



VIA CREATIVA 2023 SEEDS OF CELEBRATION: DEEP WATERS

12/24/22

Deep Waters: of Christ

"How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given." In the quiet of the night, a baby cries. In the quiet of the night, angels sing. In the quiet of the night, love is born. A quiet joy. A wondrous gift. O Come, let us adore him.

Luke 2:1-20 (The Message)

About that time, Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel. There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,

Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

1/1/23

Deep Waters: of Kwanzaa

The word Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza" or first fruits, referring to the agricultural harvest festivals that are found throughout Africa. Celebrating the ideals of unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economies, purpose, creativity and faith, Kwanzaa is a 7-day celebration of African values.

“Unite My Brothers and Sisters” by Sonia Dixon

Here we are on distant shores
Searching for love ones lost
Knowing their pain and suffering
Was an ocean of love lost.
Cant you see the sun is shining
Bringing energies of love all
Come my people unite together
Wake up stand up be the love for all
The bells are ringing it is time
To answer the call of one
Get together my brothers and sisters
It's time you must unite as one
Unite Unite it's time it's time
You must unite as one
Hold together brothers and sisters
It's time to unite as one.

“Kwanzaa” by Alfonso Siverls

it is the light
of candles
that shines brightly
after a long journey
of darkness,
that empowers my soul
and proclaims my place
in the culture of humanity

it is the sounds that vibrate
across the earth with an echo
that whisper and sings my song

it is the smell of nameless souls
long gone, that was cast out
of the family of man, whose scent
dwells beneath my skin

it is the taste of
the pain of yesterday, with
the flavor of hope for tomorrow
proclaiming here I stand

it is the touching of my heart
with your heart
in joyful celebration
of the sacrifice of our ancestors

1/8/23

Deep Waters: of Epiphany

Following a star, a sign, a light, a dream, a message, they set out across the desert. Being called requires bringing – and offering – your gifts. And so the astrologists set out to follow the call. Following the call

also meant getting in trouble with the political powers, as it so often does ... What star is shining for you in this new year? Will you follow?

Matt. 2:1-12 (The Message)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?” They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land,

no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader

who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

Rumi:

If anyone had once, even once, glimpsed Your Face of Lightening,

They’d spend every second stammering Your Praise.

Each moment, like the angels, they’d offer their heart to Your Fire,

Each moment, like the angels, they’d be reborn in You.

1/15/23

Deep Waters: of MLK and Indigenous Wisdom

Amos 5:21—24

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts, I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles of racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its Indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it.

1/22/23

Deep Waters: of Creativity

Hafiz: "Venus Just Asked Me"

Perhaps

For just one minute out of the day

It may be of value to torture yourself

With thoughts like,

"I should be doing

A hell of a lot more with my life than I am

Cause I'm so damned talented"

But remember,

For just one minute of the day.

With all the rest of your time-

It would be best to try

Looking upon yourself more as God does.

For God knows

Your true royal nature.

God is never confused

And can see Only Godself in you.

My dear,

Venus just leaned down and asked me

To tell you a secret, to confess

She's just a mirror who has been stealing

Your light and music for centuries

She knows as does Hafiz,

You are the sole heir to

The King.

Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

1/29/23

Deep Waters: of Brigid/Imbolc

Isaiah 9:2.

The people who abide in darkness have seen a great light, those who live in the time of deep darkness, on them the light has shone.

Caitlin Matthews - "A Blessing for Hearth Keepers"

Brigid of the mantle, encompass us

Lady of the Lambs, protect us

Keeper of the hearth, kindle us

Beneath your mantle, gather us

And restore us to memory

Luke 11: 33-36 from The Message

And Jesus said: "No one lights a lamp, then hides it in a drawer. It's put on a lamp stand so those entering the room have light to see where they're going. Your eye is a lamp, lighting up your whole body. If you live wide eyed in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. Keep your eyes open, your lamp burning, so you don't get musty and murky. Keep your life as well-lit as your best lighted room."

2/5/23

Deep Waters: of Unknowing

So much is hidden. Life is full of mystery. The clouds of unknowing can feel heavy like a blanket of fog. But maybe that blanket is a swaddling cloth; maybe we are being held in the arms of a power until we can grow into the wisdom we need to receive the inscrutable power of love.

"Prayer" by Thomas Merton

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you

does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though

I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Matthew 13:33

Again Jesus asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

2/12/23

Deep Waters: of Gifts

Gospel of Thomas, Logion 70:

Jesus said, "That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have within you will kill you if you do not have it within you."

Romans 12:4-8

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

2/19/23

Deep Waters: of Renewal

Psalm 51:10-12

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2/26/23

Deep Waters: of Harmony

Romans 12: 9-18

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

3/5/23

Deep Waters: of Sacred Feminine

John 4:4-30

To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. He came into Sychar, a Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was still there. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon.

A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, "Would you give me a drink of water?" (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.)

The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

The woman said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so I won't ever get thirsty, won't ever have to come back to this well again!"

He said, "Go call your husband and then come back."

"I have no husband," she said.

"That's nicely put: 'I have no husband.' You've had five husbands, and the man you're living with now isn't even your husband. You spoke the truth there, sure enough."

"Oh, so you're a prophet! Well, tell me this: Our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?"

"Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of salvation is made available through the Jews. But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter.

"It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."

The woman said, "I don't know about that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we'll get the whole story."

"I am he," said Jesus. "You don't have to wait any longer or look any further."

Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked. They couldn't believe he was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were all thinking, but their faces showed it.

The woman took the hint and left. In her confusion she left her water pot. Back in the village she told the people, "Come see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah?" And they went out to see for themselves.

3/12/23

Deep Waters: of Spring

3/19/23

Deep Waters: of Earth

Psalm 23

Holy One, you are my shepherd, I want nothing more.

You let me lie down in green meadows;

You lead me beside restful waters: you refresh my soul.

You guide me to lush pastures, for the sake of your Name.

Even if I'm surrounded by shadows of Death,

I fear no danger, for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff, they give me courage.
You spread a table for me in the presence of my enemies,
And you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows!
Only goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in your house, God, for days without end.

“When I Am Among the Trees” by Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, “Stay awhile.”
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, “It's simple,” they say,
“and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine.”