

WILDERNESS

REHAB WORSHIP SERIES

Today's Sanctuary flowers provided by Helen Fisher to the glory of God in honor of her brother.

Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Joan Nevill. Organist: Barbara Waite. Special music provided by Don Travis, Susan Travis, & John Keil.

Ushers February 18: Eric Eades, captain; Seby Durgy, Chuck Taylor, Ronnie Pursley, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)

Ushers February 25: Eric Eades, captain; Chuck Taylor, Ronnie Pursley, John Oberhelman, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)

Greeters February 18: Warren & Rosemary Heinsohn, Janet Kissel, Lila Allen

Greeters February 25: Sue & Cle Watson, Tom Harvey, Mary Lockett

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Congregational Hymns

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"St. Flavian - Theme and Variations" by H. Willan

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come to worship the God who walks with us through every challenge.

People: We come to remember what Jesus did when he was faced with the wilderness. The Spirit was there.

Leader: When Israel wandered through the wilderness, she was not alone. God was there.

People: If you are walking through the wilderness, you are not alone. God is with you.

CHORAL INTROIT

"Christians, We Have Come to Worship" by Douglas E. Wagner

*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

*HYMN #269

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"We Are Waiting"

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray as one.

PASTORAL PRAYER

All: God, we remember the story. After he was baptized by John, Jesus went by himself to the wilderness where he was tempted. For forty days, Jesus was tempted to become relevant, spectacular, and powerful. Today, we journey with Jesus forty days toward the cross. As we come face to face with ourselves, we may be tempted. Give us the courage to walk the journey together, seeking the Spirit as our guide along the way. Now, God, hear us as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13 "Pray then like this: **'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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'**"

GIVING TITHES & OFFERING

"Land of Rest" by W. Held

*DOXOLOGY *The congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#95 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"Go Not Far From Me" by Zingarelli

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mark 1:9-15

The Baptism of Jesus

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."

The Temptation of Jesus
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.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry
14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

FAITH WE SING #2152

"Change My Heart, O God"

MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

"Wilderness"

It was yesterday that I got calls from just about everyone in my immediate family. I don't know what it was about Saturday but it seemed like everyone decided they needed to give me a call to talk. I talked to my in-laws. I talked to my parents and as I was talking to my dad he has this phrase that he uses. My family has all these like one-liners they like to use and the one liner my dad used yesterday was "Andy you got to be somewhere so you might as well be here you got to be somewhere so you might as well be here." Look at your neighbor and say you've got to be somewhere. You might as well be here. It feels good. It feels good. It's good to be here today we're beginning our first Sunday in Lent and our series theme this Lenten season is Rehab. We're talking about rehabilitating our faith which is what the Lenten season really is all about. Originally Lent was a time to prepare candidates to be baptized on Easter Sunday. It was like the 40 days leading up to Easter, candidates would be prepared for baptism. But as it has kind of evolved, Lent has become a sort of rehab-ing season for us as Christians as we seek to die to ourselves in order that we might rise to new life in Christ during the season of Easter. So it's kind of like a rehab series of times and experiences for us. The two words that come to my mind as I think about Lent for me at least has to do with the way the Greek world talked about time. There were two words that the Greek world used when they talked about time. There was chronos and there was Kairos. Have you ever heard of this Chronos and kairos? Chronos is where we get our word chronology in English, and it's basically Chronos as time measured by quantity. It's about seconds, minutes, days, years. It's about time measured in quantity and really time, and in a chronos mindset has to do with like an enemy that keeps us from more important things like working against time all the time. Well that's one way of talking about time. The other one is kairos and Kairos is not measured in quantity. Kairos is measured in quality. And it's not measured in seconds, minutes, and years, but instead, it's measured in moments. A Kairos mentality believes that now is the time for transformation. This moment is the moment in which God is here speaking to us, inviting us to open our hearts and be transformed. Now apply these both to Lent. Some of us can approach that from a chronos mindset where we think it's just 40 days we gotta get through until Easter, or some of us can approach Kairos mindset when we say this is the season. Now is the moment in which we can open our hearts and lives to be transformed. I hope and I pray that you have a Kairos mentality this Lenten season because now is the moment. Today is the time. The Kingdom of Heaven has come near. The time is at hand to be transformed. That's what Lent is really about. It's about now- being transformed into the very spirit of Christ. Would you pray with me as we get started? Help us to be present to you today as you are here present with us, oh God. Change our hearts. May we be renewed this moment, this day. It is in the name of Christ. Amen.

