

Good morning,



I woke up this morning thinking about *Smokey the Bear*. As a child, I remember watching the Smokey the Bear commercials on one of the two channels we had in Edmonton. “*Only you can prevent forest fires,*” he would say in his deep bear voice. We were campers back then and my mom used to remind me of Smokey, especially when we were about to leave a campsite. We would pour water on the fire, stir it and pour more water on until there was no heat left at all. We did what we could do.

Years later in 1971, I was taking a course in Physical Science at university. The professor told us about air pollution and what was called the *Greenhouse Effect* which would lead to global warming if people didn’t pay attention. He also talked about holes in the ozone layer of the atmosphere which might also lead to heat events in different parts of the world. It all sounded alarming and very much like science fiction somewhere in the distant future. As the decades have rolled by, what I heard then has become more and more a reality. So it is time to pay attention.

The news today reports record heat in the United Kingdom and Europe. “*They are not prepared for this*” was the comment. We had the heat dome last year. How can we forget? The news is pretty troubling. Have you noticed? Wildfires are ablaze again in our country and elsewhere. The pandemic lingers even though most of us wanted it to be over long ago. I received a text informing me that I would be contacted about the 4th booster shot to be available in September. The war in Ukraine continues without letup. Gas prices are hard to face. Inflation is leading to lifestyle changes. Doctors and nurses are worn out and some emergency departments have had to close due to staffing shortages.

Yikes! This is very discouraging to talk about. Maybe ostriches can help us with the answer — bury our heads in the sand! That doesn’t work for very long. I recall our pastor talking about “one needful thing” last Sunday. What is the needful thing for us as a community? Smokey the Bear used to tell us that we have a responsibility. My professor told us in the lecture theatre that we have to pay attention. A verse in ***Romans 8:19, For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God,*** reminds us that we have a lot to offer to the distress in this world. Taking practical responsibility for the creation around us; paying respectful attention to scientists now saying, “*See, look here, look there!*” and joining others to call for change; and caring for each other, especially the frail, vulnerable and victimized reveal options for the needful thing we might follow up on.

We are the ***children of God***. What we do together will may be even more effective than what we try all by ourselves. Thanks for being responsible, paying attention and offering care with and for others. Creation waits with eager longing.

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On Sunday, immediately following the worship service this Sunday, July 24, I will be leading a small procession out to the *Memorial Garden* for "**A Time to Remember.**" Together with prayer and readings and a few stories we will remember those among us who have died in the last four months: **Derick Mather, Gillian Ames, Zack Ziebart, & Rudy Gross.** We will not forget them.

I will be taking two weeks of vacation following the service on Sunday, so my UPDATE will return on August 10.

On Saturday morning you will receive the *Hybrid Worship Service* for Sunday, July 24; and the *invitation to Zoom* for worship. During my absence you will receive this information by email from **Glenn Harvey.** Thanks. Glenn!

As children of God, we are stronger together than alone.  
But don't forget, the Lord is with us always.

Pastor Terry

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