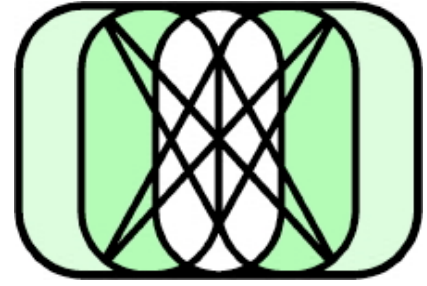


# Church of Creation

## Order of Service

Sunday, January 4, 2009 8:00 AM

First Sunday of 2009



### **Welcome:**

You are always already chosen

### **Hymn:** Blah-Blah

### **Announcements and sharing**

The Kiss

Are you Happy enough to be Happy about it?

This week in Semiotics: **Paradigm Shift**

### **Lost In Space...**

### **Birthday acknowledgment:**

**Sir Isaac Newton** (January 4, 1643 – March 31, 1727, aged 84)

**Louis Braille** (January 4, 1809 – January 6, 1852, aged 43)

### **Process:**

**Day One...**

### **Message:**

**Beginnings: Creating Newly**

**Dialogue on Beginnings: Creating Newly**

**Next week: January 11**

Chaos and Order

## Welcome:

**Welcome to the Church of Creation!** ‘Welcome’ is one of those everyday words mostly spoken and heard automatically. ‘Welcome’ comes to us from the Old English, *wilcuma*, which means, “Your arrival is in alignment with our choice.” This coming together and welcoming is an act of choosing. By welcoming you, we are communicating that you are always already chosen. You don’t have to do anything to be chosen; you already are. Thank you for Being.

There is also nothing to believe or disbelieve. This is a church without a creed or a code. Recognizing that believing or disbelieving may get in the way of living authentically, one of our practices is to suspend belief in favor of inquiries into the unknowable infinity of Being. Notice that I said suspend: you do not have to give up your beliefs. Your beliefs will still be available to you, if you want to take them up again. It is always your choice.

Inquiring into the unknowable produces distinctions that make a difference in one’s experience of life. We promise that an open inquiry will give you power over the matter in question.

The distinction between what and that is a basic example of a distinction. The what-it-is of something (its whatness) describes the properties of the thing: its weight and measure, its content and dimensions, how it shows up in consciousness. That-it-is, or thatness, is the ontological aspect of a subject: the fullness of its existence. While whatness is considered important, it is mostly a matter of preference or point-of-view. Thatness is crucial and primary. **What** you eat is important to your life and health. **That** you eat is crucial. This distinction shows up everywhere. Given the subject of church music, we could say that **what** you sing is merely important. What matters is **that** you are joyfully expressed. In our ongoing experiment on bringing aliveness to our music, we invite you to...

## Announcements and Sharing:

### Tales of the Blah-Blah...

Last week, I mentioned that the Blah-Blah has its root and source in what the Hindus call Brahman or "neti neti" and what the Buddhists refer to as Tathata or Shunyata. It may appear that referring to this Nothing from which all things come as Blah-Blah is somehow dismissive, while referring to it as Brahman is more reverent. The purpose of the Blah-Blah is to keep the Nothing in mind in its appropriate context: Nonsense. Those who dismiss the Nothing and Nonsense, and do not keep it in mind (and this is most people) are left with something and sense. Living by sense alone is futile and filled with frustrations. Attempting to see the light while dismissing the darkness is impossible, just as it is impossible to see stars in the daytime. In *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* (bra-dar-an'-ya-ka oo-pa'-neh-shad), a guru is questioned by his students to explain god. He states "The divine is not this and it is not that" (neti, neti). In other words, Blah-Blah.

### New Year...

My thoughts and theory which you have forgotten.  
These things have served their purpose: let them be.  
So with your own, and pray they be forgiven  
By others, as I pray you to forgive  
Both bad and good. Last season's fruit is eaten  
And the full-fed beast shall kick the empty pail.  
For last year's words belong to last year's language  
And next year's words await another voice.

