

W4E Sunday 22nd September - Creation

Reading – Psalm 104

Talk 1

(comes after the game where we link the animal to the environment)

So different animals live in different places or environments
And they live there because things are right for them
Temperature; weather; food; shelter

But sometimes what we as human beings do affects the way animals live,
Sometimes we might even change the environment
(people tell me of when Shirley was all fields – I wonder how much more wildlife there was then)

Around us we often see foxes who have adapted well to the urban environment – often feeding from waste food rather than hunting as their more rural cousins would do.

But sometimes when towns or cities expand; when farms become more intense, the environment changes so animals can no longer live there.

But here's a story about the unintended effects of changing things.

(video of the Yellowstone Park wolves)

Link is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q&t=240s>

Shows how connected everything is.

How intricate the design of creation – how wise the God who made it

Psalm 104 - The Psalm that we heard - talks of the way creation works for all animals, birds, fish as well as humans. It is designed for life – and we change it at our peril.

We cannot improve on what God has done. – and we will think a bit more about that in a moment

Talk 2

I am not a great fan of clergy conferences

The thought of 100 or so clergy shut away for 2 or 3 days in a conference centre fills me with horror – and its even worse if I have to be there with them

But Surprisingly I do have some good memories of some clergy conferences that I have attended.

The last one a couple of years ago was where I heard Rowan Williams talk of Kingfisher moments – keeping our eyes and ears open. He was using the example of being out for a stroll by a river, and just keeping eyes open in case a kingfisher flew past (and I have still never seen one)

But this gave us the inspiration for our WOW moments

And then way back over 30 years – one in London where we had some amazing speakers including Tony Benn who talked about capitalist trains and socialist trains (happy to explain that later) and Professor Bernard Carr – an eminent astrophysicist – who introduced us the the anthropic principle .

The anthropic principle basically says that the universe has been designed in such a way that human life can exist on earth

Everything is just right

The distance the earth is from the sun

The atmosphere

The rotation of the earth

The law of gravity – indeed a whole host of physical constants which have to have certain values to support life – and they do

Change anything by a small amount and human life is under threat – which is why climate change is such a scary prospect

For me and many the anthropic principle points to a Creator God

When we think of creation, we often think of mountains and hills, lakes and seas, birds and animals, flowers and trees.

But for any of these to be as they are the physics constants have to be as they are; the sun has to be as it is; the earth has to be as it is. Mathematics has to work as it does

For this to have evolved by chance is a bit like the proverbial monkeys and Works of Shakespeare.

The more we look at creation, the more we see how complex it is, and how well it all fits together.

In that video earlier we saw how when we change something, the effects can be very surprising – often some catastrophic unintended consequences

Perhaps more often we see species added - invasive species they are called

Grey squirrels – Deliberately released - and the consequent elimination of the native red squirrel

Mink – escapees from mink farms - and the catastrophic effect on native voles

Rhododendron – imported plant (for gardens etc – very attractive) – now widespread and hard to control. Takes over so no other ground plants can survive

Himalayan Balsam – imported plant again for gardens – now widespread esp along river banks. Dies back in winter, leaving nothing to hold the banks in place and erosion happens

Many more insects, mammals and plants

All affect the environment

All this points again to the interconnectedness

But there is some good news – environmentalists have made changes that have positively affected the environment – often correcting earlier mistakes

Grey wolves in Yellowstone

Sea Otters in the Pacific – previously hunted to extinction, sea urchins had no predator, kelp forest decimated. Now regenerating

Beavers in Scotland and elsewhere (including the Wyre Forest) – because of the dams they produce, wetlands are formed and there is a great diversity of pond and mammal life

I read a book recently about someone in the UK who for one year grew wheat on a field in the old traditional way. No pesticides, tilled and sown by hand.

Wildlife – animals, hares, foxes etc; flowers; birds

All around him the countryside seemed bare and lifeless

Again – we see the complexity and beauty and interconnectedness

Next week is our Harvest Festival – a traditional time for reflecting on creation and we will take that opportunity to think further about the mess we have made – how we have broken the connections that hold the creation together - , and how we can be those who take steps to make it better

But today let us reflect on how all this points to a creator God- a creation thought out, planned and made. A creation that reflects the beauty and wonder of its creator

And as we reflect on that it's very easy to see why so many people say they feel closest to God when in nature, for that is where we see evidence of his power and wisdom; that is where his fingerprints and footprints are and that's why in this Parish we sometimes have Forest Church – an opportunity to be in creation, to use creation as we worship the creator

something we will be doing next Sunday evening at ST Johns – perhaps you might like to give it a try!