

May 22, 2022

12. A New Creation —

Joel 2:18–26; Romans 8:19–22, NRSV

The earlier parts of Joel describe ecological deconstruction. The writer calls the people to lament that there is not enough grain or wine for the priests to make their sacred offerings (1:8–9). “The fields are devastated, the ground mourns; for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails” (1:10). This trio of food types in the Old Testament repeatedly signifies the fullness—or loss—of creation’s abundance for humans.

Their lament is not an endpoint but is meant to provoke introspection leading to repentance that will in turn, perhaps, win God’s merciful restoration of the right working of creation—when the people have returned to a right relationship with God. Through soul-wrenching worship, the people reestablish right connections (2:12–17).

A 50-year-old climate activist died by self-immolation on the steps of the US Supreme Court Building last month on Earth Day.* He used fire to sacrifice his life, demanding through his ultimate lament that people pay attention to creation care. His extreme action speaks of extreme despair that humans will do enough, fast enough, to make a difference.

- With honest-to-creation-care worship of the Creator as a start, what creation-care acts most compel your attention?

—Greg Bowman, GMBowman33@gmail.com

*Chris Cameron, “[Climate Activist Dies After Setting Himself on Fire at Supreme Court](#),” *New York Times*, April 24, 2022. “A friend described the actions of Wynn Bruce, of Boulder, Colo., as ‘a deeply fearless act of compassion to bring attention to climate crisis.’”

The earth and all its parts support life. The parts are interdependent. In science class, we studied biorganisms. Each one created waste. In God’s wisdom, one creature’s waste is another’s food. This cycle is created so that all can survive and thrive.

We humans have become very irresponsible about our handling of waste. How it must grieve God to see us acting so indifferently about how we protect or degrade our world. But God is merciful, choosing to leave a remnant—survivors who will tell the story of healing and forgiveness.

I am saddened that people feel so ignored, that corporations turn a blind eye to stewardship, that the impact of our collective actions upsets the delicate divine balance.

So let us commit to reconciliation. Join in participation with the circle of life. Everyone can do a little so no one has to do a lot. Reuse, regift, recycle, and reconnect to the source of life

and love. God is forever true to his Word. God will not take away our freedom of choice but also doesn't take away natural consequences.

- What do you do to reduce waste in your life?
- Do you love this earth?

—Greg Battle, battlegregory1@gmail.com



Gregory Edwin Battle is a 66-year-old Black American elder and AV minister at Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, Ohio. He is a proud father, son, husband, brother, uncle, and neighbor. Greg's favorite Scripture is Micah 6:6–8 and his favorite saying is, "Everything I know is subject to revision, especially what I know to be the truth" (*Narcotics Anonymous* textbook). We do recover.



Greg Bowman and his wife, Ellen, live as active retirees in the northeastern Ohio community and congregation where they were reared. Previously living in other rural, suburban, and urban communities has humbled and challenged Greg as to God's ways of working in and beyond "the church." He is alert for God's transforming moves in his community as he keeps on gardening.

Resources for this session

["Why Soil Is One of the Most Amazing Things on Earth"](#)

Salt & Light Videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **Lana Miller** is the presenter for unit 2. The videos are now closed captioned, free, and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).