T. S. Eliot, *Little Gidding* (No. 4 of 'Four Quartets'), pt. II, 1942

### Are You Happy Yet?

Use the 1–7 scale to rate your level of agreement.

1 = Not at all true  
4 = Moderately true  
7 = Absolutely true

1. In most ways, my life is close to ideal.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I am satisfied with my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Dr. Holden says the key to being happy is overcoming "destination addiction," which he defines as "living in the not-now." "It's always about tomorrow, so you're chasing 'more,' 'next' and 'there,'" he says. "You promise yourself that when you get there, you'll be happy. And I promise you, you won't, because you'll always set another destination to go for." Instead, Dr. Holden says if you are unhappy with your life or looking to improve your score on the satisfaction test, there are two things you can do. "We have to learn to let go of our past, we have to give up all hopes for a perfect past. Let the past go, it's gone." After that, he says, "Take a vow of kindness. Be kinder to yourself and to others. "It's never too late to be happy," he says.

Oprah's Best Life Series: personal development.

Semiotics is a general term for the theory of sign systems. It is an inquiry into the way human beings signify their world in language and derive meaning. Through the study of semiotics, we can see how sign systems are used by media, politics and popular culture to manipulate reactions and manufacture consent. It provides us with a valuable look behind the curtain, and insights into how it works and how it doesn't. Beyond what is merely important and interesting about semiotics, we find that language is the medium in which human beings create the Universe. Using language rigorously and precisely supports complete communications and the fulfillment of possibilities.

### This week in Semiotics: The Paradigm Shift

Last week, we introduced the syntagm and the paradigm. You'll recall that the syntagm is a word or phrase that relates to other words or phrases in a sentence. A complete sentence has at least a subject and a verb, with the subject performing the action indicated by the verb. Often there is an object that receives the action. While you may have heard of syntax, the arrangement of the syntagms to form a sentence, although most people have never heard the word 'syntagm.' Have you heard the word 'paradigm' before? Did you believe that the word 'paradigm' had its origin in science or mathematics? Before 1962, the term 'paradigm' was used exclusively in the grammatical or

linguistic sense. Then in 1962, Thomas Kuhn (1922 - 1996), wrote his influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, to describe the basic assumptions within the predominant theory of science. If you think that might be confusing, Kuhn would agree, and in later work, he used more descriptive terms, such as exemplar, ordinary science, normal science, standard model, and so on. Previously the term was used by Ferdinand de Saussure, and other linguists of the late Eighteenth Century, to refer to a class of elements with similarities that could be substituted along the paradigmatic axis...

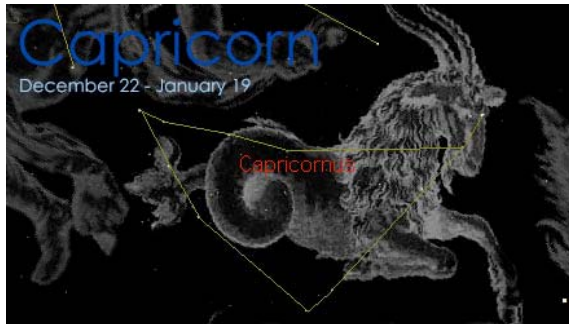
<b>Paradigmatic Axis</b>	<b>elephant</b>	<b>remembered</b>	<b>hunter</b>
	<b>typewriter</b>	<b>ate</b>	<b>homework</b>
	<b>asteroid</b>	<b>smashed</b>	<b>city</b>
	<b>The</b>	<b>cat</b>	<b>scratched</b>
		<b>the</b>	<b>dog.</b>
	<b>Syntagmatic Axis</b>		

Recognizing and realizing that the elements of language may be substituted by means of a paradigm shift gives us real power. We all have motivational narratives that the voice in our heads repeats to us frequently. I refer to these as mythemes and life principles. These mythemes and life principles govern our actions in subtle and automatic ways. "I am a klutz," is an example of a mytheme. "Life isn't fair," is a life principle. Our mythemes and life principles combine in various ways to form disempowering self-talk that limits our choices and diminishes our aliveness.

