



Pioneer Pastoral Charge
Sunday, September 20th 2020
Creation Season: Wilderness

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Acknowledgements/Inspired by...

Seasons of the Spirit™ SeasonsFUSION Pentecost 2 2020

Gathering. Pentecost 2 2020 (Year A)

Candle Lighting:

The light of Christ... God around us, among us, within us.

Acknowledging the History of the Land We Share

The land we share is God's land.

We worship God on the traditional territories of the
Blackfoot, Nittsitapi, Metis, Cree
and Sioux Indigenous people.

We are partners together in the agreements of
Treaty Six and Treaty Seven.

As God's people, followers of the way of Jesus,
Let us be people of Love, of Truth,
And of Reconciliation.

In our church's creation season this year
today is Wilderness Sunday,
a day we set aside to look beyond ourselves
and remember the grace,
wisdom, grandeur, and experience
of the nonhuman world.

What can the wilderness teach
us about ourselves?

Creator God,
help us to open our minds and hearts
to the grandeur of our creation.
Help us to remember
that even when we are in solitude
at the back of a cave or the foot of a mountain
or the bottom of a silent canyon,
we are not alone.
We are part of this wild,
grand, connected world.
We are part of the wilderness.
and the wilderness teaches us who we are. Amen.

Hymn: ♪ MV#27 Creator God, You Gave Us Life

Scripture is our song for the journey,
the living word passed on
from generation to generation to guide and inspire.
**God calls us to be
doers of the word
and not hearers only.**

Scripture opened, God invited:

Mark 1:9-13 Common English Bible

Jesus is baptized and tempted

⁹ About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. ¹¹ And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

¹² At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

Prayer for Grace

Creator God,
as communities surrounded by
the beautiful wilderness of the prairie,
we know the power of space and quiet
we know the stillness
that enables us to hear your voice.

Yet...
there are times
when we forget to take time to talk to you.

**there are times
when we find ourselves
uncomfortable in the silence**

there are times when
we rush to fill the spaces with noise
losing the opportunity
to grow and learn with you.

Forgive Us God.

Remind us again of
the importance of connecting with you.
**Take us into uncomfortable places
where we are forced
to confront our fears and our faith.**

Remind us that in those wilderness places,
when we feel alone,
when we feel threatened,
when we need direction for
our next move forward in your kingdom...
you are with us.

**Share your patience with us
as we pray to be
grounded and guided
by your loving voice
coming to us in the silence
to lead us forward,
to be one with your creation.**

☪Hymn: ♪ Listen in the silence. Linnea Good

Words of assurance.

In this land of living water,
of long prairies, of dips and turns,
of wildness and wilderness,
God is with us.
In all of the hours of
our struggles and questions
God is right beside us whispering in our heart
that we are strong, compassionate and loved
because God made us that way.
Thanks be to God.

Scripture opened, God invited:

Listen to the spirit: Wilderness moments.

As part of our Church Creation Season, today is named Wilderness Sunday. What does wilderness mean to you?

My first inclination was a place of no civilization, no houses, no people, miles of land that felt unwelcoming and scary. Or perhaps it is a feeling of isolation, emptiness, alone-ness, disconnectedness.

Many of us might feel that Wilderness is undesirable, but the truth is that there are people very comfortable with living in the middle of nowhere, of having neighbours miles away instead of on the next block, of feeling unrestrained by the space around them. There are people who prefer to be alone – it is a comforting place and space for them. Wilderness means different things to different people. It is important to be aware that the same circumstance is not the same experience for everyone.

The scripture that we are given today to explore Wilderness with is short. We could have explored some more Moses stuff, or perhaps Adam and Eve thrust out from the garden to a wilderness, but, no, today we sit with Jesus.

And this is a sitting. Not a travelling. It is a time of contemplation without distractions.

Just after his public baptism, a declaration that he was changing his focus of life to follow God, just after he felt the power of the Holy come upon him, Jesus moved into a wilderness. He went into a place with no people, no food, and plenty of danger – look out for wild animals, and solitude.

In other scriptures we are told in detail of temptations and challenges given to Jesus by Satan, but today's scripture simply says that the Spirit – God? -- moved Jesus into the wilderness and that he was there for forty days. In this dangerous place he was indeed tempted, but God through Angels cared for him.

It appears that this time of discernment was necessary to strengthen Jesus for the next steps of his journey. In this uncomfortable time, he would consider what was important and what was not; what he would leave behind and what he would take with him; was he really prepared to make the changes and sacrifices that would be needed to be his best for God and God's people.

