it is essential that we hear other words. And that we hear the Bible in serious discussion about how we live in our home. If you were in chapel on Monday, Dr. Pederson got us off to a great start. She quoted Genesis... she also quoted Colossians and the Psalms and Jonah. Whenever we think the Bible has only one word, it’s essential to open it up again.

I am more than a little haunted by my very first class in biblical interpretation. We started with Genesis 1 and our professor drew a pyramid on the board. Day one was light and darkness, 2 separating land and water, 3 plants 4 stars and sun and moon, 5 animals, fish and birds. And then the sixth day, God’s crowning creation was the creation of humanity, male and female in the image of God to have dominion over the creation. Even though my professor wrote the book on how dominion does not mean domination, it means care, nurture and responsibility, there was something about picturing us above all the rest that kept us from even hearing it, much less living it.

When you heard the text this morning, did you feel like humanity is at the top of the pyramid, the crowning creation? Or did you hear God challenging Job’s place, our place amid all the mysteries God has created?
God takes Job on a safari—to see the mysteries of the universe. God pellets Job with one question after another. Does Job know where the hail is stored? Or who tells the dawn to rise? Or by what power a hawk soars?

This is another account of creation. . . and the only mention of humans is to ask them to think about their place: what can they do to get wild animals to obey? And what do they know about light or birth or boundaries of chaos? And God’s favorite question of humans: where were you? Where are you?

I want to offer 2 ways we can hear this passage.

The first is God putting Job and us in our place. . . and it’s emphatically NOT on top of a pyramid or pedestal. After 35 chapters of Job screaming at God, he is silenced by awareness that he lives IN creation, utterly dependent on sun, rain, seasons, life over which he has no domination. The end of the book of Job is controversial because it doesn’t “solve” all the questions about suffering. It doesn’t even solve the question about our place in the universe. It certainly asks us to get down and look at it.

Most any day in the news it’s like God is taking us on safari—and whether it’s measured by global temperature or ferocious storms or extreme wild fires or innumerable extinctions, the question is the same: What are you doing people? Frankly claiming to be the crowning creation, living dominion, rings a little hollow.

The first thing way to hear this text is to be put in our place. AND there is a second way to hear it.

This encounter, Job and God, is NOT Job’s condemnation, it is his vindication. It is not his doom or his death, it is his healing. How is that for Biblical imagination? What if being put in our place is not damnation but new life?

When I worked through this text, trying to think in new ways about our place in the earth and what God is telling us, I was reminded of Parker Palmer, who described devastating depression as gravity that brought him back to earth. Listen to his description:
But something in me knew that down, to the ground, was the direction of wholeness for me, and something in me allowed that image to begin its slow work of healing.

I began to understand that I had been living an ungrounded life, living at an altitude that was inherently unsafe. The problem with living at high altitude is simple: When we slip, as we always do, we have a long, long way to fall, and the landing may kill us. The grace of being pressed down to the ground is also simple: When we slip and fall it is not fatal, and it is possible to get back up.

The altitude at which I was then living had been achieved by at least four means. First, I had been trained as an intellectual not only to think—an activity I greatly value—but to live largely in my head, the place in the human body farthest from the ground. Second, I had embraced a form of Christian faith devoted less to the experience of God than to abstractions about God, a fact that now baffles me: How did so many disembodied concepts emerge from a tradition whose central commitment is to “the Word become flesh?”

Third, my attitude had been achieved by my ego, an inflated ego that led me to think more of myself than was warranted in order to mask my fear that I was less than I should have been. Finally, it had been achieved by my ethic, a distorted ethic that led me to live by images of who I ought to be, or what I ought to do, rather than by insight into my own reality, into what was true and possible and life-giving for me.

Depression was indeed the hand of a friend trying to press me down to ground on which it was safe to stand—the ground of my own truth, my own nature, with its complex mix of limits and gifts, liability and assets, darkness and light.

If climate change is gravity knocking us off our perches and bringing us back to earth, I lay my hands on my lips. My hope is that our lives will be fed by many words of Scripture—about humans living in and with creation—forming God’s
love for the earth in us. I offer Job, God bringing him and us down to ground level—to appreciate and marvel and heal.

God form in us your love of the world. Amen.
Holy Communion
Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Prelude  Praeludium in E Major
by Vincent Lubeck
Marilyn Schempp, organ

Welcome/announcements

Invocation

Confession/Forgiveness
Sisters and brothers, we come to the God of mercy mindful that the world
upon which we all depend is suffering. The sacred creation given to us, the
immense beauty surrounding us, the complex web of life supporting us has
been broken, not only by others, but by our own hand. Let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and one another. (silence)

Loving God, you have placed us as stewards within your creation. Instead,
we have abused your gifts. The beauty and abundance of the earth is falling
apart under us. God of all life ... We confess our part in a broken world.

You have multiplied your people beyond counting and have provided enough
for all. But we have poisoned the waters, exhausted the soils and polluted
the air. By our own hand we have spoiled the life-giving resources upon
which we all depend. God of all life ... We confess our part in a broken
world.

As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and
tend to the sick. Instead, we have taken the wealth of the world into our
own houses and left your children in hunger and need. God of all life...
We confess our part in a broken world.

