

February 21, 2021
First Sunday of Lent: Service of Word and Sacrament
Worship in the Wilderness¹

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PREWORSHIP MUSIC

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: God of feasting and fasting, mountaintop and desert, you gather us together by your Holy Spirit. May we follow Jesus into the wilderness, feeding on your living bread and tasting your water of life. We come hungry and thirsty for more of you. Amen.

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION - *What kind of road has brought you here?*

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION TIME - *Blessed Be Your Name* (Redman)²

Verse 1

Blessed be your name -
in the land that is plentiful,
where Your streams of abundance flow.
Blessed be your name.

Verse 2

Blessed be your name -
when I'm found in the desert place.
though I walk through the wilderness.
Blessed be your name.

Pre-Chorus

Ev'ry blessing you pour out I'll -
turn back to praise.
When the darkness closes in Lord,
still I will say:

Chorus

Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be your glorious name!

Verse 3

Blessed be your name -
when the sun's shining down on me,
when the world's all as it should be
Blessed be your name.

¹ Much of the worship liturgy (Call to Worship, Confession, et cetera) for this year's Lenten season will be adapted from a hard copy resource called "Worship in the Wilderness" by Sara and Sam Hargreaves/Music and Worship Foundation 2018. This is from Pastor Laura's personal worship material library. If they are not from this resource, footnotes will indicate otherwise.

² Redman, Matt and Beth. Copyrights 2002: Thankyou Music. Approval to print and livestream words given by the CCLI. Marantha Music Video: [Blessed Be Your Name | Maranatha! Music \(Lyric Video\)](#) - Bing video used with permission.

Verse 4

Blessed be your name -
on the road marked with suffering,
though there's pain in the offering -
Blessed be Your name.

Pre-Chorus

Ev'ry blessing you pour out I'll -
turn back to praise.
When the darkness closes in Lord,
still I will say:

Chorus

Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be Your glorious name!
(Repeat entire chorus)

Bridge

You give and take away.
You give and take away.
My heart will choose to say:
Lord, blessed be your name!
(Repeat entire bridge)

Chorus

Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be Your glorious name!
(Repeat entire chorus)

Bridge

You give and take away.
You give and take away.
My heart will choose to say.
Lord blessed be your name.
(Repeat entire bridge)

Chorus

Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be Your glorious name!
(Repeat entire chorus)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: What kind of road brought you to this moment – into worship today?

If you're splashing in streams of abundance –

All: *You are welcome – share your joy!*

Pastor: If you're parched in a desert wasteland –

All: *You are welcome – share your doubts.*

Pastor: If you're relaxing in the light of contentment –

All: *You are welcome – share your peace.*

Pastor: If you're stumbling on a road of suffering –
All: You are welcome – share your pain.
Pastor: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey –
You are welcome in this community of faith.
*All: God in times of plenty and in want,
God on the mountaintop and in the valley,
God of flowing water and in seasons of drought,
God of day and night,
we welcome you, as you welcome us.
Blessed be your name!
Amen.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT³

All: God, we confess that we do not always understand your ways. We are easily discouraged when life takes unexpected turns and our carefully laid plans and dreams come to nothing. We confess that we are quick to give up when things get difficult, and quick to question your presence and your power. Forgive us. Grant us patience to wait for your good timing. Open our eyes to recognize your leading in our lives— to listen for your gentle whisper when we least expect it. And then give us courage to step out in faith and obedience, trusting in your leading even when we cannot yet see the outcome. We praise you for your faithful love and bless your glorious name! We pray that you would make us worthy to bear Christ's name: Christian. Amen.

HEBREW READING – Deuteronomy 8:1-5, 15-18

This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ² Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. ³ He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you.

GOSPEL READING – Mark 1:9-13

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

SERMON

Spirit-Led

Rev. Laura Bair

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Sometimes we feel like we're walking through wilderness:
All: Jesus we choose to walk with you.
Pastor: When our spirits feel dry, help us trust in your Spirit.
All: Jesus we choose to walk with you.

³ Christine Longhurst, Assistant Professor of Worship and Music at the Canadian Mennonite University, is also the editor of the blog "re:Worship." She wrote the Confession & Commitment we are using today for August 7, 2011 (Proper 14A – Genesis 37:1-4). <re:Worship: Prayer of Confession & Commitment: August 7, 2011 (re-worship.blogspot.com)>

Pastor: Fasting seems difficult, prayers seem unanswered:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you.*
 Pastor: The world howls like wild animals all around us:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you.*
 Pastor: We can choose to worry, or to trust you to provide:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you.*
 Pastor: Temptation is everywhere, doubts can overwhelm us:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you.*
 Pastor: You know what it's like to walk through this desert:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you.*
 Pastor: You long to transform us with wilderness worship:
All: *Jesus we choose to walk with you, and pray as you taught us, saying:*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All people: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom comes. 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.*