Broadly speaking, and this might get me in trouble, but broadly speaking at least in my experience there are two ways of understanding Christian salvation. The first camp if you will starts with the idea that were horrible, awful people. We are sinners and our sin has separated us from God. And Grace. Well Grace is this thing that God kind of puts on us. We receive grace God puts it on us and in order that when we die we can go to heaven. And so salvation really is this big evacuation plan to get us out of this world onto the next world, Heaven where we need to go. That's option A. Option B is kind of opposite of that and instead of horrible, awful people, it suggests that we are created in the image of God. Our fundamental identity our original starting place if you will is goodness and love. Grace in a sense is what we are by virtue of being created and Sin is the thing that's kind of been put on us. Sin is all those things that keep us from seeing what we really are. It's like an infection that's been given to us that we are supposed to get rid of as Christians so that we could be our true selves- the people that God has created us to be. Salvation is not about getting out of this world, but salvation then becomes about this present world being transformed into our truest identity- the loving people that God has always created us to be. I'm going to start with option B today as we think about the Lenten season. I believe Lent is a time in which we try to take off the sin, if you will, of our lives in order that we might live into being the people that God has created us to be. And I think we see this pattern in our scripture lesson for this morning. Our scripture lesson for today. The story goes Jesus goes to the River Jordan to be baptized by John. And as he's coming up out of water there's a voice from heaven. Mark tells the story. It seems like Jesus in the Marken story is the only one that hears it, but Jesus hears the voice of God and the voice of God says you are my beloved. You're a child of God and with you I'm well pleased. And then the next thing that happens is Jesus is let out into the wilderness where he is tempted by the tester. In other words, in these two scenes we find the fundamental drama of the Salvation story in the first scene, Jesus is claimed as God's beloved child, but in the second scene he goes into the wilderness and he begins to do battle with all those voices who tell him he is less than what God has deemed him to be. And he invites us to follow the pattern too.

Friends, you and I are God's children. For the last four weeks that's what we've been telling you again and again and again you are God's beloved children. You are loved by God. And we're called to do battle, just like Jesus did against all those voices who speak to us, telling us we're less than this Truest identity. This is really what it means to move into the wilderness. We move into the wilderness of our hearts and we learn to say no to those voices that tell us that we are less than a child of God. This morning what I would like to do is share with you three of those voices I think that we battle with as Christians that keep us from seeing and being our truest selves. I'm going to take a look at Jesus's temptations and the way I want to do this. The first temptation as Jesus is in the wilderness that is said that after he's fasted for 40 days he's real hungry, I suppose. After the end of the 40 days the tester or the devil comes to Jesus and says here it is: if you are the son of God, then turn the stones into bread. If you're what God says you are and you do this. And Jesus of course famously responds by saying well we don't live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. That's what Jesus response is. Now here's the thing. You and I have probably never tried to not eat for 40 days. Have you? OK? And you and I probably have not spent 40 days in the wilderness like Jesus has. Have you? No. And you and I probably have not heard the voice of the devil like Jesus did in that period of time where he says if you're the son of God, turn the stones into bread. Probably never experience that either, have you? Ok. just checking. But here's the thing. We have all had the tendency to put our trust in those things that we have created with our own hands. If you are the son of God turn stones into bread. We have all had the tendency to put our faith and our trust in the material things of this world. Have you struggled with this one? Yeah. I mean we live in a culture that says Buy this. Eat that. Wear this. You need that. We are inundated with voices that say that in order to be valuable you have to consume more and more and more and more. I once read the article that said that if the entire world consumed the way the United States of America consumes, that it would take three planet Earths to sustain it. Let me say that again: if the entire world consumes the way that we do as Americans, the entire world did that it take three planet earths to sustain us. And yet, the more we've consumed, it has not satisfied our souls. Study after study has suggested we are not a happy culture right. That hasn't satisfied who we are. The bigger tragedy to me is this though: the more we've placed our faith in those things created by our own hands, the more we put our faith and trust in these things, the tragedy is is that it cuts us off from one another and it cuts us off from God. Father Richard Droi tells a story of walking through the poor part of town in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was where much of the homeless and the impoverished stayed and lived. It was the type of place in the city where there was graffiti on the buildings. There's trash in the streets. And he was walking along and he said he had his head down. We've done this. We've gone to the poorer parts of town and put our head down, and the reason why is because we don't want to make eye contact with any of them. So he's walking along and then he's got his head down and he looks down at the sidewalk where someone had written something on the sidewalk it was a message and here's what it said. Look how man and guards his nothing- thereby keeping us out. Surely God is hated here. Look how man guards his nothing keeping us out. Surely God is hated here. This is the real tragedy to me. As we've guarded our nothing- those things that literally will turn to dust which is between our fingers. And we deep down know they won't last. But the more we've guarded our nothing, what's happened? We have become shut off from our neighbors, from one another in the presence of a Living God. If you are the son of God, the tempter says, turn the stone into bread. And Jesus response is well we don't live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. He takes the moment to point us to the source that ultimately satisfies and sustains our souls.