As surely as the rain comes forth to water the earth, God’s mercy comes as a
gift to abundantly and freely renew the world. The same God who created
the cosmos and raised Jesus from death to life forgives, frees, and calls you
to love one another and world anew. Amen.

Prayer
The eyes of all look to you, O God. Turn our hearts and minds to your open
hand that provides for every living thing, so that we may know your
generosity and participate in the healing and restoration of all that you
have made, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Copyright, Dakota Road Music, 2011. Used by permission.
How Great Thou Art vv. 1-2 ELW #856


Sermon: Put in our Place or Job’s Safari Pr. Paul

Hymn: Light Dawns on a Weary World ELW #726


Put in our Place or Job’s Safari Pr. Paul

Light Dawns on a Weary World ELW #726

Scripture


Sermon: Put in our Place or Job’s Safari Pr. Paul

Holy Communion

Dialogue

L: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.
L: Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them to the Lord.
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Distribution Vocalise by Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
Augustana Orchestra directed by Christopher Stanichar

Blessing

Benediction

Postlude Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J. S. Bach (arr. Isaac)
Augustana Orchestra

Hymn

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

TOUGH QUESTIONS WITH PASTOR ANN 2 is happening tomorrow - Thursday, October 9 at 7pm in Tuve Hall. This is an opportunity to anonymously ask some of your most pressing questions about faith and life, and share deep conversation with your peers. No topic is off limits. Snacks will be abundant! All are welcome!

CONEXIONES, a partnership program between our Augustana Chapel and the Hispanic congregation of Pueblo de Dios, is looking for volunteers to help make autumn-themed baked goods with kids on October 12 at 1:30-3:30pm (NO SPANISH NECESSARY). The cookies will be sold as part of a fundraiser to help these kids attend college. For more information, please contact Jordan Dobrowski at jdobrowski11@ole.augie.edu or (952) 994-2308.

Join us to serve at the SIOUX FALLS BANQUET on Tuesday, October 14 at 5:15 pm! The Sioux Falls Banquet is a local soup kitchen dedicated to providing food and fellowship for its guests. Sign up in the Narthex on the yellow paper through October 7th!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY BLESSING Celebrating your birthday in October? Join us in chapel this Friday, October 10th, 10 am for a special blessing.

WORSHIP AT ST DYSMAS: An opportunity to worship and fellowship at the South Dakota State Penitentiary the evening of November 6th. Sign-up forms are due October 17th. Come see Patty in the Chapel Office with Driver’s ID in hand to get signed up! Truly a safe, eye-opening experience!

Come listen to one campus’s unique CAMPAIGN FOR AWARENESS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, and then participate in a discussion with Beth Torkelson, Assistant Dean of Students, and Beth McDuffie, Adjunct Professor of Religion, about sexuality at Augustana: what’s important, what’s problematic, and what simply needs to be talked about. Bring your questions! Thursday, October 16, at 7pm in the 3-in-1 room.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Fri, Oct 10 Worship Service, 10 am, Natasha Wegner & October Birthday Blessing
Sun, Oct 12 Worship Service, 11 am, Outreach team Catholic Mass, 8 pm
Mon, Oct 13 Worship Service, 10 am, Pastor Ann & Flute Choir
Wed, Oct 15 Worship Service, 10 am, Carrie Hall & New Squids on the Dock

Augustana (SD) Campus Ministry
CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

TOUGH QUESTIONS WITH PASTOR ANN 2 is happening tomorrow - Thursday, October 9 at 7pm in Tuve Hall. This is an opportunity to anonymously ask some of your most pressing questions about faith and life, and share deep conversation with your peers. No topic is off limits. Snacks will be abundant! All are welcome!

CONEXIONES, a partnership program between our Augustana Chapel and the Hispanic congregation of Pueblo de Dios, is looking for volunteers to help make autumn-themed baked goods with kids on October 12 at 1:30-3:30pm (NO SPANISH NECESSARY). The cookies will be sold as part of a fundraiser to help these kids attend college. For more information, please contact Jordan Dobrowski at jdobrowski11@ole.augie.edu or (952) 994-2308.

Join us to serve at the SIOUX FALLS BANQUET on Tuesday, October 14 at 5:15 pm! The Sioux Falls Banquet is a local soup kitchen dedicated to providing food and fellowship for its guests. Sign up in the Narthex on the yellow paper through October 7th!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY BLESSING Celebrating your birthday in October? Join us in chapel this Friday, October 10th, 10 am for a special blessing.

WORSHIP AT ST DYSMAS: An opportunity to worship and fellowship at the South Dakota State Penitentiary the evening of November 6th. Sign-up forms are due October 17th. Come see Patty in the Chapel Office with Driver's ID in hand to get signed up! Truly a safe, eye-opening experience!

Come listen to one campus’s unique CAMPAIGN FOR AWARENESS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, and then participate in a discussion with Beth Torkelson, Assistant Dean of Students, and Beth McDuffie, Adjunct Professor of Religion, about sexuality at Augustana: what’s important, what’s problematic, and what simply needs to be talked about. Bring your questions! Thursday, October 16, at 7pm in the 3-in-1 room.