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: It is true, is it not, that all good things come from God, the giver of life? We are called to be wise stewards of God's gifts of time, talent, and money, to share in the fulfillment of God's purposes for all of creation. As stewards of the Kingdom of God, let us give from our abundance with thanksgiving and joy. Before we join our grateful voices in dedicating our offerings and the gift of our very selves to the work of God's kingdom, let us pause for a moment to contemplate just what "good" God has given to us and what we will "give" in return in thanksgiving. (Pause)

OFFERTORY PRAYER⁴

All people: *God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your generous gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our every need. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves. May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen.*

HYMN

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days⁵

Last Page of Bulletin

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION⁶

Pastor: Here we are, again, a year after the coronavirus pandemic first shook our world. Since that time, we have held fast to our faith, continuing to find new ways to worship together and practice the rituals and traditions that help us to remember and tell the story of God and how much God loved the world that his Son would be sent to save us. We have remembered and do so tonight in celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion. While our hearts aches and we may be physically separated from one another, we are still bound together as *family* through our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, and our baptisms.

As members of the household of God we now join together, virtually, yet still present to one another as we gather from across the miles. This presence is marked by our shared praises and prayers, our shared hearing and affirming of God's word, and now

⁴ RevGalBlogPals Offering for Worship Pieces: Lenten Offertory Prayer and Benediction. February 15, 2013. < <https://spaciousfaith.com/2013/02/15/worship-pieces-lenten-offertory-prayer-and-benediction/> >

⁵ Public Domain. Claudia Frances Hernaman. 1873.

⁶ The Sacrament of Holy Communion for today is adapted from *A Eucharistic Prayer for the Global Pandemic*. It was written by Rev. Lane Cotton Winn and Rev. Juan Huertas of the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.

our shared eating.

And now, as we share in the Great Thanksgiving, each time I say, "*The family of God* says," you will repeat back the response I have given to you.

The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The peace and presence of the Lord be with us.
We lift up our hearts.

And *the family of God* says, "We lift them up to God."

People: "We lift them up to God!"

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God,
because it is the right thing to do,
not only now, but always - day after day after day.
And *the family of God* says, "Day after day after day."

People: "Day after day after day."

Pastor: We thank you, Creator God, that you made us in your image, and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away in sin, our love failing, you reached out to us again and again, providing healing, wholeness, and new life. When the flood came, you provided an ark. When the plagues came, you provided safety. When evening came, you provided a pillar of fire. When exile came, you provided a new song. Day after day after day, your love remained steadfast. And *the family of God* says: "Day after day after day."

People: "Day after day after day."

Pastor: And so, with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of power and might! *The family of God* says: "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of power and might!"

People: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of power and might!**

Pastor: Heaven and Earth are full of your glory.
The family of God says: "Heaven and Earth are full of your glory."

People: **Heaven and Earth are full of your glory.**

Pastor: Hosanna in the Highest!
The family says: Hosanna in the Highest!

People: **Hosanna in the Highest!**

Pastor: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Blessed is your Son who came to preach the good news to the poor, release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, freed the oppressed, and announced that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick. And *the family of God* says, "He healed the sick."

People: **He healed the sick.**

Pastor: He is healing the sick now.
And *the family of God* says, "He is healing the sick now."

People: "He is healing the sick now."

Pastor: He will heal the sick, day after day after day.
And *the family of God* says, "day after day after day."

People: "Day after day after day."

Pastor: On the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus the Christ took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, Jesus the Christ took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Let us be a community of healer and hope givers, as together we proclaim the mystery of faith: *The family of God* says: “Christ has died.”

People: **Christ has died.**

Pastor: *The family of God* says: “Christ is risen.”

People: **Christ is risen.**

Pastor: *The family of God* says: “Christ will come again.”

People: **Christ will come again.**

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Let them be for us the body and blood of Christ, so that we may be for the world the body of Christ, made whole by his witness, passion and life. In this season of social distancing, may you remind us that we are never spiritually distant from You. We belong to your body. *The family of God* says: “We belong to your body.”

People: **We belong to your body.**

Pastor: May the Spirit use us to heal and reconcile in Jesus name,
The family of God says: “We will heal and reconcile in Jesus’ name.”

People: **We will heal and reconcile in Jesus’ name.**

Pastor: And now Holy Spirit make us one in Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world. *The family of God* says: “Amen!”

People: **Amen!**

The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup

Pastor: This bread reminds us that any life, no matter how broken, or sick, or distorted it may become, can be made whole again.

The cup reminds us that any life, no matter how empty, or lonely, or isolated it may become, can be filled again.

