

**Lent Midweek Creation Gen 2: 4-7**  
**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

**March 4, 2009**  
**Pastor Laura Ziehl**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. This evening we begin a 5 week journey together from the dust of Ash Wednesday to the empty tomb of Easter Sunday. I have taken a poll and asked many people here at Bethlehem, "what is your favorite part of Lent." One person said Maundy Thursday. Several people said Ash Wednesday. A few people said Good Friday, many said Holden Evening Prayer. But the vast majority of you said soup suppers. Just so we know why we are all here.

Lent is a wilderness journey. I picture a traveler on the road. His favorite shoes covered in the dust of the road and her heart full of the journey. Wilderness, I believe, is a part of God's intention for us. In solitude we often find ourselves, and in silence, we have always found God.

Tonight let us return to the beginning, to the moment of our creation. To a day, the Bible tells us, when no plant of the field was yet on the earth. No herb of the field had yet sprung forth. The earth was empty, except of God. This is the second of the two creation accounts. Both tell the same story, but their focus is different. In this account the earth is empty when humankind is created. And the Lord God, as he walked upon the earth, got down on one knee. He bent to the earth he had just made, and from the dust of the ground, from the clay at the water's edge; God began to form a child -- his child. God formed arms and legs and finally a face; a face which reflected the face of God. But it was stone cold. And into the child's nostrils, says the text, God breathed the breath of life. The ruah, in the Hebrew. Ruah means the spirit and presence and breath of God. Do you feel the truth of such a creation in you? Do you feel the weight of the clay of which you are made and the breath of the Spirit both at the same time. Both are part of who we were created to be. Lent is a time to acknowledge the weight that clings so closely, as it says in Hebrews, but not to dwell there. Lent is the time now to dwell in God; to take stock of who we are and then to give thanks for the breath of God in us.

The amazing thing about the story of creation is not that it happened, but that it happens. That you and I are created and shaped by the hand of God, just as Adam and Eve were. That you and I have breathed into us the Spirit of God, and that such a thing, is true for us tonight. Tonight God is breathing hope into us. Tonight, the prayers we offer are heard. Tonight, it is true that we are made of dust, for we can feel it, but tonight it is also true that God lives in us. This life of ours, as Rob Bell likes to say, is a life between the trees. We are people of dust and earth living between the tree of the garden of Eden and the promised tree in the new Jerusalem, when God will make all things new.

We are living in the time between the times and to just such a dusty place did Jesus come and lay his salvation in the midst of us all. Jesus did not wait until all would be made new. He waited until our need of him was great.

God's Spirit intercedes in our lives now. Jesus lays his healing hand in our lives now. And God breathes life into us now. Dusty we certainly are, but we are the beloved dust of God. And the life in us is of his making. Amen