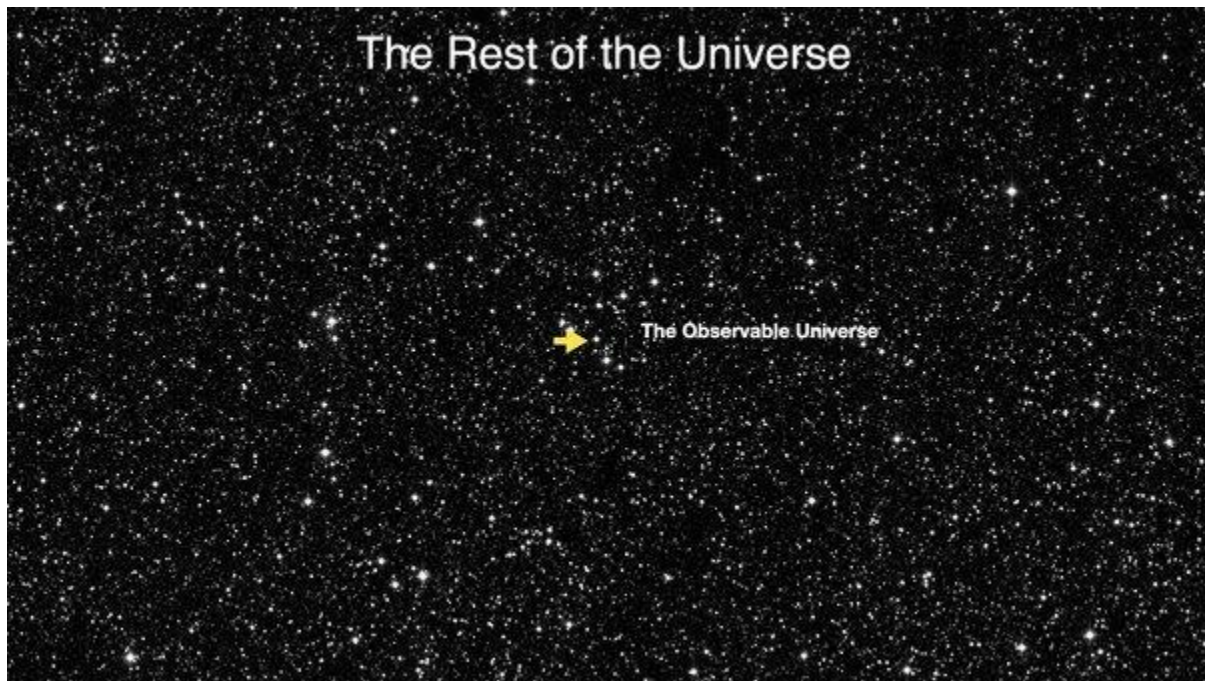


“Home: The Universe’s Story”
John 1:1-5

Where is home for you? Where do you really belong? Turn to a neighbor and tell them where you are from. Most of us would respond with the name of a specific town and then the name of a specific neighborhood or a group of people. It is always interesting also how we go back in time. Even though we might have lived in one location for a long time, we often go back to where we were born or grew up. Today, I want to invite you to do a similar thing but by looking at your home of origin through the eyes of the writer of the Gospel of John.

That is what John did for Jesus. While the other Gospel writers presented Jesus in the local and regional context of his birth and his human history, John decided to get us even deeper into the home from which Jesus came and from which we all come.

The beginning of the Gospel of John reminds me of this image about planet earth being a small dot among so many.



The American Museum of Natural History reminds us of this cosmic connection this way: “Every atom of oxygen in our lungs, of carbon in our muscles, of calcium in our bones, of iron in our blood – was created inside a star before Earth was born. Hydrogen and helium, the lightest elements, were produced in the Big Bang. Almost all of the other, heavier, elements were produced inside stars. Stars

forge heavy elements by fusion in their cores. In a star of intermediate mass, these elements can mix into the star's atmosphere and be spread into space through stellar winds. During the supernova explosion of a massive star is the only time when elements heavier than iron are fused. The supernova expels this material across interstellar space. The enriched material ejected by stellar winds and supernova explosions becomes part of vast interstellar clouds. The Sun formed within such a cloud, where some of the heavy elements condensed to form Earth." And those elements form...us."

