Psalm 114

When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
Judah became God’s sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

The sea looked and fled;
Jordan turned back.
The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.

Why is it, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back?
O mountains, that you skip like rams?
O hills, like lambs?

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

I think sometimes the Earth can be so much smarter than we humans are – more tuned in to what the rest of Creation is about. For me, this image of the sea fleeing, the Jordan river turning back, the mountains and hills skipping like sheep all at the presence of our God bursts wide my heart. “Why is it, O sea, that you flee? . . . Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.” Yes, for the earth in this imagery is reacting to the presence of our One God – not to any one people.

At the time this was written, the God of Jacob supposedly belonged to the Israelite people – but now at least three faiths claim this same God as the One God: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

As we consider how divided people of faith remain at our time of history – especially on the anniversary of a day when so many felt it was one religion against another (September 11, 2001), may we remember that the Earth is home to all of us, these three faiths and all the rest of the people who live on this planet. May we not then be like the Earth, and all of us tremble in humility, skip with sheer joy, together in the presence of our God?

Marisa Brown Ludwig, August 2011