

## *Deacons Corner*

A portion of our deacon's meeting each month is dedicated to book discussion. We typically read a chapter or two and discuss questions and insights that we have received from our reading. This season we are studying 'Green Faith' by Fletcher Harper. Some of you may have participated in a discussion group around this thought-provoking book with Pastor Lourey. It examines our role and responsibilities in taking care of our earthly home. The book begins with a discussion of awe and wonder about creation. The reader is asked to reflect upon spiritual experiences had in nature. We all shared stories of time spent outside either alone or with friends and family. I related an experience that I had sitting on a bank overlooking Nantucket Sound a few years ago in the waning light of an early autumn evening as a huge flock of birds were beginning their migration south. The setting sun was bright orange and it lit up the bellies of the birds flying overhead so that they appeared like little flames from the ground below. The show went on for five or ten minutes before the sun dropped below the horizon, but the effect stayed with me so that I think about those birds every time I revisit that site.

The author provides a perspective of the 'nature teachings' from all of the major world religions. It is no surprise that although the symbols and language used by the different faith traditions might be different, the message is the same: we are all instructed to care for this amazing, beautiful and bountiful creation in which we are all a part. The book then provides a description of the various systems that sustain life on our remarkable planet. It's easy to take air, land and water for granted, but just try to image life without them! The author is of course leading the reader to put faith in action and modify behavior to cherish and protect our precious environment.

I like to think of myself as someone who cares for the environment and I have made changes to act in ways that support that objective, but as I read 'Green Faith' a second time, I can see there are still so many ways to improve. For example, while I take composting and recycling to heart, I often forget to bring my reusable grocery and produce bags into the store (thank you Sandra Ng for reminding me!). I've switched to a metal water bottle and eschew throw-away plastic bottles, but I still grab a package of dried beans instead of scooping them from the bulk containers. I know I can do better and I'm thankful to be reading this book again as a reminder. It really is all about awareness.

I'd like to recommend that everyone in our congregation read 'Green Faith'. It is available through the Commonwealth Catalog of your local library or you may be able to borrow one from someone in our congregation that was part of the original study group. If we all increase our awareness together, we can encourage each other and share ideas on how to become better stewards of the earth.

Peace,  
Brian Le Suer