



Creation Season

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A, April 27, 2008

Water: Groundwater/wells

A Bulletin Insert for the congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota

Lessons (Revised Common Lectionary)

Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:7-18 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21

Collects

Fearless One, who left the daily care of Creation into our hands, awaken in us the fullness of your Spirit, that we may be emboldened to live truly sanctified lives. Teach us to trust your Word, that we may become the holy ones you intended, and live fully in you so you may shine fully in us, for you are God, creator, redeemer and sanctifier, now and forever. *Amen.*

Life-giving Savior, we pray that our desire to seek you does please you. Help us to be so keenly aware of your presence in our lives that we do not fall back into living only for ourselves, but live into the abundant web of creation you have set forth. Touch our souls with your eternal generosity, that the whole world may radiate the fullness of your love, through God our Creator, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and loves forever. *Amen.*



Groundwater is rain water or snow melt that does not run off in streams, but seeps into the ground.

More than 50 percent of the people in the United States, including almost everyone who lives in rural areas, use ground water for drinking and other household uses. Ground water is also used in some way by about 75 percent of cities and by many factories. The largest use of ground water is to irrigate crops.

The greatest dangers to groundwater supplies are over-extraction and contamination. We can help with both by using water efficiently, taking care not to contaminate, and supporting strong protections for groundwater resources.

Source: United States Geological Survey, *What is Groundwater*
(<http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/OFR93-643/>)

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Water: Groundwater/wells

Fresh water is one of God's greatest gifts to us. "Water is formless and transparent, yet we long to be beside it. It has no taste, yet we love the taste of it. We travel great distances to see it in sunshine. Even though it is dangerous and drowns many thousands of people every year, we can't wait to frolic in it." (Bill Bryson, *The Bounding Main*)

Water is essential to life. The human body is anywhere from 55% to 78 % water depending on body size. We require about 1 liter of fresh water per day in order to function properly. Next to air, it is the thing we can go least long without.

Fresh water is available in two primary ways: as surface water in lakes, rivers and streams, and as groundwater in aquifers. Today our focus is on groundwater. But the blessings of fresh water are the same no matter where it comes from. Once you begin to think about it, the number of ways we use fresh water is astonishing. We use it in our homes for drinking, cleaning, bathing, clothes washing and watering plants and lawns.

We also use it in any number of industries. Did you know one of the limitations on the current ethanol boom is finding the large amounts of fresh water required to make it? Paper mills use tons of water, as do petroleum refining and steel making. Mining requires water for screening and washing ores, and for floating impurities.

The largest and most important use of water after drinking is irrigation for crops. The current world population stretches our capacity to grow crops to the limit. Without groundwater pumped to the surface for irrigation, everything from grains to fruits to vegetables and meats would be in short supply.

Unfortunately, people all over the world are extracting groundwater faster than it can be replaced. Too often we are carelessly contaminating it as well, and such contamination is extraordinarily hard to clean up. The best things you can do to care for this gift of God are use water efficiently, and take care not to pollute it with pesticides, fertilizers, or oil.

The Minnesota Episcopal Environmental Stewardship Commission (MEESC) has prepared Creation Season materials for the Season of Easter, 2008, with a focus on water. If you find the information on these inserts to be of interest, you may wish to visit the MEESC website for more information (www.env-steward.com). Members of MEESC are available to visit your congregation to assist you in your environmental stewardship walk.