



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

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless  
Tippecanoe just.good.food Garden | Food Justice Site PCUSA  
Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

# Welcome To Worship

March 5, 2023

9:30 a.m.



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

*"Mystery in the Wilderness" Rev. Trish Eckert*

## ✧Prelude: Zo Trembley

### ✧Welcome and community news

Today is Communion Sunday and we have Adult Education after worship  
This afternoon is a celebration of DI – asking for your prayers  
A reminder that you are always welcome to join us for Tippe’s other worship opportunities which take place on Zoom weekly:

- **Sunday evening 6 pm *Centering Prayer***
- **Monday evening 6:30 pm *Sanctuary Time of Belonging***

### ✧Readying Ourselves for Worship

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

### ✧A Poetry Prayer as we Center Ourselves in this Moment

#### ***The Wilderness is a Place of Mystery & the Unknown***

It’s only in the wilderness that you can see the stars.

That’s what city living has taught me.

We can shine a light on the things we want to see—

Fluorescent and bright, lighting up dark alleys.

However, it’s only in the wilderness that you can see the stars.

And it’s only in the dark of night that the questions come.

What is my purpose here?

What does God have to say to me?

What does God have to say to suffering?

The sun falls and my doubt rises,

For it’s only in the dark that the questions come.

So like Nicodemus in the night,  
I will throw my big questions at the sky.  
And my voice will reverberate among  
the stars,

And my questions will echo throughout  
the dark.

For there in the night, my words form constellations.

And there in the wilderness, my prayers form galaxies.

So even there in the unknown, I trust that I am found.

A light shines in the darkness, friend.

So if ever you’re in the wilderness,

Look up and find the stars.

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)



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

### ~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

#### ✧ **Kid's Time**

#### ✧ **Gathering as God's People: The Lenten Season ~ Wilderness**

As we move more deeply into the Lenten season, we turn to the Gospel of John, out of which over the next four weeks, we'll hear Jesus interacting with different people in different situations. We are invited to think about what kind of life Jesus is offering each of these individuals. We gather a sense of what it might mean when the divine enters into our lives. Each person who encounters Jesus in these stories appears to be confused, to be struggling to understand - in a sense, to be walking in the wilderness. Wilderness is our theme throughout Lent. Each of us have navigated wilderness times in our own lives, and many of us are coping in the wilderness right now – grief, health concerns, career path discernment, estrangement from a family member. I'm grateful that we can explore this theme, the Bible Wisdom teachings, and our own experiences, as a gathered community.

On this particular week we will pay attention these aspects of the wilderness theme:

- The wilderness is a place of mystery and the unknown
- The wilderness requires trust
- The wilderness feels like walking in the dark
- The wilderness is a place for the lost
- The wilderness requires that we keep climbing

#### ✧ **Gathering Hymn 819 *Be Still, My Soul***

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

One: All are welcome here—

**All: The young and old, those who have visions and those who dream dreams.**

One: All are welcome here—

**All: The sinner and saint, those who seek forgiveness and those who long for peace.**

One: All are welcome here—

**All: The hurt and the doubting, those who know the wilderness and those who feel lost.**

One: All are welcome here;

for you are loved by God, and this is God's house.

**All: Let us worship God. Amen.**

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

God, we give you our hearts.

They are brimming with doubt and are saturated with fear, but we give them to you anyway, for you promise to love us as we are. You promise to walk with us to the ends of the earth, so in this moment, we promise to tell the truth.

God, you ask us to be brave and bold, but we cower in fear.

You ask us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but we hold tight to privilege and the status quo.

And you ask us to risk it all to follow you, but we are content with the injustices at hand.

Forgive us for our transgressions and lift our eyes to you. Lift our eyes to the hills.

Gratefully we pray, amen.

✧ **Special Music *Return Again***, by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, sung and played by Rosie Rain

## ✧ **Prayer of Intention**

### ✧ **Bible Wisdom Teachings Psalm 121**

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Sovereign,  
who made heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot be moved;

God who keeps you will not slumber.

Yahweh who keeps Israel

will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Sovereign is your keeper;

Yahweh is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

The Sovereign will keep you from all evil;

God will keep your life.

Yahweh will keep

your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and for evermore.

