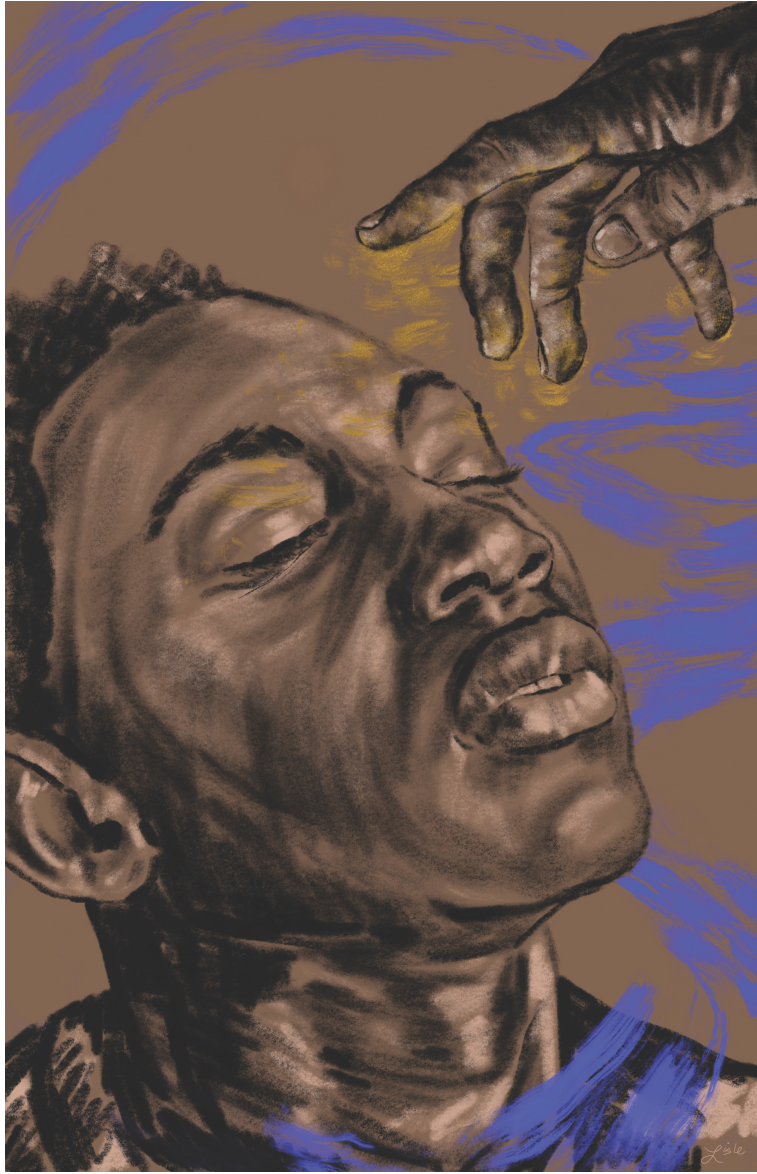


Sunday Worship- March 22, 2020



Siloam by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Wilderness: A Place of Comfort **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

Welcome to Worship

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God is in the water that restores our soul.

All: And God is in the night when we lose our way.

One: God is in today and tomorrow, raising up leaders, prophets and dreamers.

All: And God is in the wilderness with us—every step of the way.

One: So with confidence we declare—

All: If God is in those spaces, then God is surely here.

One: Let us worship the God of creation.

All: Let us worship the God of wilderness spaces.

~Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

*HYMN #183 Come to Me, O Weary Traveler

*Come to me, O weary traveler,
come to me with your distress,
come to me you heavy burdened,
come to me and find your rest.*

*Do not fear, my yoke is easy,
do not fear, my burden's light;
do not fear the path before you;
do not run from me in fright.*

*Take my yoke and leave your troubles;
take my yoke and come with me.
Take my yoke, I am beside you;
take and learn humility.*

*Rest in me, O weary traveler,
rest in me and do not fear.
Rest in me, my heart is gentle,
rest and cast away your care.*

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Are you thirsty for grace? Are you hungry for mercy?

