



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

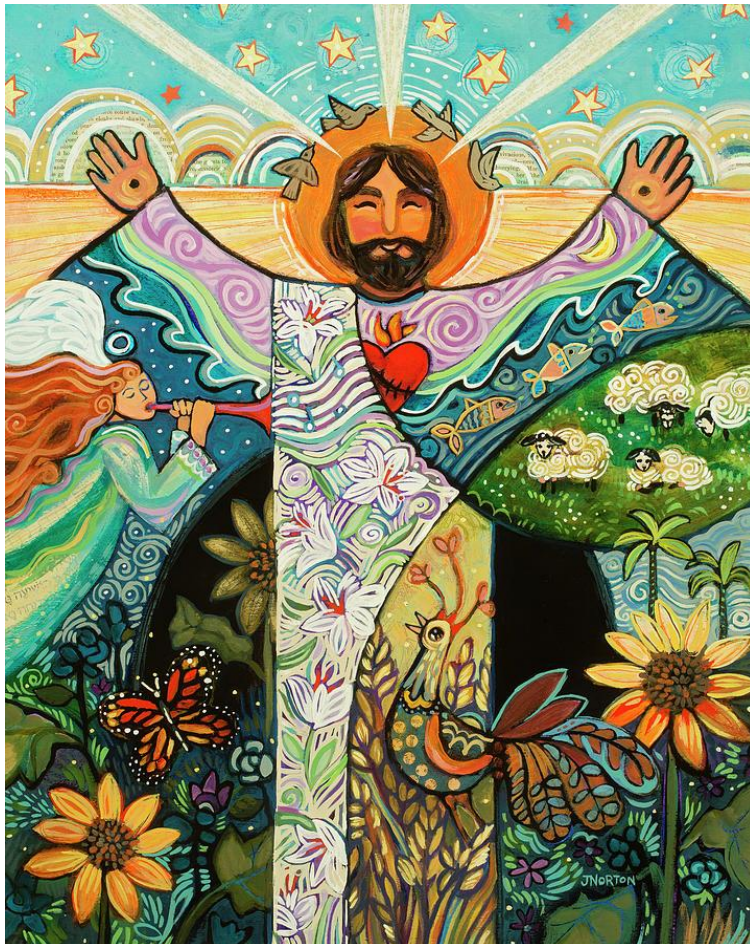
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# Welcome To Worship

April 9, 2023

9:30 a.m.

## Easter Sunday



*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

*"The Wilderness is the Birthplace of Joy" Rev. Trish Eckert*

✧ **Prelude: Zo Trembley**

✧ **Welcome and community news**

We invite you to attend our Congregational Meeting to elect new elders/deacons on Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> right after worship. It will be a brief but important gathering and we ask that as many people attend as possible.

✧ **Readying Ourselves for Worship**

*Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!  
Surely God is in this place,  
Holy Ground!*

✧ **A Blessing as we Center Ourselves in this Moment:  
*The Wilderness is the Birthplace of Joy***

I used to know the wilderness only as pain;  
A land without food, a land without water.  
    But you rained down manna  
    And even water flows in your desert.

I used to think the wilderness was total isolation—  
    But the Israelites had each other,  
    And you had the stars in the sky.

So then I thought the wilderness must be time wasted—  
    Forty years of circles.  
    Forty years of wondering.  
    But then I realized, each step is a step,  
    And maybe there's growth in that.

So then I concluded that the wilderness must be lonely spaces—  
    The woman and her well,  
    The blind man and his gate,  
    Martha and her kitchen,  
    Peter and his fire.  
    But then you showed up in each of those places,  
    To each of those faces.

So now I wonder—  
    What if the wilderness is the birthplace of creation?  
    What if the wilderness is where call begins?  
    What if the wilderness is where joy is birthed?  
    What if, between the dirt and the sky  
    And that wide orange horizon,  
    The wilderness is where we find you?