These are the gifts of God, for the family of God.
And *the family of God* says, “Thanks be to God.”

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Invitation

Pastor: I invite you to prayerfully partake in Holy Communion by whatever means you have. Eating and drinking in communion with God and the family of God. (All people eat and drink)

Day after day after day you give yourself to us: in two or three gathered in your name, in connection across the miles, and in bread and wine. As we go from this gathering around your table, may we feel restored to your body, companioned by your people, and sustained by the power of your Spirit as we witness to your healing and reconciling work. Through Christ our Lord. And the entire *family of God* says, “Amen.”

All: **Amen.**

HYMN

Blessed Be Your Name

(Words printed earlier in bulletin & projected on screen)

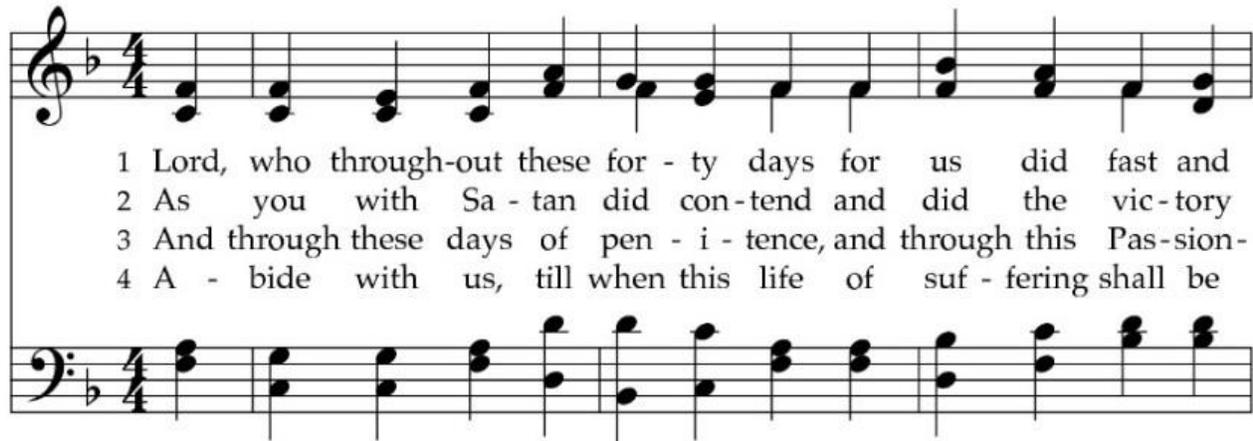
BENEDICTION⁷

Pastor: Whatever road the Spirit has brought you to -
Walk in boldness, as a beloved child of God!
Walk in peace, under the shelter of the Most High.
Walk in faith, knowing Christ walks with you.

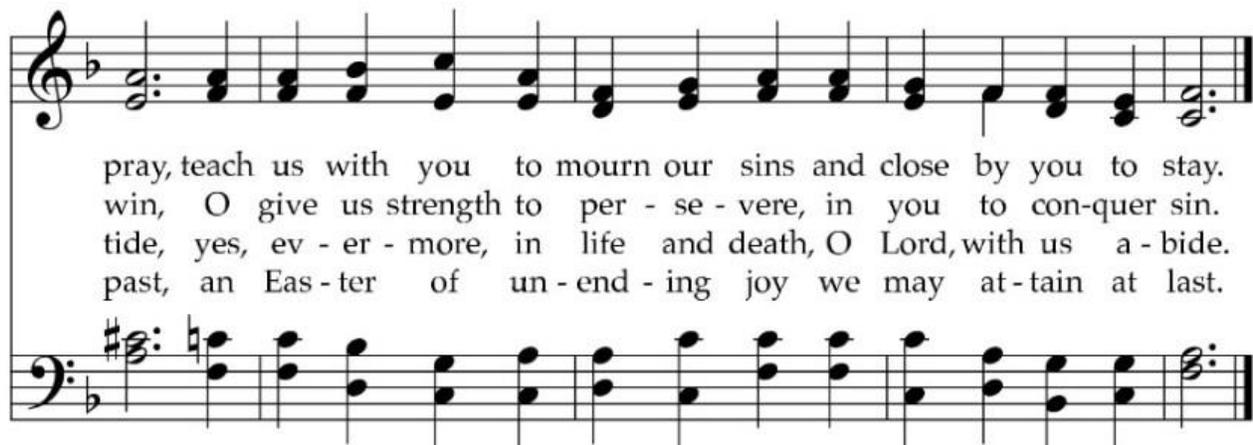
All: *Amen.*

POSTLUDE

Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days 166



1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be



pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at-tain at last.

⁷ Ibid.