One approach to gaining mastery over one's mythemes, life principles and self-talk, as well as our communication with the World, is to explore substitutions along paradigmatic lines. For example, something that I hear myself say, both in my head and to others, is "I have to take care of my parents." I could begin by substituting the verb syntagm 'have' with 'get' that belongs to the same paradigm. "I get to take care of my parents." I could go further. The phrase "have to take care" is a verbal phrase that also forms a syntagm. I could substitute 'contribute' as it belongs to the same paradigm. I can also see that I contribute to my parents, who contributed to me in many ways, not the least of which is life itself. For 'parents,' I could substitute 'people who contributed to me' — an objective phrase in the same paradigm. "I contribute to people who contributed to me." Who contributes to me? Everyone. From research scientists to pastry chefs, from garbage collectors to Nobel Peace Prize winners, from people who join me in these conversations every week to the people who avoid these conversations: everyone contributes to my life. "I contribute to Everyone." Another paradigm shift brings out the possibility, "Everyone contributes to Everyone." What started out as disempowering, burdensome self-talk, or an egocentric mytheme of martyrdom, has been transformed, through a series of paradigm shifts, into a possibility into which I can live as a contribution. Inquiring into the paradigms gives power and mastery to our speaking and listening.

The ever-present sky is, in a way, an overarching context for all that happens here on Earth. Reason would doubt that the stars could move us any more than we could move the stars, although it is possible. Even when astrological projections correlate with what is going on with our lives, it is useful to remember that correlation does not indicate causation, and whenever one considers a possibility to be the "Truth," it becomes a lie. For us of course, it is just inspiring to look upward and see the Universe showing off.

Our purpose here is to expand our awareness and explore all inquiries, and so we look outward from this planet to get...



### Lost In Space...

The *International Year of Astronomy 2009* has begun! It is set to be a public celebration of astronomy to be enjoyed all around the world. The year marks the 400th anniversary of Galileo turning a telescope to the sky and aims to reconnect people with the night sky and highlight the contributions astronomy has made to our society and culture.

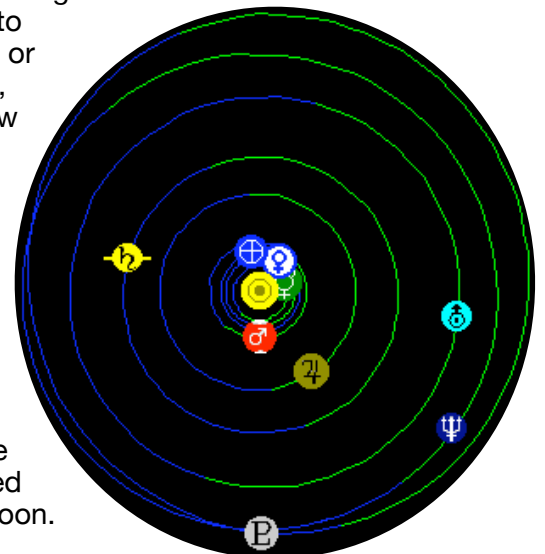
This week, **January 4th through January 10th**, Jupiter will continue to get lower in the sky every evening and disappear into the sunset. We'll see him again as an early riser in late February, just before sunrise. This passage coincides with Jupiter's transition out of Capricorn. Get ready to jump into action as Jupiter moves into humanity-oriented Aquarius. According to Astrology, the shift into Aquarius gives us one year for Jupiter to expand our understanding, interaction and concept of humanity.

Look for the constellation **Cassiopeia**, the Seated Queen, around 7:00 PM, just above and to the left of the North Star (Polaris). If you have difficulty finding Polaris, find the Big Dipper, a little above the treetops. Sight along the two front stars of the dipper, up and to the left. Polaris is, not surprisingly, due north. Above Polaris, Cassiopeia looks like a broken-down capital 'M.' The supernova known as Tycho's Star, or SN 1572, was widely observed in Cassiopeia in 1572. The scientific description of this star was written by Tycho Brahe, and its appearance created a lot of interest in Astronomy. Johannes Kepler was one of the most famous to become an astronomer at this time.

