

"Our Coat of Many Colors"

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Genesis 9:16; Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:3, 10:1; Genesis 37:3

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Hayward United Methodist Church

Call to Worship

In purple and green and orange, it shines all over the world; in blue and red and yellow, it colors our life.

The eternal promise of God, the everlasting grace of Christ, the healing warmth of the Holy Spirit,

In truth that never wavers, in love that never ends, in life that is never defeated:

The created colors of God will stand before the world. We have now seen them...

Prayer of Invocation

Holy Spirit, speak to us deep within the flooded places of our lives. Reveal to us once again, the colors of your presence in and around us as we gather here in faith.

Open us to all that you would have us be for you and for others. Breakthrough into our lives and our church with new possibilities. Amen.

The Scavenger Hunt –Rainbow Colors – What is your favorite color and favorite item of that color?

The blue in my husband's eyes – he is such a blessing in my life (smiley face); Yellow lemon pie.

Blue – always draws me – clothes, home furnishings, etc. Green – many shades of forest green as the seasons change. Blue – seeing blue in my grandson's eyes. Brown – the sandy beach where the rainbow shines on the beach on Haggart Lake, Ontario. Silver; Blue on the Lakes; Turquoise – anything that color.

Blue – sky; Green – the lofty Trees of the North Woods; Indigo – not sure that I see it! Blue – looking at the blue sky; Red, Orange & Yellow for happiness & cheer; Green & Blue for soothing; Purple & Pink for awesome sunsets. How can one have a favorite! The blue in the flag reminding me of the freedom we have because of the men & women in the service. Yellow of the sunshine.

The Word

Rainbow Scripture Litany

God's Word to Noah: "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." Genesis 9:16

Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking. Ezekiel 1:28

And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Revelation 4:3

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. Revelation 10:1

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. Genesis 37:3

Living the Word

All of the Colors bright and cheerful, that God has given us to enhance our world is what we have been celebrating here all summer. Hopefully, you have experienced and seen God in new places and new ways.

The Color Quiz

Look at the chart and say the color, not the word.

YELLOW BLUE ORANGE
BLACK RED GREEN
PURPLE YELLOW RED
ORANGE GREEN BLACK
BLUE RED PURPLE
GREEN BLUE ORANGE

If we focus on the rainbow, there is enough to be said about all of the colors when put together.

Rainbows are optical and meteorological phenomena that cause a spectrum of light to appear in the sky when the Sun shines onto droplets of moisture in the Earth's atmosphere. They take the form of a multicolored arc, with red on the outer part of the arch and violet on the inner section of the arch. More rarely, a secondary rainbow is seen, which is a second, fainter arc, outside the primary arc, with colors in the opposite order, that is, with violet on the outside and red on the inside.

The rainbow's appearance is caused by dispersion of sunlight as it goes through raindrops. The light is first refracted as it enters the surface of the raindrop, reflected off the back of the drop, and again refracted as it leaves the drop.

A rainbow does not actually exist at a particular location in the sky. It is an optical illusion whose apparent position depends on the observer's location and the position of the sun. All raindrops refract and reflect the sunlight in the same way, but only the light from some raindrops reaches the observer's eye.

This light is what constitutes the rainbow for that observer. The position of a rainbow in the sky is always in the opposite direction of the Sun with respect to the observer, and the interior is always slightly brighter than the exterior.

Every rainbow has seven colors beginning with red and ending with violet or purple. To remember the order of those colors, people use the acronym Roy G. Biv or VIBGYOR which stands for Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo and Violet.

We cannot talk about the significance of a rainbow without talking about the Bible. It is believed that the rainbow is a sign from God that we are not forgotten.

Just as Rainbows aren't seen very often in our part of the world, the Rainbow wasn't mentioned but a few times in the Bible. In fact the first references we read about in the Word this morning are the only places you will find a rainbow mentioned. That usually means that it is either of little importance or very significant...

Before we get to chapter 9 of Genesis, God has created everything and given us dominion over it all. We – humans began making poor choices soon after that. It got worse and worse until God wanted to forget the whole human project, but instead the decision was made to give everything a good washing, saving only a core group to begin again.