## ✧ Becoming Present to God and Each Other - Our Check-in

### ~ The Joy of Passing the Peace ~

#### ✧ Kid's Time



#### Song ~ *Before we Fly*

written by Betsy Gonwa,  
played by Betsy and Willie Gonwa

From the corner of my eye, I see a caterpillar  
crawling,  
watch it crawl on by and stop and sigh, and  
wonder  
If while he's eating and exploring,  
does he know he'll be transforming soon into a  
butterfly?  
That his crawling days are numbered?

*And in this moment, it's clear. It came to me while  
sitting here*

*We must die to keep on living.*

*Before we fly, we've got to crawl, or if we're  
leaves, we've got to fall.*

*Each end becomes a new beginning*

One day his striped and fuzzy back will be wings  
orange and black  
against a wide blue sky, drying as they flutter.  
And I don't think it's strange. I just accept that he  
will change.  
That a different life awaits him in his future.

*And in this moment, it's clear. It came to me while  
sitting here  
We must die to keep on living.  
Before we fly, we've got to crawl, or if we're  
leaves, we've got to fall.  
Each end becomes a new beginning*

Like the leaves in fall, the caterpillar crawls upon  
its belly living 'til it dies  
Yes, disappears forever.  
So am I a living creature, not a stationary fixture  
Does each me inside become my own successor?

*For in that moment it was clear. And it's still true  
now and here.  
We must die to keep on living.  
Before we fly, we've got to crawl, or if we're  
leaves, we've got to fall.  
Each end becomes a new beginning.*

So now when I see a caterpillar crawling on its  
belly, I still stop and sigh  
And question why, and wonder.  
With the caterpillar guiding, I no longer can deny  
that death is part of life,  
that fall will follow summer.

*Just a moment in time of a tiny creature's life  
Showed me a whole new way of living  
Before we fly, we've got to crawl, or if we're leaves  
we've got to fall  
Each end becomes a new beginning  
Each end becomes a new beginning.*

Do you ever watch a caterpillar as it crawls and do  
you think about its life,  
And stop, and sigh, and wonder . . .

### ✧ **Gathering as God's People: Joy in the Wilderness**

Throughout the Lenten season, as we've made our way through the wilderness, we've reflected on our own wilderness journeys alongside imagining the wilderness that Jesus navigated throughout his ministry. His journey continues to form and inform us. We come to recognize that we are not meant to stay in the wilderness, losing all sense of rootedness, but neither are we released into the world without any direction. Jesus shows us that the way through, is love. To love in service and in action, as Christ

demonstrated through his many parables, and healings, through his presence and his many teachings, through washing the feet of the disciples and so faithfully walking the path that God set him upon. We are called to reflect the love that the Christ showers upon all of us, to love so boldly that everyone will feel that love enter every wound and every hurt. Our prayer, then, becomes that our wilderness time might increase our capacity for love, spark our feet and hands to action, and strengthen our resolve to love as we have been loved.

On this Easter morning, we are reminded that:

- The wilderness is a place to show up
- The wilderness continues to change us, even when we have left it
- The wilderness is the birthplace of joy
- The wilderness is where we seek enduring hope
- The wilderness is where we encounter resurrection

### ✧ **Gathering Hymn 98 *Morning Has Broken***



### ✧ **Opening Ourselves to God's Grace**

One: In this room, we recognize the wilderness in the world.

**All: In this room, we trust that God is near.**

One: In this room, we hold on to hope.

**All: In this room, we hold on to each other.**

One: In this room, we sing, "Alleluia!"

**All: In this room, we trust that love is stronger than hate.**

One: So in this room, we celebrate.

**All: In this room, we sing.**

One: In this room, we trust that nothing can separate us from God's love.

**All: Let us rejoice together!**

## ✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

God of new life,

We come to you confessing that we are guilty  
of creating emotional wilderness spaces—

Spaces of raised voices and slamming doors,

Of judgments passed and accusations cast,

Of cold shoulders and deep regret.

