

## *Star-Gazing*

September 13, 2009 – Kirkland Congregational Church UCC

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**SING:** What a mighty God we have! What a mighty God we have! What a mighty God, what a mighty God, what a mighty God we have! Let us sing and praise the Lord! Let us sing and praise the Lord! Let us sing and praise, let us sing and praise, let us sing and praise the Lord! --  
A Zimbabwe chorus

### **REFLECTION – part 1**

Aren't these photos, mostly from the Hubble Telescope amazing?! Their names are amazing... the whirlpool galaxy, just off the end of the handle of the Big Dipper... 31 million light years away! A Spiral Galaxy with a central eye... 50 million light years away! The Trifid Nebula 3,000 light years away... the Horsehead Nebula only 400 light years away... And the immensity of it all...the one-armed spiral galaxy that spreads 100,000 light years from end to end, and from earth is 41 million light years away. Imagine how many millions of generations of space travelers it would take to travel to such distant corners of God's creation. Wow!

How can we but gaze "in awe and wonder" at God's good creation.

### **Genesis 1:1-19 (selections)**

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light....And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters....God called the dome Sky...And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; ...and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth."... And it was so. God made the two great lights...and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth..And God saw that it was good.**

### **REFLECTION – part 2**

One dark evening in Zimbabwe, after the sun has set, Tod bundles me and our two kids into our little pick-up truck. He mysteriously drives us out the Dombodema Road, away from our little town, away from the few lights, away even from the cooking fires. About 2 miles out, where the baboons and warthogs begin to reside, he stops the truck, right in the middle of the road – not lots of traffic! Then he switches off the headlights, plunging us into blackness – the kind where you can not see your hand in front of your face. The children squeal. Tod opens the door and leads us from the cab, holding hands to the flatbed of the pick-up where we lie down and peer up. The heavens open up above us, bursting into a shimmering canopy of light. Then Tod pulss out binoculars and passes them around. The moon's craters and mountains jump into focus, and the distant stars appear that much closer. We gaze in awe and wonder at God's amazing dome of creation.

God, like Tod on that starry night in Zimbabwe, invites us on a journey into un-knowing, into mystery. God invites us into a risky activity, stepping beyond the brightly lit solid ground on which we stand into a world of complete trust and faith in that which is invisible to the eye. The wise fox in *The Little Prince* aptly states, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye." God invites us to dream of possibilities beyond our personal galaxy, beyond our familiar world of church, family and community. To envision a realm in which no one is hungry, no one is cold, no one is alone, no one is marginalized or hated, a universe in which stars expand into Red Giants and collapse into "Black holes." To employ a new lens, like the Hubble telescope, in our seeing and understanding.

**Psalm 145:3-5 NRSV**

**Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; God's greatness is unsearchable.  
One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.  
On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.**

**Reflection Part 3:**

Christ invites us to meditate on these things, to look both inward and outward, into the mystery of our ground of being and the wonder of human life, and to look outward into the mystery of the ever-expanding universe, always being open to the possibility of transformation – of ourselves and of our “universe.” Paul writes to the Corinthians:

*Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy....Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4: 1-2,5 NRSV)*

We can be grateful to those stewards of God's mysteries who have guided us, who found us where we were and offered us new lenses, new perspectives – a new telescope or pair of binoculars. Grateful to those who have seemingly plunged us into darkness only to bring to light the things once hidden in the darkness, sometimes with a vivid new brilliance. Grateful to those who, like the scientists using the Hubble telescope, invite us to look into the mystery and unknown expanses of God and our universe.

And we, as stewards of creation, can share our awe and wonder with our children and with those who have lost touch with the magnificence and glory of God's creation.

Let all the people say together “Praise the Lord!” PRAISE THE LORD! Amen. AMEN.

**Psalm 104:1-4 NRSV**

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
O LORD my God, you are very great.  
You are clothed with honor and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment.  
You stretch out the heavens like a tent, you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,  
you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind,  
you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

How can we but gaze “in awe and wonder” at God's good creation and do all we can to protect our little corner of it from harm and danger?

**Psalm 113:1-9 NRSV**

Praise the LORD!... Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time on and forevermore.  
From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised.  
The LORD is high above all nations, and God's glory above the heavens.  
Who is like the LORD our God,  
who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?...  
Praise the LORD!

**Prayer:** God, we praise and glorify your name, for you are the creator of all that has been, all that is, and all that shall be. Open our minds and hearts as we strive to be worthy servants of Christ and stewards of your mysteries. Amen.