

# Sunday Worship- March 29, 2020



*Unbind Me* by Lauren Wright Pittman

## **Wilderness: Jesus Weeps With Us** **Fifth 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

L: We are in the wilderness—

**P: Discerning and working, seeking and dreaming.**

L: We are in the wilderness—

**P: Grieving and wondering, praying and hoping.**

L: We are in the wilderness—

**P: Longing and running, creating and waiting.**

L: We are in the wilderness, but we are not alone; for God walks with us, every step of the way.

**P: So let us worship the God of our darkest nights and our brightest days.**

**ALL: Let us worship Holy God.**

~Prayer by Sarah Are (altered slightly) | 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:

**ALL: 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 that 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: Hear these words of the psalmist (Psalm 130):

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

**P: I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in God's word I hope;**

**My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning,**

**More than those who watch for the morning.**

L: Beloved people of God, believe the good news:

Through the grace 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.

John 11:1-45 (Common English Bible) - The Death of Lazarus

*Reader 1:* A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill."

*Reader 2:* When he heard this, Jesus said, "This illness isn't fatal. It's for the glory of God so that God's Son can be glorified through it." Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was. After two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's return to Judea again."

*Reader 3:* The disciples replied, "Rabbi, the Jewish opposition wants to stone you, but you want to go back?"

*Reader 2:* Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in the day? Whoever walks in the day doesn't stumble because they see the light of the world. But whoever walks in the night does stumble because the light isn't in them." He continued, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I am going in order to wake him up."

*Reader 3:* The disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get well." They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was in a deep sleep, but Jesus had spoken about Lazarus' death.

*Reader 2:* Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. For your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there so that you can believe. Let's go to him."

*Reader 1:* Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other disciples, "Let us go too so that we may die with Jesus." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother's death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you."



*Reader 2:* Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

*Reader 3:* Martha replied, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.”

*Reader 2:* Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

*Reader 3:* She replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, God’s Son, the one who is coming into the world.” After she said this, she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary, “The teacher is here and he’s calling for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. He hadn’t entered the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were comforting Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and leave, they followed her. They assumed she was going to mourn at the tomb.

*Reader 1:* When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.” When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled. He asked, “Where have you laid him?” They replied, “Lord, come and see.”

*Reader 2:* Jesus began to weep. The Jews said, “See how much he loved him!” But some of them said, “He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?” Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

*Reader 3:* Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, “Lord, the smell will be awful! He’s been dead four days.”

*Reader 2:* Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see God’s glory?” So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me.” Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

*Reader 1:* Therefore, many of the Jews who came with Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.

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: Jesus Weeps With Us

HYMN            #795 Healer of Our Every Ill

*Refrain:*

*Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.*

*1. You who know our fears and sadness,  
grace us with your peace and gladness;  
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. [Refrain]*

*2. In the pain and joy beholding  
how your grace is still unfolding,  
give us all your vision, God of love. [Refrain]*

*3. Give us strength to love each other,  
every sister, every brother;  
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. [Refrain]*

*4. You who know each thought and feeling,  
teach us all your way of healing;  
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. [Refrain]*

## SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS & 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 #543 God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me**

*1. God be the love to search and keep me  
God be the prayer to move my voice  
God be the strength to now uphold me  
O Christ, surround me  
O Christ, surround me*

*2. Bind to myself the name of Holy  
Great cloud of witnesses enfold  
Prophets, apostles, angels witness  
O Christ, surround me  
O Christ, surround me*

*3. Brightness of sun and glow of moonlight  
Flashing of lightning, strength of wind  
Depth of the sea to soil of planet  
O Christ, surround me  
O Christ, surround me*

*4. Walking behind to hem my journey  
Going ahead to light my way  
And from beneath, above, and all ways  
O Christ, surround me  
O Christ, surround me*

*5. Christ in the eyes of all who see me  
Christ in the ears who hear my voice  
Christ in the hearts of all who know me  
O Christ, surround me  
O Christ, surround me*

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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*The Fifth Week of Lent* | THE WILDERNESS IS A PLACE OF  
NEW LIFE —RESILIENT LIFE

I used to think the wilderness would never end.  
I called my mom and asked—  
“Does time really heal all wounds?  
Do the pieces ever fall back into place?  
Does the wilderness go on forever?”

So she told me about the horizon.  
She said, “There is an edge,  
Where the earth meets the sky.  
And when you’re there,  
You will see daisies in the sidewalk  
And the sun after the rain.”

I asked her to draw me a map  
And she cried,  
Because she knew this road was mine to walk,  
But she promised to wait for me,  
Day in and day out,  
For as long as the wilderness raged.