If we were able to observe Earth's Sun from Alpha Centauri, the Sun would appear in Cassiopeia as a yellow-white 0.5 magnitude star. The famous 'M' of Cassiopeia would become a longer zig-zag pattern with the Sun at the rightmost end.

Cassiopeia was a rather self-absorbed mortal queen, and she had boasted that she and her daughter, Andromeda, were more beautiful than the Nereids (or sea nymphs), which were the daughters of Poseidon (Roman god, Neptune), the god of the sea. Angered by the insult to his daughters, Poseidon sent floods to Ethiopia, the land ruled by Cassiopeia and her husband, King Cepheus. An oracle told King Cepheus that the only way to pacify Poseidon's anger was to sacrifice his daughter to the sea dragon, called either Cetus or Draco, depending on the version. Andromeda was chained, naked, to a rock by the sea to wait for the dragon. You know how dragons are: they always want to possess things that are of absolutely no use to them, particularly gold and beautiful virgins. Then Perseus, the hero arrived, killed the monster and freed Andromeda. For her troublesome boasting, the gods chained Cassiopeia to her throne and placed her in the sky, close to Polaris, so that every night, as she turns she suffers as she hangs from her throne when she gets above Polaris. Her constellation zone is bordered by Perseus, Andromeda and Cepheus.

**Full Moon** on Saturday, the 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:27 PM CST. Called the Full Wolf Moon, this full Moon appeared when wolves howled in hunger outside the villages. It is also known as the Old Moon.



## Birthday Acknowledgement: January 4

**Sir Isaac Newton**, FRS (January 4, 1643 – March 31, 1727) was an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian and one of the most influential men in human history. His *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, published in 1687, is considered to be the most influential book in the history of science. In this work, Newton described universal gravitation and the three

laws of motion, laying the groundwork for classical mechanics, which dominated the scientific view of the physical Universe for the next three centuries and is the basis for modern engineering. Newton showed that the motions of objects on Earth and of celestial bodies are governed by the same set of natural laws by demonstrating the consistency between Kepler's laws of planetary motion and his theory of gravitation, thus removing the last doubts about heliocentrism and advancing the scientific revolution.

In mechanics, Newton enunciated the principles of conservation of momentum and angular momentum. In optics, he built the first "practical" reflecting telescope and developed a theory of color based on the observation that a prism decomposes white light into a visible spectrum. He also formulated an empirical law of cooling and studied the speed of sound.

In mathematics, Newton shares the credit with Gottfried Leibniz for the development of the differential and integral calculus. He also demonstrated the generalized binomial theorem, developed the so-called "Newton's method" for approximating the zeroes of a function, and contributed to the study of power series.

Newton was also highly religious (though unorthodox), producing more work on Biblical hermeneutics than the natural science for which he is remembered today.

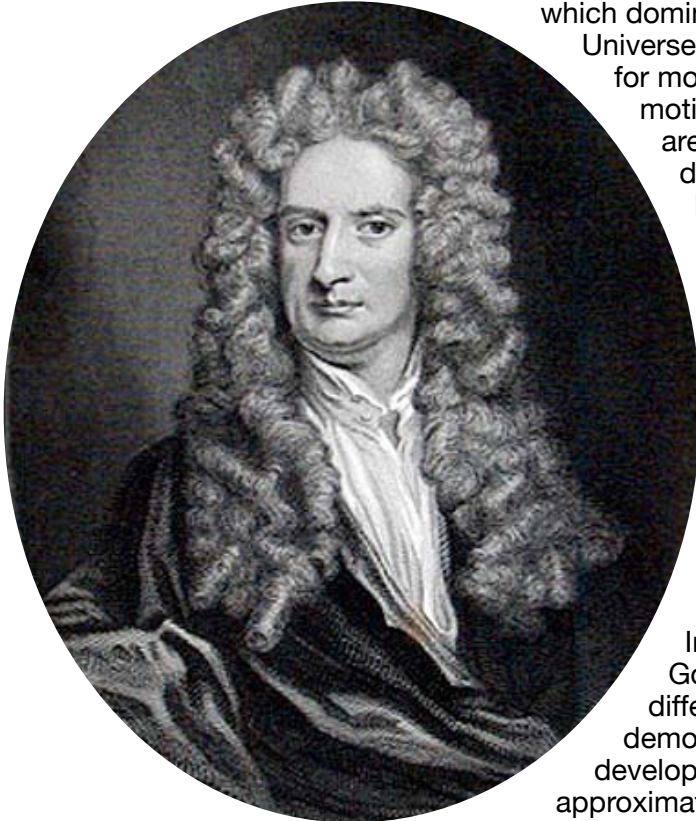
Newton's stature among scientists remains in the very highest regard, as demonstrated by a 2005 survey of scientists in Britain's Royal Society. The survey asked who had most profound effect on the history of science, and Newton was deemed much more influential than Albert Einstein.