About 18 years ago I had a Confirmation class that had 17 students, about half boys, half girls. There was a lot of bullying between the two groups. Mean teasing – going both ways. So one evening when they arrived I invited them to draw as best they could a picture of someone or something that was special to them – a hobby, a person, whatever they wanted. I gave them enough time to detail it fairly well.

Then I collected them and passed them back to the opposite side of the room, with the instructions to add whatever they wanted to the picture for one minute. At first they were so intent on making mustaches and extra odd things sticking out and even scribbling on someone else's picture, that they didn't realize what might be happening to their picture across the room.

I then passed them back to the original owners. And there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. – even a few tears. This became a hard lesson on respect, and how we treat each other. Class was different after that.

To watch the best of what you have created, be then spoiled or destroyed – no matter if you know it has to be done or not, is very difficult. No one wants to go through that kind of experience again.

Genesis 9:8-17

⁸ God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, ¹⁰ and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you. ¹¹ I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹² God said, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation. ¹³ I have placed my rainbow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures.

¹⁶ The rainbow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring covenant between God and every living being of all the earth's creatures." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth."

On behalf of every future generation... that means these words are for you and me as well. God is remembering the Creator's Covenant with us every time there is a rainbow. When you see a rainbow do you acknowledge and honor God?

Moving to Ezekiel 1: Ezekiel was a prophet sent to share with the people, messages from the Lord. Ezekiel had visions and verses 26-28 is the first one recorded: ²⁶ Above the dome over their heads, there appeared something like lapis lazuli in the form of a throne. Above the form of the throne there was a form that looked like a human being. ²⁷ Above what looked like his waist, I saw something like gleaming amber, something like fire enclosing it all around. Below what looked like his waist, I saw something that appeared to be fire. Its brightness shone all around.

²⁸ Just as a rainbow lights up a cloud on a rainy day, so its brightness shone all around. This was how the form of the LORD's glory appeared. When I saw it, I fell on my face. I heard the sound of someone speaking. At this point in the story God begins to speak to Ezekiel. It is an interesting story that you can read for yourself when you pick up your Bible and are looking for an interesting, conversation with God and God's people. For the sermon's purpose, this is only the second story that speaks of a rainbow and in my Bible it is on page 1006.

The third and fourth places that we find the rainbow are both in the last book of the Bible, John's Revelation. If you have read that book, you know there is lots of unique imagery there. Revelation 4:1-3 John sees God's heavenly throne - *After this I looked and there was a door that had been opened in heaven.*

The first voice that I had heard, which sounded like a trumpet, said to me, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in a Spirit-inspired trance and I saw a throne in heaven, and

someone was seated on the throne. ³ The one seated there looked like jasper and carnelian, and surrounding the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.

And Revelation 10:1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.

The rainbow in Ezekiel and Revelation represent the colorful glory of God, which through the Covenant given to Noah, is ever present with us. The rainbow is not created by humans, it is something that can only happen when the elements are aligned in order for us to see it.

There is another story of color – not a rainbow, but it could be a symbol of the covenant to us. It is the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors. So we go back to the beginning of the book - Genesis 37:3 *Now (Jacob), the leader of Israel, loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors.*

It would be a human reaction to make one of your children of more value than others, Jacob set up a situation that caused lots of jealousy and strife between the brothers. God doesn't work like that. God sent Jesus to point out the colors to us. They are symbols of how we all are unique individuals, yet side by side we become a rainbow of unity when we stand together.

We are all so different, yet we were each created in God's image. Just as we can see God in the individual colors, we need to look for God in each other and know that together we are all a part of God's Kingdom. We are all a part of the rainbow and the covenant that God will never forget us; that God is always near us as individuals and as a rainbow.

God would cover all of us with an arc of color. We have each been given a coat of many colors to surround us with creation in all of its splendor to remind us that God is always present and we can have God's best. We are not forgotten.

We can recreate the colors, through prisms of glass – like our stained glass in the morning when the sun shines in, or when water is sprayed into the air and the sun shines through. Yet not the sight across the sky that is so big that it is hard to capture in a photo, it is too high to touch and the only pot of gold at the bottom is the glory of the land.

This summer we have separated the colors so we could experience how vast each color is in our lives. As we bring them together today, we should feel overwhelmed by the richness of all that God has created for us and that each color represents the glory of God arched over us.