

Creation 2C ~ Fauna  
Peace, Seattle  
June 20, 2010 epk  
Psalm 29, Luke 8:22-25

## **STORM**

**ERIK:** *Explanation of four congregational responses - signs (wind, rain, thunder, lightening).*

**ELDON:** We have been moving through a season during these Sundays of June – not a weather cycle season, but a season that calls us to an awareness of creation itself. And we've designated these June Sunday themes as **Ocean, Fauna, Storm, and Universe**, experimenting with some different formulas of worship, alternate formats for preaching, calling ourselves to a vocation of care for creation.

**Today's theme, storm, is more complex, perhaps.** When we think of storms we're not inclined to think of the beauties of creation, the delights of discovery and fascination with the natural order of things. Storms are more terrifying than beautiful!

**ERIK: (Creation)** **There was a wind, a primal storm that swept across the face of the waters,** separating light from darkness, earth from the void, so that life could emerge on the earth, so that human life could evolve to care for that earth and all its forms of life.

The wind was the very Spirit of God, hovering so that the formless void and the darkness gave structure for life – the great moment of creation itself. **(Wind, rain, thunder, lightening)**

**ELDON:** Storm is about the natural disorder of creation! It's about chaos and crisis, danger and power. The wind, the rain, the cyclone and hurricane – these are natural events that instill fear and panic in a human being. We may well stand in awe in the face of a storm, with the rain in our face and the wind lashing at our body, but it's an awe that stuns us – it takes our breath away. In each Biblical reference to the storms, the human response is the same – fear!

**ERIK: (Moses at the Red Sea)** With the armies of Egypt at their rear and the depths of the Red Sea ahead of them, God's people escaped slavery only to find themselves facing immanent dangers of slaughter or drowning. Terror struck the people – but a strong wind came from off the desert, blowing all day and all night with a force that dried the sea itself, creating a dry pathway across which the people could escape as promised. The violent and the arrogant perished – the faithful recognized the promise of God, that “the Glory of the Lord” might be revealed. **(Wind)**

**ELDON:** Breath, wind, and storm are all the same word in the languages of the Bible – the invisible force, the flow we cannot control, cannot long endure, and cannot escape. Biblical writers talk about this sense of the storm often, particularly when they themselves are in a situation of powerlessness, chaos, and disarray or confusion. In those situations, they write what we have come to call Wisdom literature – a form of writing that bring order to chaos, insight to panic, a sense of the future to situations of bondage or oppression, wisdom to folly.

**ERIK: (Flood)** In a time of flagrant disregard for the ordering of life by the law of God, Noah and his family took refuge in a makeshift boat that was said to contain every specie of the earth, every creature from whom new life could emerge. The torrent came, unstopped wind and rain for 40 days and nights, a storm that utterly obliterated all the earth in a terrible deluge of the judgment of God.

But then the storm ended, dry land appeared, and creation was given a new earth, a new day – and humankind walked free to start all over again. (Rain)

**ELDON:** The tumult of the storm is as if the earth itself is calling us to hear! Listen, O Israel! Listen, My People! Listen, My Disciples! Listen! Hear the sound of chaos, but believe beyond chaos – beyond the storm, the tumult – in the raging of the wind there is a blowing of the spirit! With each note of destruction, there is a note of deliverance  
With each tumult of judgment there is the promise of renewal  
With each event of chaos, there is a voice that calls us to a new structure for life itself

**ERIK:** (Crucifixion/Resurrection) In the abject darkness of that Good Friday, as the words “It is finished!” were spoken, the storm set off a cataclysm of earthquake, darkness, and terror. Then...**Silence** – not that the storm had ceased, for the work of God had not ended in the terror of that storm. Quietly, at the dawning of a new creation, in fear and despair, they came to the tomb expecting to find a corpse. Instead they heard that an ancient promise had been fulfilled, that this is the first day of a new creation – and we enter it as a new humanity. (Thunder, Lightning)

**ELDON:** The storm offers us that thin line between what has been and what lies before us. The message of the storm is that the old is being blown away – a new day has come! You can't go back to where you were – the wind has washed out the pathways that you used to find familiar and habitual. You're to find your way into a new world – the wondrous world of creation after the storm – washed as wet as baptism itself, forever renewed, forever calling us to a new place from which to see ourselves, our neighbor, our world.

**ERIK:** (Pentecost) Locked in a crowded room, filled with vague reveries of who they were and who they were called to become, the disciple community watched and waited, terrified of facing a world that hated them with a message that was incomprehensible. The wind began, and tongues like lightening bolts rested above each head. **It's that Spirit again! Like a rush of violent wind!** And they could suddenly speak all the voices of humanity, and the message was clear. (Wind, lightening)

**ELDON:** We are told by numerous scientific voices that our planet is gradually warming. Most commonly, this alarming trend is attributable to our glutinous burning of fossil fuels. As the earth warms, the storms of our world become more frequent and violent, particularly in tropical areas. As storms intensify, life on this planet will change.

While we may not be able to turn back the clock, there is a moment of decision before us. We may be able to stem the tide, but we may not be able to continue the luxuries of private automobiles, central heating, and air-conditioned comforts.  
We are coming to a new day.

**ERIK:** (Paul's Deliverance) Paul was in jail, condemned for inciting riots and disturbing the status quo. But he appealed to a distant emperor for justice, so was shipped in bonds to Rome for that Tyrant's final decree. En route, a storm emerged on the sea, terrifying everyone on the ship – except Paul. He had read the ancient stories about storms and heard the ancient promises about deliverance. Though the crew panicked, Paul shared his bread, gave thanks to God, and found yet another place from which to proclaim that strange gospel. (Thunder)

**ELDON:** There's a parallel between the storms of creation and the storms of our inner lives. The images of the inner storms are more likely to be those of bondage, imprisonment, guilt, poverty of spirit, paralysis of woundedness and oppression. We can define these by the psychology of the human heart, the cultures of negativity and prejudice within which we live, or the powers of injustice and oppression that tyrannize our world – storm, all of them. Yet standing at that thin line, what do we see, what are we called to understand, how are we called to act.

**ERIK: (Jesus' Calming the Storm)** DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND! he asked those who wakened him in their terror at the storm. HAVE YOU NO WISDOM THAT CALLS FOR FAITHFULNESS! AS IF THE STORM ISN'T BAD ENOUGH, CAN'T YOU SEE BEYOND IT, THROUGH IT, TO A NEW DAY?

**ELDON:** **And the question of the Wisdom writer of the Scripture is the same:**

Do we succumb to the chaos, victims of the raging storms of life? -  
Or do we move forward, through the storm, to a vision of hopefulness,  
a new ordering of our lives, a new structure for hope in our world?