Wilderness is uncomfortable. It shakes us out of our complacency and forces us to re-examine what is important to us. From a faith perspective, it may ask us to re-consider what faith means to us and how we live it.

We are finding ourselves in a bit of a wilderness place right now. We have been separated from the people and places that are familiar to us. We have been set in an unfamiliar place where we can't be with those we wish to share time with. We are being asked to re-examine our priorities.

This Wilderness experiences chafes many of us. We don't want to contemplate and discern, we want to be out of here, back to civilization. There are others who are finding new gifts in slowing down, in not being rushed to do things, in spending their time enjoying the gifts of God's creation.

Wilderness is affecting us in different ways but, either way, this Wilderness moment is asking us to think about who we are and who God is calling us to be.

As followers of Jesus, we can take some guidance from his Wilderness experience. He did not succumb to the temptation of taking the easy way out. He did not give in to the fear of the unknown. He trusted that God would have his back and walk with him in this unknown journey ahead.

What he did was to take this time to strengthen his faith, to discern how he would move forward calling for justice, teaching of God's love. He looked at what he had been doing and changed it to fit his new, changed circumstance. He looked at what his

new mission would look like when the Wilderness moment was completed.

We are invited to do that too.

Before this wilderness time, we had a way of being and doing things as church. When we leave this wilderness time, we will be and do things differently. How will we do this to include all of God's people, while offering care to God's people?

The easy way, for some, would be to not return to church, to remain with Zoom, to continue to receive bulletins. The easy way, for some, would be to return to church, drop the Zoom and the bulletins. But... maybe we need to stretch ourselves and consider how we do all three. During this wilderness time, we have caught the attention of different people. If we drop the online components we may be dropping newly engaged folk. Should we continue to send bulletins to those who can't get into our buildings or onto computers to join us. Is our Mission to hide, or to emerge with new ways of connecting to God's people?

In the Wilderness, Faith held Jesus together. Faith brought him back into the world with a changed attitude, a new direction, a new energy to be the voice, feet and hands of God. Faith guided Jesus to emerge with a renewed dedication to listen to God's people, to look for God's people, to love God's people.

How has this Wilderness experience changed you?
What challenges has Spirit God laid in your heart?
What will you leave behind? What will you change
so that all God's people hear love and caring
through you?

Responding to God's Invitation

God invites us to take time
and live in the world
with deliberate determination
to be love for all others.
God invites us to
connect to truth with humility
putting our ego aside to learn what is needed.

May we respond by being
the voice in someone else's silence:
coming together in learning how
to love God's world;
offering from our abundance
so that others may find life without scarcity.
Amen.

œHymn: ♪ VU#633 Bless Now, O God, the journey.

Prayers from God's people, for God's people.

*As we move through these prayers today,
there will be a moment of silence * after each
section.*

*You are invited to be in the silence,
thinking of those who need our prayers,
listening for God's voice speaking to you.*

Holy God,
On our continuing journey of faith,
where there are celebrations
and decisions to be made,
we are grateful for
your presence with us on the journey:
for those times when
you come to us in light telling us “we are loved”;
for those times when
you whisper in our heart “we are loved”

Creator God,
we offer our prayers for your world:
for times and place where
enough care has not been given;
for times and places when
the earth has groaned and not been heard;
for your continuing grace that
holds the earth and all of it's creatures together
*

God of Justice,
we offer our prayers for your people:
for those who struggle with discrimination,
with violence, with poverty,
with systems that hurt instead of heal:
for those who, sometimes unknowingly,
are part of the problem
but can't see past themselves
to the needs of their neighbours;

for those who offer their best
to support those who are lost
in unfriendly wilderness moments.

*

God of great compassion,
We pray for those who are ill,
We pray for those who are sorrowing,
We pray for the healers who are
tired and worn from their caring.
May they feel your love
surround them and support them.
May they feel the strength of your spirit
pull them through the pain,
the sorrow, the weariness
to a place of peace that only you can give.

*

God who knows us and loves us,
We pray for ourselves,
that we will take time
to hear your voice of justice and care;
that we will see you in
the light and the dark,
the quiet and the noise;
that we will be the people of your wilderness,
listening, learning and loving
as you would have us do.

*

AMEN

Changing the Christ Candle:

The light of Christ, shining into all the corners of the earth,
showing us where we are and where we are meant to be.
The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with us
wherever we go.

Blessing

Go from this place knowing that,
in the silence, God is with you.
Go from this place knowing that
God has a plan for you
to go out into the world
to live and love as Jesus did.
Go from this place knowing that
we are never alone.
God is always with us.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 🎵 VU#307 Touch the Earth Lightly

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