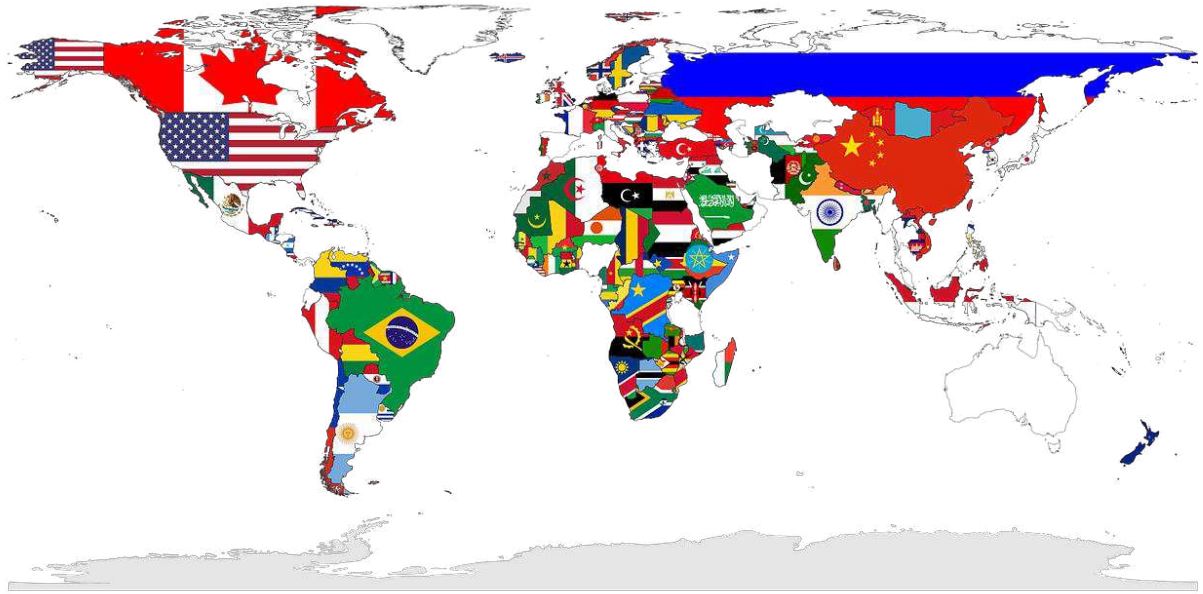
Here is how the Gospel writer puts this same idea in the beginning of his Gospel. Let's listen to John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

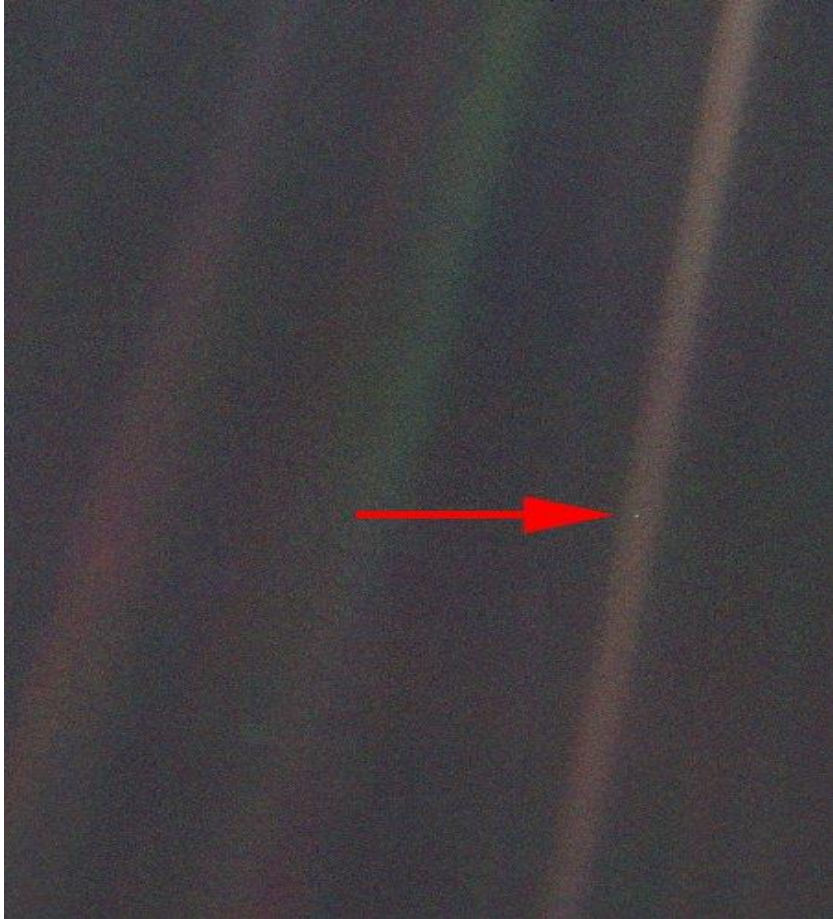
So when we hear these words, we are invited to see the good news in our story of origin. We are people of eternity. We are people who are connected to the universe. We are people who are formed and shaped by the energy of love. Our home is not just here but also among the stars. Jesus came at a time of oppression and empire, but he never lost track of his eternal and cosmic home. His love was so large because his home was larger than any of our small boxes.

We tend to think of our homes as small, but today, the invitation is to see that our home is the whole cosmos, including the parts we don't know and cannot even begin to imagine and this makes all the difference. I think of how freeing this awareness was for the early Christians to do the work of mercy without being afraid of persecution. It also freed them to see the whole world as God's mission field instead of looking at countries, tribes, or any other human groupings.

Today I want to invite you to ponder your greater belonging to the cosmos and how that could change your life. Look at the two images we have here of earth and consider how different your life and our world would be if we lived each day aware of the larger picture; seeing life in light of the cosmos:



I would like to end with a juxtaposition of the words of John 1 and the words of Carl Sagan reflecting on a 1990 image from the Voyager I spacecraft when the astronauts took a picture of Earth from 4 billion miles away:



People: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Leader: Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives.

People: ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being

Leader: The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there - on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

People: ⁴in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. Amen.