



# Simple Gifts

Words to Inspire the Spirit

IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

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## Beauty in the Smallest Things

By The Rev. Rachel Rickenbaker

“It’s a millie!” With the weather warming up, I have been spending much more time outdoors with James and our daughter Eleanor who is almost three years old. The woods of Government Island in Stafford County have recently been full of millipedes. When we go for walks, they take much longer than usual because Eleanor wants to stop and observe *every single millipede*, or “millies,” as she lovingly calls them.



As we walk, she stops to observe them, squatting down to be able to see each of their tiny legs scurrying across the damp ground. When one is crossing our path, she helps me take a stick and gently allow the millipede to crawl onto it and be moved across the path. Eleanor says we are helping them avoid getting stepped on; sadly, we also see many that haven’t made it across the path safely.

Each of these walks we take have become precious time to me. They cause us to slow down, take the time to pay attention to what is around us, and to notice even the smallest forms of springtime life in these woods.

I've recently reflected during the walks on how God notices and cares deeply for each of us. Sometimes it takes our noticing the smallest forms of life to be reminded that God sees and knows each of us intimately.

The Psalmist sings to the Lord:

“Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed (Psalm 139:16).”

And Luke the Evangelist tells us: “Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Luke 12:7).”

When Jesus went to the cross out of his love for the world, we often think that he only did it to save humanity. Yes, he did die on the cross to save us, human beings, from our sins. But, he also died and rose again, that the *whole creation* would be made new. All of creation feels the effects of sin, even when they may not be aware of it in that way as we do. All of creation, too, is loved by God, the one who created it and breathed life into it.

What a reminder of how we, as stewards of creation, are to seek to care for all life as well. Each life, no matter how small, is precious and valued by God.

Even though we are to seek to care for all creation, we will inevitably fall short of our care for it; our ancestors in the Garden of Eden did, as well. Nonetheless, we are reminded that the new life we are given and the new creation that the Lord is bringing about are not based on our actions, but the saving work that Christ has done for us.

Thanks be to God for the immense gift of God's creation, the beauty we witness in its diversity and complexity, and the joy we experience in serving the Lord in those around us! Make sure to keep an eye out for those “millies”!

Today, let us pray together this prayer *For Joy in God's Creation*:

O heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty:  
Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works;  
that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with  
gladness;  
for the sake of him through whom all things were made,  
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (Book of Common Prayer, p.  
814).