

Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before.

—Joel 2:21-23

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

The daily cycle of life on the farm reminds me that God is in relationship with creation – not only or even primarily with humankind, but with all creatures. The sunrise over the trees begins this cycle of life and death every day. It continues through the compost pile and the noisy henhouse – with the new chicks and the spiders eating a breakfast of flying insects caught in the network of webs hovering in the rafters. The ewes awaken beneath, bleating at the glimpse of green grass in the pasture covered in a blanket of dew.

In this season of Lent, it should not surprise us that the darkest places hold the most abundant life. Our soil is teeming with microbes, bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi. These unseen workers make life on Earth possible. Of all the species, these – the smallest – are the least expendable because they are the foundation of everything that lives. Without fertile soil, plants cannot grow, animals cannot survive and humanity's sacred covenant with God is broken.

Don't fear the dark, unknown dirty places. The Earth's fragile skin is where life is found. And upon it is where our relationship with one another and our covenant with God and all living things are kept.

Rejoice and be glad with the soil!

—Lisa Ransom