

### Sermon Seeds

This psalm, quoted in the book of Amos (4:13/Psalm 139:2 and 9:2/Psalm 139:8), tells us that it was written more than 2,750 years ago. It is divided into three sections: God's knowledge, God's presence, and God's power. One might go about preaching this text in several ways. The psalm is one poem. Go back to the Hebrew to hear and see the original, well-crafted poem. How does this poem change your "seeing" of creation, of the creator? What is an unresolved theological question that comes to your mind as you read it? How do you/your parishioners feel about God knowing *all* about you? How do you feel about the fact that one cannot escape God's knowing? How does this psalm fit into the larger story of creation? Another option would be to use Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey's book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* to celebrate the intricacies of the human body. How do we as a culture honor or dishonor bodies? Our bodies are sources of shame and mystery. Resources: Stephanie Paulsell, *Honoring the Body* (Jossey-Bass, 2003); James B. Nelson, *Embodiment* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1978); Lillian Calles Barger, *Eve's Revenge* (Brazos Press, 2003).

## RESPONDING

### Benediction

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## Week Six: An Outdoor Celebration



**Scripture Text:** Leviticus 23:33-43; Deuteronomy 16:13-15

### Focus Statement

The Festival of Booths came at the end of harvest time. Families lived outdoors for seven days, remembering God's provision and the Israelite exodus from Egypt.

### Song Suggestions

HWB 80	<i>O Bless the Lord, My Soul!</i>	STJ 40	<i>As Rain from the Clouds</i>
HWB 161	<i>We Give Thanks unto You</i>	STJ 75	<i>Be Still</i>
HWB 226	<i>You Are Salt for the Earth</i>	STS 58	<i>O God, How We Have Wandered</i>
HWB 419	<i>Lead on, O Cloud of Presence</i>	STS 96	<i>Had God Brought Us Out</i>
HWB 532	<i>I Am Leaning on the Lord</i>	STS 106	<i>Comme un Soufflé Fragile</i> ("Like a Tender Breath, Stirring")

## GATHERING

### Call to Worship

Leader: Faithful and persistent God,  
**Side 1:** who shelters and provides for us through the journeys of our life,  
**ALL:** *be present in our worship,*  
**Side 2:** that we may hear from others  
and learn to trust your ever-expanding story of faithful care.  
**ALL:** *In the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.*

## Theme Psalm

### PRAYING

#### Confession

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#### Prayers of the People (Using gesture: cup hands, lift, and release.)

Journeying God,  
Who calls us by name as we move toward your promised land,  
who asks us to trust even when we cannot see where we are going,  
we cup our hands and pour into them our thanks . . .  
(*extemporaneous prayers of thanks*)  
We lift our prayers and release them into your care.

We cup our hands and pour into them  
our prayers for ourselves and those we love . . .  
(*extemporaneous prayers*)  
We lift our prayers to you and release them into your hands of compassion.

We cup our hands and pour into them  
our prayers for our neighbors and the towns where we live . . .  
(*extemporaneous prayers*)  
We lift our prayers to you and release them into your hands of mercy.

We cup our hands and pour into them our prayers for the world . . .  
(*extemporaneous prayers*)  
We lift our prayers to you and release them into your hands of love.  
Amen. (*Or end with Lord's Prayer.*)

### LISTENING

#### Children's Worship

#### Sermon Seeds

The Feast of Booths (Sukkoth) is a Jewish festival where families build a hut out of flimsy materials, with a roof open enough to let in starlight. Children put up their drawings and decorate the hut. It is a time of joy when all meals are enjoyed in the hut. The festival comes after a season of repentance reminding the people that God is slow to anger and forgives. Then during Sukkoth one remembers that God is all-sufficient and we are dependent on God for all things. It celebrates God as both Creator and Redeemer, which underscores God's faithfulness. Then immediately following Sukkoth comes Simchat Torah to celebrate reading the Bible, returning to the joy of Scripture. This flow—who we are, who God is, how God connects with us—is overlooked in our culture due to our reliance on ourselves. As Mennonites we have a great work ethic. How do we live with this tension between our work and what our ancestors called *Gelassenheit* (yielding/abandonment)? What are the spiritual disciplines that will get us to a place of following Jesus with heart, soul, mind, and strength? Resources: C. Arnold Snyder, *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004); Lauren F. Winner, *Mudhouse Sabbath* (Paraclete Press, 2008).

### RESPONDING

#### Benediction

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