

**Sermon Outline - Sun, April 14, 2024 –**  
(Psalm 95:1-7; Ephesian 5:9-19)

**Overview** – Shout out to everyone who came to our songwriting workshop. We are looking forward to more opportunities for creative practice. This is Earth Month! In the season of Eastertide

**Exegesis – Telling the story**

- The Psalms Scripture is where we will focus our reflection
- The Ephesians Scripture comes from the Orthodox lectionary
- Our orthodox siblings are still in Lent – They are the older tradition – precolonial and more aligned with the practice of the early church.
- The Orthodox community will celebrate Easter on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> - On Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will participate in a second Good Friday with the Coptic Orthodox Church to build connections and bridges between the Western tradition from which we descend and the Eastern Orthodox tradition
- We are in the season of Eastertide – 6 weeks after Easter when we celebrate the powerful gift that Easter is for us all.

**Key Points –**

1. Jesus' redemption is just for us, but for a transformed world.

There is nothing wrong with trying to make a connection with God, but if it means that we limit the scope of God then it becomes a problem in terms of our faith and our practice. We should not try to make God smaller, we should be opening our minds to the massiveness of God.

2. Our core calling is to be in the “right relationship” with each other AND our non-human siblings

We are not in control of the world, but we are in control of how we relate to the people and beings around us. First, we treat God like the amazing being that God is. Then our responsibility is to treat each other like children of God and the rest of the beings like God's creation on whom we depend. It is really simple and extremely hard, especially in the structures we have created.

3. Worship and creativity help us to center God and imagine the world we are called to lean into.

Starting with a clear sense of who God is, the bigness and amazingness of God – humbles us and tapping into the immeasurable creativity of God helps us to imagine the world God calls us to. It is so much better and more beautiful than how we are living now. Spending time in the natural world that God created gives a glimpse into what God has done and where God is leading us.

**Reflection Questions**

1. How big is the God that you imagine –is God mostly concerned about your life, mostly focused on the movements of humans, or an abundant creator who cares about the movement of the entire planet and the galaxies beyond here? What can you do to expand your vision of God?
2. What is your theology of “right relationship”? Is this a familiar concept to you? How do you feel called to be in a relationship with other humans (even the ones you don't easily like)? How can you be in the “right relationship” with non-human beings around you?
3. Creativity and Nature Challenge – Over these next two weeks, commit to spending at least 10 minutes a day actively being in nature and/or spending time in creative practice (listening to a song outside, sketching a flower or tree, taking photos of beautiful things). How would you integrate that into your life for 16 consecutive days?