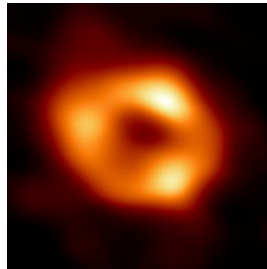


Worship at home  
*July 10, 2022*



<https://eventhorizontelescope.org/blog/astronomers-reveal-first-image-black-hole-heart-our-galaxy>

**God calls us to worship:**

Responsive reading: Psalm 104:1-5, 24

Hymn: #321 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

**We offer our prayers:**

Prayer of Praise and Supplication (*please remain standing*):

God of all beginnings,  
we come today with praise on our lips and in our hearts.  
We stand in awe of all you have created:  
the vast expanse of a starry night and the tiny beauty of a raindrop  
together reflect your glory.  
You have blessed creation with life and meaning.  
Your love makes a beginning in us, too, O God,  
in each new life born into the world,  
in each new friendship formed,  
in each kindling attraction,  
in each kind word and act for neighbour or stranger.  
We praise you, O God, for your love moving in the world around us,  
lived out in Jesus  
and by the Spirit at work in us.  
All praise and glory belong to you, Source, Saviour, and Spirit of Love,  
one God, now and always.

*Please be seated.*

*Simply because we are the creatures and not the Creator,  
if we say that we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)  
Yet we know that nothing is able to separate us  
from the love of God in Jesus Christ.  
Let us, therefore, be free to confess our sins  
before the God who is faithful and just. (1 John 1:9)*

Prayer of Confession (Unison):

**God of mercy;**

**As we gather to celebrate your gift of love  
we recall the times when we forget you  
and are divided one from the other.**

**How often our thoughts, our words, and our actions  
have betrayed the goodness you have shown to us.**

**Forgive us.**

**Mend what is broken.**

**Heal the wounded relationships**

**that separate us from you,**

**from one another,**

**and which leave us divided within ourselves;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

***God offers the assurance of grace:***

John 3:16

***We offer our lives and resources:***

*Offering plates are positioned as you enter and leave the sanctuary. If you'd prefer to use e-transfers, please speak with Rev. Ian, Judy Armstrong (St. Andrew's), or Howard McKellar (Knox)*

***God speaks to us:***

**Hymn:**

#500 "Open my eyes, that I may see"

**Readings:**

Proverbs 3:1-26

## The foundation of the earth

1. As a species, human beings have learned a lot about how life works. We've learned about how a tree can grow from a tiny seed; how crops grow well or poorly; how the sun warms the earth. We've learned about how we can smell and differentiate smells: rain from manure, diesel fuel from fresh-cut hay. We've learned about how our brains send signals to our muscles and our fingers move seemingly of their own volition. We've learned about why we feel sadness and anger. We've learned about how our bodies need a variety of nutrients to survive and thrive; about emotional health; about mental health. We've learned about hygiene and the importance of sewers. We've learned about atoms and electrons, super novas and black holes. In fact, just this past May, scientists were able for the first time to actually take a picture of the black hole that is at the center of the Milky Way galaxy!

We have learned a lot!

And, we are still learning. New discoveries are still being made (such as the picture of the black hole!) New technologies are being created. We're learning about how our past and present experiences and actions affect the present and future health of this planet and all who dwell thereon. We're learning about how we are influenced by many factors and our reactions and responses to them can cause harm or blessing to others.

And, any researcher with a soul stands in awe of every new discovery made. On some level, they declare with the psalmist:

*O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.<sup>1</sup>*

Yet, for all that we've learned, for all that we know about the world in which we live, for all the discoveries we continue to make, we don't know it all.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 104:24

2. In this series of sermons, I've been trying to lay some building blocks that will help us build into our own daily walks of Christian discipleship the wisdom contained in the book of Proverbs. I've argued that pursuing Godly wisdom, while perhaps not as exciting as miraculous healings or speaking in tongues, is an important part of living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first building block we discussed is the belief that by the Holy Spirit guiding our eyes to the particular proverb our Lord needs us to hear, the Father passes on to us, His children, wisdom for our faithful and holy living.

*My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you.<sup>2</sup>*

The second building block is the belief that the *fear of the Lord* (by which we mean awe-fuelled obedience to God's principles manifest in the Word of God) underlies everything that is good, holy, and lasting.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge....<sup>3</sup>*

The third building block on which we're reflecting today is *humility before the wisdom of God*.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and **do not rely on your own insight**. In all your ways **acknowledge him**, and he will make straight your path. **Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.**<sup>4</sup>*

This theme occurs repeatedly throughout the proverbs. In 16:2 we read:

*All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit.*

And again, in 16:25:

*Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right, but in the end it is the way to death.*

And again, in 19:21:

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<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 3:1-2

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 1:7

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 3:5-6

*The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established.*

And again, in 20:24:

*All our steps are ordered by the LORD; how then can we understand our own ways?*

The point is clear: simply because we are part of the creation; we are creatures and not the Creator, our wisdom is limited. We don't know it all. In whatever situation we find ourselves, as sure as we may be that we are right, it is also true, that we may be wrong.