We create these spaces when we feel threatened, afraid, or ashamed,

Which is far too often given the promises you make to us.

So draw us back to the beginning—where you created and it was good.

Smooth over our wilderness scars and fill our veins with your love;

For like the disciples on that Easter morning, we are running toward you. Amen.

## ✧ **Special Music *I am Infinite*** written and played by Rosie Rain

Mantra:

I am infinite

I am immortal

I am aware

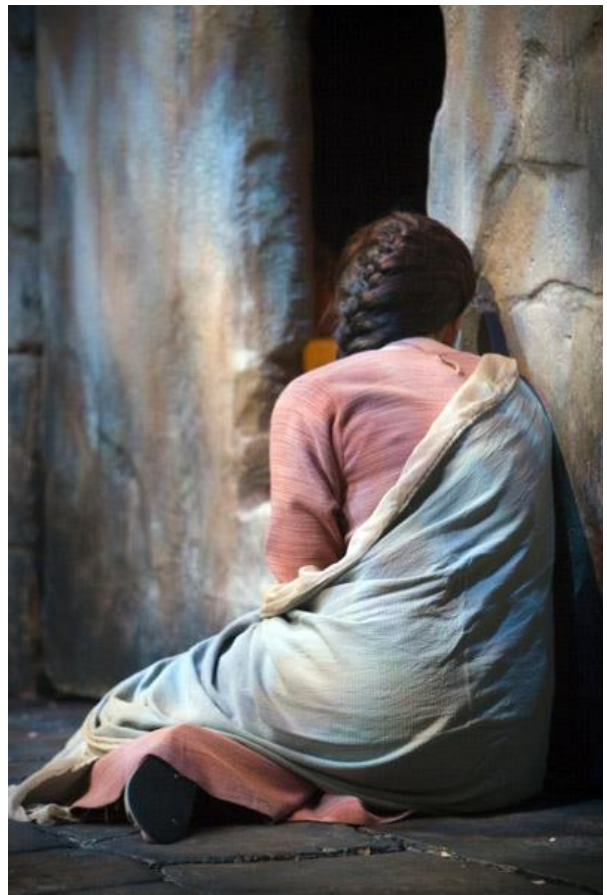
I am awake

## ✧ **Prayer of Intention**

## ✧ **Bible Wisdom Teaching**

### **John 20:1-18**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”



Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

### **Psalm 46**

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the  
earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the  
heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its  
tumult. Selah

There is a river whose streams make  
glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of the city; it shall  
not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning  
dawns.  
The nations are in an uproar; the  
kingdoms totter;

he utters his voice; the earth melts.  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Come, behold the works of the Lord;  
see what desolations he has brought  
on the earth.  
He makes wars cease to the end of the  
earth;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the  
spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
"Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations;  
I am exalted in the earth."  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

All: Thanks be to our God.

✧ **Message** *The Wilderness is the Birthplace of Joy*



✧ **Reflection Questions**

Is there anything you need to release, in order to acknowledge what you have seen?

What are you called to share with the world?

What have you learned from your time in the wilderness?

✧ **Short period of silent reflection**

✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**



✧ **Hymn 157** *Lord of the Dance*



## ✧Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer

### The Lord's Prayer

**ALL: O most Compassionate Life-giver,  
may we honor and praise you;  
May we work with you to establish  
your new order of justice, peace, and love;  
Give us what we need for growth,  
And help us, through forgiving others, to accept forgiveness.  
Strengthen us in the time of testing, that we may resist all evil,  
For all tenderness, strength and love are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

*~Bill Wallace, Aotearoa/New Zealand*

### ✧Benediction

Christ is risen, and goes before us, into this world of fear and pain.  
Christ has called us to bring the Good News of healing, hope, and redemption.  
Go in peace, and feel the presence of Christ with you, now and forever. Amen.

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

### ✧Our Response:

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives on in us.***

### ✧Postlude Zo Trembley