God is calling; come to the water.

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess how we have fallen short:

God of Creation,

**The psalms remind us that even before a word is on our tongue,
you know it completely.**

**You know the prayers we bring before you today—
confessions of greed and doubt, fear and anxiety,
conflict and impatience and regret.**

Free us from these sins.

**Give us the wisdom to recognize that which separates us from you,
to let them go, and cultivate what lets love grow.**

Guide us through our wilderness times and into your light.

Gratefully we pray. Amen.

~Prayer by Sarah Are (modified by Lori Wunder) | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Time of Silence

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

L: Listen, so that you may live:

the steadfast love of the Lord never fails. (Isaiah 55:3)

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

P: Thanks be to God! Amen.

***RESPONSE**

#819 Be Still, My Soul (verse 1)

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side.

Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

*Leave to thy God to order and provide,
who through all changes faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

***PASSING THE PEACE**

L: We are all in need of peace

By the power of the Holy Spirit, let us now share Christ's peace in spirit...

Pandemic –Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?*

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

*on trying to make the world
different than it is.*

*Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.*

Center down.

*And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.*

*Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.*

(You could hardly deny it now.)

*Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.*

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils

*of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.*

*Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

L: Friends, the peace of Christ is with us.

P: Thanks be to God. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

L: In the beginning was the Word.

P: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

L: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Psalm 23 (New Revised Standard Version)

L: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

**P: He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.**

L: Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;

**P: for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.**

L: You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;

**P: you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

**All: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.**

Ephesians 5:8-14 (New Revised Standard Version)

L: For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

**P: Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.
Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.**

L: Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

L: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,

P: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION Wilderness: A Place for Comfort

HYMN #250 Hymn of Promise

*In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*

*There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*

*In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art 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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

L: All that we seek to accomplish, all that we strive to achieve,
all that we claim to possess—all of this amounts to nothing
without the grace of Christ.
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***RESPONSE #70 What Does the Lord Require of You?**

*What does the Lord require of you?
Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.
To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Great God, you are the giver of life and all that is good.

Accept our humble gifts and multiply them.

Accept our humble hearts and mold them.

**Accept our humble lives and transform them, that we might live
in the power of the resurrection, willing to risk all for your kingdom.**

In the name of Jesus we offer these gifts, and in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

~Words for Worship 2 by Diane Zaerr Brenneman, #152

***HYMN #479 Come! Live in the Light!**

*Come! live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God!*

*We are called to act with justice.
We are called to love tenderly.
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

*Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless,
so all hatred and blindness will be no more!*

*We are called to act with justice.
We are called to love tenderly.
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

*Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love!*

*We are called to act with justice.
We are called to love tenderly.
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

The Fourth Week of Lent | THE WILDERNESS IS A PLACE OF DISRUPTION

My grandfather was a good man,
But he believed
That wilderness emotions
Were not to be seen.
Cry with the door closed,
Don't dwell on the negative.
Chin up, kid,
We've been here before.

My grandfather was a good man,
But I'd like to say—
The wilderness is here to interrupt your
previously-scheduled programming.

Like water in the desert
And setting the slaves free,
The wilderness might be
The very thing we need,
The very thing we dream,
The very thing we plead
For.

I guess what I'm trying to say is—
It never seems appealing to let a bird
in the house,
But if you do,
Then you might as well
Open every window and door.

And if you do,
Then you just might find yourself
Basking in the light,
Dancing in the breeze,
Overwhelmed with the beauty
That an open door brings.

So I'm opening my door
And inviting in the wind,
To rustle up my heart
And start over again.

For sweeping the truth under the rug
Has never gotten us far.
So may the wilderness be like a
Bird in your house.
Throw open your doors.
The truth must come out.

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