Isaac Newton was born at Woolsthorpe Manor in Woolsthorpe-by-Colsterworth, a hamlet in the county of Lincolnshire. Newton began his schooling in the village schools and was later sent to The King's School, Grantham, where he became the top student in the school. At King's, he lodged with the local apothecary, William Clarke and eventually became engaged to the apothecary's stepdaughter, Anne Storer, before he went off to the University of Cambridge at the age of 19. As Newton became engrossed in his studies, the romance cooled and Miss Storer married someone else. It is said he kept a warm memory of this love, but Newton had no other recorded "sweet-hearts" and never married.

In June 1661, he was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge. According to John Stillwell, he entered Trinity as a sizar — allowed free education in consideration of performing certain menial duties. Sizar had to earn their keep as servants to the wealthier students.

### Mathematics

Most modern historians believe that Newton and Leibniz developed infinitesimal calculus independently, using their own unique notations. According to Newton's inner



circle, Newton had worked out his method years before Leibniz, yet he published almost nothing about it until 1693, and did not give a full account until 1704. Meanwhile, Leibniz began publishing a full account of his methods in 1684. Moreover, Leibniz's notation and "differential Method" were universally adopted on the Continent, and after 1820 or so, in the British Empire.

### **Mechanics**

In 1677, Newton returned to his work on mechanics, i.e., gravitation and its effect on the orbits of planets, regarding Kepler's laws of planetary motion, and consulting with Hooke and Flamsteed on the subject. He published his results in *De motu corporum in gyrum* (1684). This contained the beginnings of the laws of motion that would inform the *Principia*.

The *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (now known as the *Principia*) was published on July 5, 1687 with encouragement and financial help from Edmond Halley. In this work Newton stated the three universal laws of motion that were not to be improved upon for more than two hundred years. He used the Latin word *gravitas* (weight) for the effect that would become known as gravity, and defined the law of universal gravitation. In the same work he presented the first analytical determination, based on Boyle's law, of the speed of sound in air. Newton's postulate of an invisible force able to act over vast distances led to him being criticized for introducing "occult agencies" into science.

With the *Principia*, Newton became internationally recognized. He acquired a circle of admirers, including the Swiss-born mathematician Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, with whom he formed an intense relationship that lasted about five years. The end of this friendship led Newton to a nervous breakdown.

### **Later Studies**

In the 1690s, Newton wrote a number of religious tracts dealing with the literal interpretation of the Bible. Henry More's belief in the Universe and rejection of Cartesian dualism (*cogito*) may have influenced Newton's religious ideas. A manuscript he sent to John Locke in which he disputed the existence of the Trinity was never published. Later works – *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* (1728) and *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (1733) – were published after his death. He also devoted a great deal of time to alchemy. After his death in 1727, Newton's body was discovered to have had massive amounts of mercury in it, probably the result of his alchemical pursuits. Mercury poisoning could explain Newton's eccentricity in late life.

