

# Nature Notes

March 5, 2020

A digital journal documenting the search for truth, beauty and goodness in God's lovely creation throughout the diocese of Fort Worth.

## I wonder . . . .

What prompts trees to start budding? Last fall, we talked about how trees measure the decreasing amounts of daylight to know when to start pulling chlorophyll out of their leaves. Does the increasing daylight trigger buds? Scientists aren't certain, but they think that trees actually measure a particular amount of "[chill hours](#)" or cold temperatures before starting to bud. This explains why not all trees begin to bud at exactly the same time, and why trees don't usually get fooled by "early" spring indicators before winter is actually over. Budding before the last of the cold could harm or even kill the new growth, so it's critical for trees to bud at the right time.

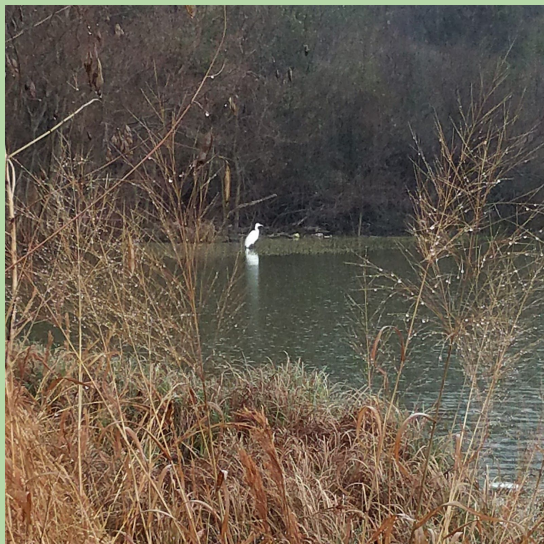
Perhaps we could take a page out of nature's book here- spending "chill hours" in quiet prayer and reflection before making a big change in our own lives.



## I notice. . . .

We've had a lot of rainy days lately. Did you know you can predict rain by [observing](#) plants and animals around your home? Some trees will turn their leaves [upside down](#) to protect the top from rain. Spiders will remove their webs before a storm, and dogs will spend lots of time sniffing the air before rain.

I spent a lovely rainy afternoon down by the lake, watching some drops fall on the water, and some cling to the slim grass blades. Birds like this snowy egret seemed completely undisturbed by the misty rainfall.



I have been reading Thomas Merton's book, *When the Trees Say Nothing*, and each of the excerpts is like a peek into his own nature journal. Excellent book! I especially love how he connects the natural seasons to the liturgical seasons and Biblical imagery. His notes on spring parallel with the gorgeous sunshine today:

*Today was **the** prophetic day, the first of the real shining spring: not that there was not warm weather last week, not that there will not be cold weather again. But this was the day of the year when spring became truly credible. Freezing night, but cold bright morning, and a brave, bright shining of sun that is new, and an awakening in all the land, as if the earth were aware of its capacities!*

*I saw that the woodchuck had opened up his den and had come out, after three months or so of sleep, and at that early hour when it was still freezing. I thought he had gone crazy. But the day proved him right and me wrong.*

*The morning got more and more brilliant and I could feel the brilliancy of it getting into my own blood. Living so close to the cold, you feel the spring. And this is man's mission! The earth cannot feel all this. We must. But living away from the earth and the trees we fail them. We are absent from the wedding feast.*

## Courtyard Adventures



The salvias are blooming! Just in time for the [hummingbird spring migration](#). Keep your eyes open for the return of our hummers.

### Where to find Mrs. Breclaw next week

Enjoying spring break!

Hope you have a lovely one! And be sure, whether you're traveling or staying home, to check out the wonders of creation outdoors!

### Nolan Outdoor Learning Headquarters

In the office immediately to the left of the teacher boxes in room D22.

Please come by anytime! Let's chat about how we can work outdoor learning into your lesson plans!

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