### **John 3: 1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into

heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of All. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of All be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son, so that everyone who believes in God may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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 Mystery in the Wilderness**



### ✧ **Reflection Questions**

Where are you turning your gaze in these Lenten days? What are you steeping your imagination in? What are you giving your eyes, ears, mind, and soul to? Stories, images, metaphors, poetry, art: what is the culture that you are creating and participating in, or long to be? How does this help you encounter the incarnate presence of the God who came solely for love of you? Queries adapted from Rev Jan L Richardson's blog, [The Painted Prayerbook](#)

### ✧ **Short period of silent reflection**

### ✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**

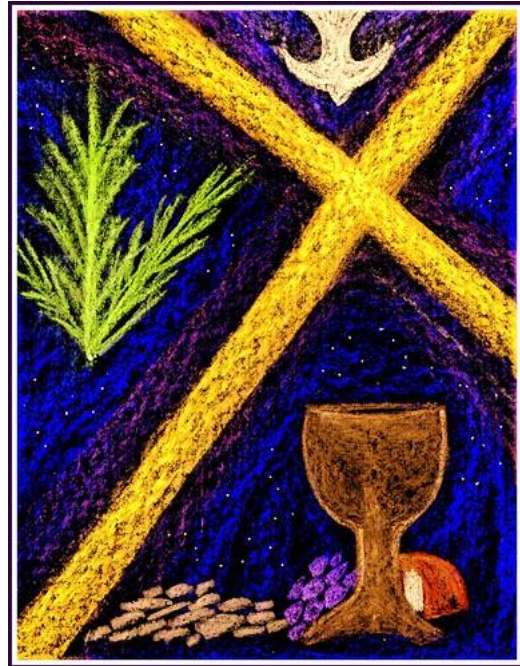
### ✧ **Hymn 292 *As the Wind Song***

### ✧ **Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer**

Lord, like the lawyer Nicodemus, we come to you in hidden ways. We have lots of questions and concerns. We aren't sure that you will even listen to them or that you will think our queries are foolish. New life sounds wonderful. We have made messes in this life, some of which we have cleaned up, but there are others that we have swept under the rug, hidden away in the closet, hidden from ourselves and we believe hidden from you. But you know us better than we want to be known. You know our thoughts and actions. Help us, Lord. How can we turn things around so that there is peace and hope? We offer to you concerns for family, community, and nation; and yet we don't really expect that anything will change. We are unwilling to change ourselves, and so change for the world appears a wispy dream. Bring your presence powerfully to us. Convince us of the hope that rests in you alone. For we offer this prayer in Jesus' Name. Amen.

✧ **Words of Invitation and the Breaking of the Bread ~**

**Communion of the People**



Welcome

As Jesus speaks to Nicodemus, we are reminded that we are born of water and of Spirit. We are invited to rebirth and renewal. As we come to this Table, we come with humility. We come seeking our way through the wilderness and the desire to find our identity in Christ. We come willing to be vulnerable, willing to accept God's grace.

In Baptism, the water washes us. But it isn't the water or the act of Baptism that saves us – it is a heart allowing ourselves to be washed by Jesus and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

In the same way, this meal nourishes us. But it isn't the act of eating that saves us – it is a heart realizing we do not live by bread alone but by the very word of God.

The water, the bread, the cup are how we remember Christ's acts of humility and love. This is how we live into our identity as the Body of Christ – humble, vulnerable, and surrounded by God's love.

## Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God who created us, we remember that you made all things good. In your goodness, you freed us and called us your own.

Jesus who saves us, we remember your love for those no one loved, your kindness for those who knew no kindness, your truth proclaimed for those who did not want to hear it. As the Good Shepherd, you seek us in our wandering and gather us to yourself.

Holy Spirit who fills us, we remember that you pray on our behalf when words fail us; that you are ever present with us. As we gather this morning, Holy Spirit, cover us with your presence. May the cup we share and the bread we break, be brought in communion with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and bind our communion with one another.

In the humility of Christ who came to serve, we pray together, saying:

### **✧The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who is in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come.**

**Thy will be done**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**

### Words of Invitation and the Breaking of the Bread

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he gathered with his disciples to share a meal. Jesus washed their feet and talked with them for a while. Then he took the bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, he took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the saving death of the Risen Lord until he comes again. Our Lord Jesus has prepared this Table for you. All who know or would like to know the love of Jesus are invited to come and partake in this meal.

### Communion of the People

### Prayer after Communion

Humble and vulnerable, we come to sit at your feet and find rest. Refreshed by your living water and fed by the bread and the cup, we rise stronger than when we came. Strengthened by your love, may our humility remain as we offer your love to others. Amen.

*Communion service adapted from Rev Michelle Henrichs, excerpted from her book, "Come to the Table: Communion Liturgies of Invitation to Celebrate and Experience the Love of God."*

### ✧ **Benediction**

This morning, gathered as a beloved community we have been reminded of God's provision and love. By water and Spirit born and blessed, may we each be a living sign of that love, and a blessing to those whose path we cross. 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**