### **Religion and Philosophy**

Newton and Robert Boyle's mechanical philosophy was promoted by rationalist pamphleteers as an alternative to the pantheists and enthusiasts, and was accepted hesitantly by orthodox preachers as well as dissident preachers like the latitudinarians. Thus, the clarity and simplicity of science was seen as a way to combat the emotional and metaphysical superlatives of both superstitious enthusiasm and the threat of atheism, and, at the same time, the second wave of English deists used Newton's discoveries to demonstrate the possibility of a "Natural Religion."

Newton saw God as the master creator whose existence could not be denied in the face of the grandeur of all creation. The unforeseen theological consequence of his conception of God (as Leibniz pointed out) was that God was now entirely removed from the world's affairs, since the need for intervention would only evidence some imperfection in God's creation, something impossible for a perfect, omnipotent creator.

In a manuscript he wrote in 1704 in which he describes his attempts to extract scientific information from the Bible, he estimated that the world would end no earlier than 2060. In predicting this he said, "This I mention not to assert when the time of the end shall be, but to put a stop to the rash conjectures of fanciful men who are frequently predicting the time of the end, and by doing so bring the sacred prophecies into discredit as often as their predictions fail."

**Louis Braille** (January 4, 1809 – January 6, 1852, aged 43) was the inventor of Braille, a worldwide system used by blind and visually impaired people for reading and writing. Braille is read by passing the fingers over characters made up of an arrangement of one to six embossed points. It has been adapted to almost every known language.

Louis Braille became blind at the age of 3, when he accidentally stabbed himself in one eye with an awl, one of his father's workshop tools and got an infection, the other eye went blind from the infection spreading to it. At the age of 10, Braille earned a scholarship to the Royal Institution for Blind Youth in Paris, one of the first of its kind in the world. However, the conditions in the school were not notably better. Louis was served stale bread and water, and students were sometimes abused or locked up as a form of punishment.

Braille, a bright and creative student, became a talented cellist and organist in his time at the school, playing the organ for churches all over France.

At the school, the children were taught basic craft skills and simple trades. They were also taught how to read by feeling raised letters (a system devised by the school's founder, Valentin Haüy). However, because the raised letters were made using paper pressed against copper wire, the students never learned to write. Another disadvantage was that the letters weighed a lot and whenever people published books using this system, they put together a book with multiple stories in one to save money. This made the books sometimes weigh over a hundred pounds. The school only had 14 books. Louis had read every book.

In 1821, Charles Barbier, a Captain in the French Army, visited the school to show the children his invention, called "Night writing." This was a code of twelve raised dots and a number of dashes that let soldiers share top-secret information on the battlefield without having to speak. The code was too difficult for Louis to understand, and he later changed the number of raised dots to six to form what we today call Braille.

That year Louis began inventing his raised-dot system with his father's stitching awl (Was it the same one that he used to stab himself in the eye nine years earlier?), finishing at age 15, in 1824. His system used only six dots and corresponded to letters, whereas Barbier's used 12 dots corresponding to sounds. The six-dot system allowed the recognition of letters with a single fingertip apprehending all the dots at once, requiring no movement or repositioning which slowed recognition in systems requiring more dots. These dots consisted of patterns, keeping the system easy to learn. The Braille system also offered numerous benefits over Haüy's raised letter method, the most notable being the ability to both read and write an alphabet. Another very notable benefit is that because they were dots just slightly raised, there was a significant difference in make up.

Braille later extended his system to include notation for mathematics and music. The first book in Braille was published in 1829 under the title *Method of Writing Words, Music, and Plain Songs by Means of Dots, for Use by the Blind and Arranged for Them*. In 1839 Braille published details of a method he had developed for communication with sighted people, using patterns of dots to approximate the shape of printed symbols. Braille and his friend Pierre Foucault went on to develop a machine to speed up the somewhat cumbersome system.

Braille became a well-respected teacher at the Institute. Although he was admired and respected by his pupils, his Braille system was not taught at the Institute during his lifetime. The air at the institute was foul and he died in Paris of tuberculosis in 1852 at the age of 43. In 1854, two years after his death, his system was officially recognized in France. His body was disinterred in 1952 (on the centenary of his death) and honored with re-interment in the *Panthéon* in Paris.