**3.** The wisdom tradition, which is represented by the books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, affirms that, although human wisdom is limited, God's wisdom is complete and eternal.

The rationale for this assertion is simple: God is the Creator.

God created all that exists.

God is the author of the life that enlightens anyone who embraces it. He has established an order in the world and in society that reflects His goodness and His good purposes.

Therefore, God is the author of the wisdom that will sustain this eternal life.

*The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.<sup>5</sup>*

The foundation of black holes and supernovas; electrons and quarks; of you and I, is the wisdom of the living God.

*He knows what is needed to sustain good and holy living.*

*He knows what the Right.*

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<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 3:19-20

Speaking through the Proverbs, the Father promises that if we can accept that and live in humility before the wisdom of God than,

*It will be a healing for your flesh, and a refreshment for your body.<sup>6</sup>*

Jesus once said:

*Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.<sup>7</sup>*

4. In the context of this series, taking Jesus' yoke upon ourselves, and acknowledging the Lord in all our ways involves acknowledging that, in the mystery of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the One who is the incarnation of the Wisdom of the Creator speaks through Scripture, and, in particular for us today, through the Proverbs.

So, the Father encourages us to keep the wisdom of the Proverbs close to us at all times:

*...bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.<sup>8</sup>*

Keep the wisdom of the Proverbs close to your body, mind, and heart so that, in all your ways, whatever decision you need to make, in whatever circumstance you find yourself, you will remember your Creator's advice and He will direct your ways.

There are a few people who are able to memorize and recall vast portions of Scripture. I'm not one of them, and I don't think many of us are. I don't think the Father means for us to necessarily memorize all the Proverbs in the book. If you can, that's wonderful, go for it!

However, as I've been saying throughout this series, I do think what is needed is for us to trust that the Holy Spirit is actually moving within our souls and will guide our eyes to the particular proverb the Lord needs us to hear today. The beautiful thing about engaging with the Proverbs is that it doesn't require a lot of heavy reading. The collection of the proverbs proper begins in chapter 10 and from there on you'll find that, generally speaking, each proverb requires 1 or maybe 2 verses. So, what's needed is

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<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 3:8

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 11:28

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 3:3

prayerful time in which you sit down to peruse the book. Or, if you'd prefer, to buy an audio version, and listen to it being read. And, pay attention to what catches your eye and ear. Trust that this is the Spirit guiding you to what the Lord needs you to hear today. Then, memorize that one particular proverb – one to two verses. Write it on a card. Put it in your pocket. Refer to it throughout the day.

And, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your path.” For, “The Lord by wisdom founded the earth.”

Glory be to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

***We respond with prayers of thanksgiving and intercession***

God of abundant growth,  
as summer unfolds around us, we give you thanks for warm sunny days,  
for beauty in our gardens,  
crops growing in our fields,  
life swimming in oceans and lakes.  
Where the abundance of nature is at risk,  
we pray that your Spirit will work in and through us  
to restore the air, water and soil for the good of all creation.

God of every life,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of peace and reconciliation,  
we thank you for the peace and freedom we enjoy  
and the many ways our lives are protected in this land.  
We remember before you those places torn apart by violence and hatred,  
those people who face discrimination daily,  
and anyone who feels unsafe this day or any day.  
*(Keep silence for 15 seconds)*

Inspire leaders in every country to lead with wisdom and mercy.  
Guide them in your ways of peace and justice.

God of every life,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of creativity and community,  
we thank you for the many ways the Church can serve you in Jesus' name.  
Thank you for the unique voices that sing your praise and speak your comfort,  
all the hands that share in acts of service,  
all the prayers offered quietly for your will to be done.  
We pray for the Church and its many congregations  
as we seek to be faithful.  
Help us work together so that our unity bears witness  
to the possibilities for unity among diverse peoples everywhere.

God of every life,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God of every precious life,  
our hearts ache for those who are suffering.  
Hear our prayers as we name before you those in need of your love and healing  
in the silence of our hearts...  
*(Silence for at least 15 seconds)*

God of every life,



**Hear our prayer.**

God hope and love,  
draw us closer to you every day. Show us what you desire for us  
and inspire our faithfulness in the example of Jesus, who taught us to pray these  
words:

**The Lord's Prayer**

***God sends us with God's blessing:***

**Hymn:** #333 "I sing the almighty

**Blessing:**

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.