I heard a poem this week that referenced God as the poet’s muse. What a startling idea, I thought. I think of God in many different ways, playing many different roles in my life, but I had never before thought of God as a muse. A muse, I thought, is a person, place or thing that brings creative inspiration to one’s mind. A muse keeps writers writing and painters painting and musicians writing lyrics and creating tunes. A muse, I thought, is small and God, I think, is more vast than I can even imagine.

But then, it came to me. God is in the muses that are all around us. Of course He is. That poet is right. She spoke of God as a muse who comes one time as a bird and another time as a cloud. And there is part of God inside us, the spark of the divine that flows in us, that draws our attention to the object of inspiration God points us to.

Last Sunday, while setting up for worship at Historic Christ Church, I spied my muse for the day. I saw it as I was walking across the patio covered in bricks dedicated to donors who helped to restore Historic Christ Church from a dilapidated, abandoned colonial brick church house into the restored, marvelous worship space and museum that it is today. As I was heading back to the Bayne Conference Center, I looked to my left and saw the sun shining through a most glorious cobweb. The spider who created that web may have had a long list of insects on her grocery list, but in my mind she was nothing if not a gifted artist.

I took a picture of that web as it sparkled in the sunshine. It made me think how each of those people remembered in that patio were all part of a web, the web of folks all gathered around to make Historic Christ Church what it is today.

It’s not much of a leap to then think about how we are all part of various webs - the web of the Grace Church Congregation, the web of our families, the web of the Northern Neck community, and so on and so on. The thing about the makeup of a web is that it is highly sensitive. When something gets caught in the web, the fibers of the web respond by moving. If you were in that web you would sense the vibration. You would be affected even if the interference happened on the opposite side of the web.

Isn’t that how life works, too. When something happens to someone in your web, others in that web feel it. There is no way of escaping the sensation that something has happened. That’s why it’s so important to think about the others in your web of relationships when you make big decisions and do things that will make your web vibrate. Be aware that the other people in your web, whether you’ve been in touch lately or not, whether you’ve been close or whether you’ve thought they’d moved on, other people will be affected. Take care to care for them.

Maybe that kind of thinking is what inspired Jesus. Maybe God was Jesus’ muse, too, when he said love and care for your neighbor as God dreams that you love and care for yourself.