Process:

### **Day One...**

We are about to participate in a process. The process is a way to bring something that has not been experienced or experienced fully — or even something impossible to experience — into ordinary experience. There is nothing that you are supposed to get from it. There is no way that it is supposed to look. You get to experience what you experience and you get whatever you get.

Please position yourself comfortably, and close your eyes, if you would like to. Bring your awareness to your breathing and the words you are hearing. Allow your attention to your own thoughts to fade into the background. Create a rhythmic method for your breathing, inhaling through the nose, pausing after you inhale to allow the air to fully enliven your cells, then exhaling completely and pausing for a moment to consider the precious gift of air before receiving it gratefully, inhaling and smiling with joy.

As you breathe and smile, create for yourself the experience of lying in a meadow on a warm and clear summer day. You are aware of the gentle sounds of benign insects and the delightfully weedy scent of the wildflowers that surround you. The Sun has risen from your left and is now high in the sky, warming your body. Still breathing and smiling, create the experience of noticing that the Sun is no longer progressing through the sky, and seems to be hanging above you in place. Feeling warm and comfortable, you sense that the rotation of the Earth has stopped, the breeze has ceased and the persistent sense of muscle tension that you sometimes refer to as yourself has been released and you experience complete relaxation and heaviness with no motion forces acting on you, other than gravity.

When the Sun resumes moving, notice that it is traveling back toward the East and the Earth seems to have reversed its rotation. Still breathing and smiling, feeling comfortable and safe, create the experience of this backward rotation speeding up: the Sun sets in the East as the full Moon rises in the West, sets in the East and the Sun comes up in the West and the nights and days are passing very quickly. You are getting younger, and smaller and lighter, with a renewed sense of vigor and vitality. Create for yourself getting younger and younger and smaller and smaller and lighter and lighter until you disappear into nothing but pure consciousness.

Time seems to be reversing even faster now, as you watch in complete fascination and joy, fully conscious and calm in your thinking and feeling, without body sensations, no pain or tension. You watch from a distance now as the Earth itself is getting younger and younger and smaller and smaller until it disappears into your consciousness. The Sun is losing its equilibrium and becoming cooler and smaller and bluer. The Sun becomes a small protostar in a colorful nebula or gases and dust, and then it disappears into the cloud. As you look around in the Universe, there are many of these colorful nebulae and they all seem to be flowing toward a central point. Still breathing and smiling and feeling very relaxed and warm and comfortable, create the experience of seeing all of these clouds gathering together and darkening. When all the gases and dust have gathered into a small point of light, watch as this small point of light fades to Nothing. This is the beginning. This is a time out of time. This is the Eternal Now. There is Now Nothing and You. Experience the Eternal Now and Nothing that You are.

When you are ready, let there be light. And there is light. Now there is all the time there ever was or will be. Create your Universe. You can keep the release from muscle tension, the vigor and vitality that you generated earlier as you continue to create your Universe, your Sun, your Earth, your body in a meadow, feeling warm and safe and comfortable, breathing and smiling without tension or pain.

When you are ready to do so, please open your eyes.

**Message:**

**Beginnings: Creating Newly  
Sunday, January 4, 2009**

**Text**

Beginnings by Samantha Thomas, 2005.

How, when and where to begin Being the possibilities that you stand for.

Trim-tabs and cracks in the stone face.

Wanting / Lacking as a paradigm shift.

**Dialogue on Beginnings: Creating Newly**

**Completion**

**Next week:**

Next Sunday is the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, the Ancient Roman festival of *Carmentalia*, which was primarily celebrated by women. *Carmenta* was an oracle who was said to be able to see the past and the future clearly. She was deified as the goddess of childbirth and prophecy, associated with technological innovation as well as the protection of mothers and children, and the patron of midwives and nurses. She was also said to have invented the Latin alphabet. This doesn't have much to do with our service next week, although I thought I'd mention it. The message and theme of next Sunday's service is **Chaos and Order**. Please join us next Sunday as we explore the question of making sense of nonsense.