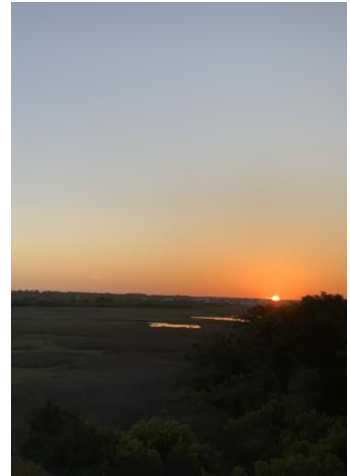


EARTH CARE & SPIRITUALITY MONTHLY REFLECTION  
May 2022

Universe: The Womb of Everything  
Inspired by Wendy Weiger and written by Stephen Hastings



We've all experienced the grandeur and awe of the night sky, most vivid in the winter with the Milky Way marking its path across the darkness. A month ago, shortly before dawn on the North Carolina coast, I held up my smart phone with its SkyMap and identified, all at one time, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Two of them were overlapping – might have been Jupiter and Neptune, I can't remember. And then the Sun rose! It doesn't take much for me to begin singing my favorite hymn since my youth, The Spacious Firmament on High from Haydn's great Creation Oratorio:

The spacious firmament on high, with all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame, their great Original proclaim.  
The unwearied sun, from day to day, does his creator's power display,  
And publishing to every land the work of an almighty hand.

Truly, the Universe inspires. And so does the story of creation. Wendy Weiger, a fellow contributor to the monthly reflections who spends her winters in an off-grid cabin on First Roach Pond doing, among other things, a lot of star gazing, sent me the link below. It takes you to the Harvard Gazette and an article in the science and technology section called A Glimpse Into the Universe's First Light. It includes a 50-second computer-generated video-simulation of the Universes's first billion years as it emerged from darkness to sparkling spangled light to "a radiant, light-filled environment." It's what we might have seen with our particular eyes if we could have been there and watched. Click on the link if you would like to watch it.

[https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/03/simulations-show-formation-of-universes-first-light/?utm\\_source=SilverpopMailing&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Daily%20Gazette%2020220325%20\(1\)](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/03/simulations-show-formation-of-universes-first-light/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%20Gazette%2020220325%20(1))

Wendy said, "I found the video awe-inspiring. My thought was, how could someone see the unfolding of light in a dark universe and think it happened only by chance, that there was no creative genius behind it?" I agree, complicated scientific explanations of creation only add to the allure and majesty of a creator. They do nothing to disavow such an affirmation. It's so easy and rational to look at a video like that and say this is the creative word of a Creator God coming to light and life right in front of us. And there in that 13-billion year old embryo of cosmogenesis is planet Earth. Look up, look around, look down and be amazed:

The heavens are telling the glory of God. (Psalm 19)  
And the whole Earth is full of God's glory. (Isaiah 6)

*Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings is founder and Chair of the Earth Care and Spirituality Resource Team of the Maine Conference UCC. He is minister to the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church. His Ph.D. is in environmental ethics and creation spirituality and he is the author of "Whole-Earth Ethics for Holy Ground: The Development and Practice of 'Sacramental' Creation Spirituality."*

*Dr. Wendy Weiger is a former medical researcher who left Boston's halls of academe for the wilds of Maine's North Woods. She is a member of Union Evangelical Church, UCC, in Greenville. A Registered Maine Guide, Wendy is founder of Achor Earth Ways, a nonprofit whose programs guide people into deeper and more joyful connection with nature. She serves at the Monson Visitor Center of the Appalachian Trail Conference, where she enjoys helping people explore the Maine Woods in ways that will be meaningful and enriching.*