

The Star Within

a creation story by Dr. Paula Lehman & Rev. Sarah Griffith

In the beginning, the energy of silence rested over an infinite horizon of pure nothingness.

The silence lasted for billions of years, stretching across aeons that the human mind cannot even remotely comprehend.

Out of the silence arose the first ripples of sound, vibrations of pure energy that ruptured the tranquil stillness as a single point of raw potential, bearing all matter, all dimension, all energy, and all time: exploding like a massive fireball. It was the greatest explosion of all time!

An irruption of infinite energy danced into being. It had a wild and joyful freedom about it, and like a dance it was richly endowed with coherence, elegance, and creativity.

The universe continued to expand and cool until the first atoms came into being. The force of gravity joined the cosmic dance; atoms clustered into primordial galaxies.

Giant clouds of hydrogen and helium gases gathered into condensed masses, giving birth to stars!

Generations of stars were born and died, born and died, and then our own star system, the solar system, was formed from a huge cloud of interstellar dust, enriched by the gifts of all those ancestral stars.

Planet Earth condensed out of a cloud that was rich in a diversity of elements. Each atom of carbon, oxygen, silicon, calcium, and sodium had been given during the explosive death of ancient stars. These elements, this stuff of stars, included all the chemical elements necessary for the evolution of carbon-based life.

With the appearance of the first bacteria, the cosmic dance reached a more complex level of integration.

Molecules clustered together to form living cells!

Later came the algae, and then fish began to inhabit the waters!

Thence the journey of life on land and in the sky.

Insects, amphibians, birds, reptiles, and mammals: all flourished and diversified and elaborated the themes of life. And now it is our time, too.

This is our story.

The story of our beginning, our cosmology.

And so we commence our Lenten Journey this night - this Ash Wednesday, with open hearts in the midst of our Creator.

As we partake in our daily things of life may we see them as sacred.

May we be empowered to perform simple acts of concern and love, and real works of reform and renewal.

Let us love deeply the earth which gives us air to breathe, water to drink, and food to sustain us.

May we remember that life is begotten from stardust, radiant in light and heat.

We are all one - all of creation, all that now live, all that have ever lived.

Remember we are stardust, and to stardust we return.

Remember we are part of the great mystery.

Remember we are stardust and to stardust we return!