

Wild Church
Sunday, October 19, 2025

Picnic Site #3, Emily Murphy Park, Edmonton

Let's Chew the Cud: Ruminating on our Place in Creation

Welcome and Announcements

Land Acknowledgment

We gather in this place with gratitude for the wisdom and compassion of the first peoples who walked this land - those who have persisted in engaging with the Holy in the Great Conversation. When these wise ones speak of "All my relations", they do not speak only of blood relatives. They do not even speak only of two-legged creatures, for to the Indigenous ones, the plants, the four-legged creatures, the fish and the birds are likewise treated with the reverence and respect of personhood.

With them, as members of Treaty Six, we are reminded of our Treaty responsibilities and of the call to be at one with all beings, holding reverence for place and for life.

Blessed be.

Calling the Circle

As Earth circles our star, the Sun, so we too gather in this sacred circle. Let us gather ourselves into silence (*pause*). Listen - listen so carefully that you hear the beating of your own heart. Listen to the life blood coursing through your body. Take a deep breath in (*pause*) and let a long breath out (*pause*). Feel the blessings of this place, this time, this Holy moment.

You belong here. You are welcomed here. You are part of this ecosystem. All beings welcome you, for they have not forgotten that we are all related, that we come from one dust and will return to that same dust.

As we gather here, in this sacred circle, we are entering into a relationship with Nature. We are here to re-member ourselves back to where we belong. We are here to restore a loving a kindred relationship with all beings.

Bringing Our Names into the Circle

Each person is invited to say aloud their name. Following the offering of each name, all in the circle will reply:

Warm greetings to you _____. We give thanks for your presence here.

Prayer

Creator, Great Spirit, you beseech us to taste your big hope for us and for all that you have created. We pray, slow our quest to conquer our world. Open our hearts to receive your word for us and bring us out of our self-imposed exile. Touch our tongues with the tastes of your soul food. Guide us that we may be share your feast with all living beings, with whom we are one in you. Amen.

Theme Reflection

A quick scan of the history of Western philosophy and religion shows that “eating and tasting have not usually been the preferred sensual point of entry for self-discovery and self-examination”. One might find this strange if we examine the etymology of the Latin word for *knowing* which is *sapper* which means *to taste*. Western theologians and philosophers have tended to emphasis seeing over tasting as the way to make sense of the world. Norman Wirzba, in his book *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* observes that metaphors associated with sight are so embedded in our conceptual frameworks that come out of the ‘Enlightenment Period of Modernism in which spiritual development or attainment is described as *visio Dei*. We speak of *the mind’s eye seeing another point of view*. Though we sometimes speak of *ruminating* over a thought but find it odd to speak of the *mind’s mouth tasting an idea*.

The focus on vision makes sense in a dualistic worldview in which subject and object are clearly defined and vision implies a safe distance between the two, disengaged as they are from each other. Independence, freedom, autonomy are all ideas that grow out of this world view.

For today, I invite us to step into another world view in which the senses of touch and taste are active players. In his book *On the Soul*, Aristotle suggested that we are always touching, even when we are asleep, and thus we are always being touched. There is no separation and we are opened to the presence of others. Rather than living separate from others we know that we and all living beings, are connected.

Let's *ruminate* on this idea. What is it to ruminate? Well, it's like "chewing cud". We think about some thing, issue, idea over and over again and through this "rumination" we gain new understanding and wisdom.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient contemplative prayer practice used to allow Scripture to speak to our hearts and to help us discover the multiple ways the Holy dwells there. It means "sacred reading" and the practice can be extended beyond the reading of Scripture to that other great book of revelation - Nature. Lectio invites us to enter into silence and stillness, to listen deeply to the stirrings of the Holy the sacred texts around us.

This is a time in our gathering when we wander solo in this place. Today, as you wander, be present to whatever touches you. Ruminates on thoughts as they arise. Taste them for the delicious wisdom and understanding they impart.

Wander for 20 minutes, then return to the circle. You will be invited to share your experience in the circle as you wish.

(When all have returned to the circle, invite participants to share whatever they are moved to share.)

Blessing *"For the Senses" p. 40 To Bless the Space Between Us" by John O'Donohue*