So I walked.  
And it felt like forty days and it hurt  
like forty nights.  
And I waved to the people I passed there  
in the wilderness.  
We tipped our hats to one another,  
Silently recognizing the weight we  
each carried,

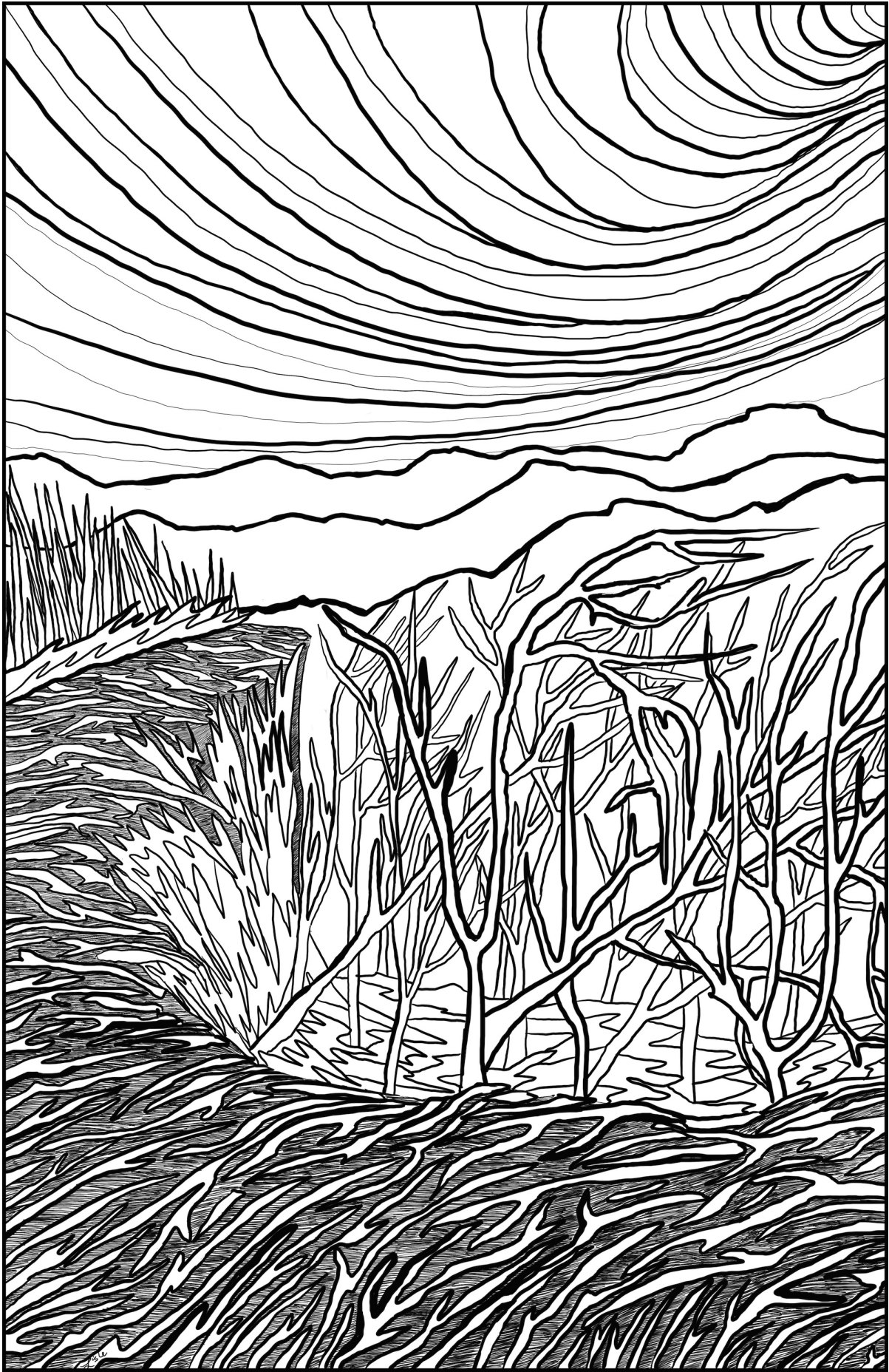
Until one day, I realized—  
The earth always kisses the sky.  
And this wilderness has turned into a garden,  
And I have made it out alive.

And my mother hugged me,  
There at the earth’s edge.  
And she whispered in my ear,  
That God was that gardener,  
And that I had nothing to fear.

So if you ever ask for a map,  
Know that God and I will be planting seeds,  
Hoping to turn your wilderness into a garden.

For as long as the wilderness rages on,  
I will never stop looking for you  
Where the earth kisses the sky.

Poem by Sarah Are | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)



*Valley of Dry Bones by Lisle Gwynn Garrity*