

Sunday March 6th, 2022
The First Sunday in Lent
Communion Sunday

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

One: We may be entering this season arid, dry from pain and injustices.

Many: And yet, God is still hydrating our spirits.

One: We may be wandering, feeling as if we have no direction.

Many: And yet, God is guiding us in the wilderness.

One: We may be fearful, wondering what comes next.

Many: And yet, God is surrounding us with peace.

One: We may begin our Lenten journey spiritually arid, aimless, and anxious.

Many: But the Spirit of Strength will never leave our side.

Opening Prayer **Unison**

Divine Sojourner, As we saunter far into the wilderness, may your light sustain us. May the questions that fill our minds with doubt drift away into the sands of the journey. May we dig within our souls to remove the prejudices deep within us. However we wander in this season, may your Holy Glow refocus our attention on our relationship with you and the ways we connect with our siblings. Amen.

Hymn #197: Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

Hymn Leader: Ken Littlefield

1) Jesus, keep me near the cross;
there a precious fountain,
free to all, a healing stream,
flows from Calv'ry's mountain.

Refrain:

In the cross, in the cross,
be my glory ever,
till my ransomed soul shall find
rest beyond the river.

2) Near the cross, a trembling soul,
love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star
sheds its beams around me. [Refrain]

3) Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
bring its scenes before me;
help me live from day to day
with its shadow o'er me. [Refrain]

4) Near the cross I'll watch and wait,
hoping, trusting ever,
till I reach the golden strand,
just beyond the river. [Refrain]

Prayer of Reflection and Growth **Unison**

God of the Road, we journey together into the wilderness again. In this time filled with new spiritual practices and studies, our minds will be “tested.” Doubts will creep in as we seek your presence. At times, we will slide away from our responsibilities to care for our neighbors.

“Keep awake,” you call to us.

And so we ask ourselves:

Will hurtful words from others taunt us, and inhibit our growth with you?

Will negative images in our minds draw us away from our practices?

Will we snooze to the needs of this world and ignore the pain in our communities?

Deliver us from the temptations of this world and the tests that we impose upon ourselves. Amen.

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

When we aimlessly wander throughout this Lenten journey, God follows us – even into the depths of the wilderness. May we see God's presence, knowing we are never alone on arid days and in barren lands. Amen!

Passing of the Peace

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Ron Dobson

Psalm 91:1–2, 9–16 (NRSV)

Assurance of God's Protection

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
² will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."

⁸ You will only look with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹ Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
the Most High your dwelling place,

¹⁰ no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.

¹² On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

¹⁴ Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.

¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honor them.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.

Special Music

Ken Littlefield

Gospel Reading

Luke 4:1-13 (NRSV)

The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.'"

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you,'

¹¹ and

'On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

¹² Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Musical Interlude

Sermon: "It's Not What You Think"

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People

Hymn # 211: Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Ken Littlefield

1) Lord Jesus, who through forty days
for us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins,
and close by you to stay.

2) As you with Satan did contend,
and did the victory win,
O give us strength to persevere,
in you to conquer sin.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer Unison

Offering Invitation

Deuteronomy 26:2 (NRSV) declares that: "...you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name."

As you prepare your offering this morning, let us also reflect on how God is calling us to share the best we possess, the first fruits of our labors.

Offering and Dedication Unison

Holy Streamer of Gifts, we share our gratitude for all of our fruits. May our "best" be something that we do not hoard but that we freely give away. As we embrace this season of fasting and reflection, let us come to recognize the best of our talents, treasures, and time and learn to share them with God and neighbor. Amen.

Service of Holy Communion

Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Communion Prayer **Unison**

As we eat this meal together and as we drink this juice of life in each other's presence grant unto us an emerging, fulfilling, and redeeming sense of life calling. In this holy meal of communion, we feel the allure and enticement of fellowship enriching us and making us more able to serve you and your ends in life. With eternal gratitude we give you thanks. Amen.

Benediction **Unison**

As we continue on our Lenten journey,
May God, the Divine Light
open our souls to healing and wisdom.
May Christ the Sojourner lead us into oases of renewal
in arid and barren times.
May the Spirit of Hope fill us with courage to carry on.
As Jesus confronted the struggles of wilderness preparation,
may we find strength to encounter the wilderness of the soul,
and come away enlightened and empowered.
Amen.