Second temptation and I'm going to have to move quick here. Second temptation is he is taken to a high point atop the Temple and the tester says jump off, thereby forcing God's hand as God would send his angels to save him. And Jesus response is do not put your Lord God to the test. The idea and the temptation here is this though: Jesus was just getting started started with his ministry career. Right? He was just getting started with his preaching career. I mean what better way to kick start your preaching career than to jump off the temple and have angels save you right it in Jerusalem at the temple. I mean come on. Everyone would see this. Everyone would be talking about this. Couldn't you see the headlines Jesus Son of God and jumps off the Temple Angels Save Him. Everyone would be after Jesus if he did this. Now I don't think we've ever had this experience. Have you ever gone to the temple? You ever heard the voice of the devil like this? Have you been tested this way? No, but we've been tested in these of this drive to be spectacular haven't we? The spectacular- to be known. To have people like us. Dare I say worship us. Fall down to us. It's this tendency we all have to want to please others so they like us. And the tragedy of this is- the tragedy of wanting to be spectacular and wanting to be famous as we start modeling our lives after people that we deem as spectacular and famous-and the tragedy is, we begin to live someone else's life. And we begin to jump for someone else's life. And we do not become the people that God has created us to be. When the tester comes to Jesus and says Jump. Be Spectacular. His response again is don't put the Lord God to the test. Instead trust, is what I would add. Trust this more than anything else. That you are exactly who God intended you to be. And God has you exactly where you need to be. Live the life that you've been given, and do what is yours to do which is usually nothing more than loving the very people that God brought into your life. There is nothing more spectacular than that. I think the tragedy maybe is we don't realize we're already spectacular. I mean each of us are completely unique.

Final test. And I'll wrap it up. The tester offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. All he's got to do is bow down and worship him. The devil offers Jesus everything. All he has to do is bow down and worship. Jesus's response, of course, is worship the Lord your God and serve only him. This last test is the test to be powerful- to be in control. Unfortunately, as I look at our world today this is the only game in town. I mean look around and think about just our marriage with violence these days. Look at the things we say to one another. Look at the things we do to one another. There is this drive to be powerful- to be in control. I think the reason why it is is because quite frankly it's just easier. It's easier to be powerful than to love. It's easier to control people than to love them. It's easier to play God than to love God. I mean how many times have we thought to ourself boy those people sure do need the Lord. It's easier to control people than to love people. How many times we thought to ourselves if they'd just listen to me. It's easier just to walk through the routine of our lives than to love our lives. How much of the time do we just take it for granted? This ultimately becomes Jesus's greatest test- to be powerful to be in control. At the moment it becomes his greatest test is when life begins to hurt the worst for him.

I mean when Jesus is betrayed, when he's abandoned, when he's crucified- any of these steps along the journey,, any of these steps along the way it would have been easy for him to take things into his own hands. But all along the way he said, God not my will but yours be done. He chose the path of love each and every step of the way. I once had an older minister when I was just getting started in the ministry and he said he said Andy he said the success of your ministry will depend on how you respond to your crucifixion the success of your ministry will depend on how you respond to your crucifixion.

I remember thinking well that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. I mean because who wouldn't like me. Right. What's not to like. I thought the success of ministry depends on my ability to preach or pray well or program. Well he was right. Because after a few years in the ministry I experienced my first crucifixion. And then my second crucifixion, then my third crucifixion, and then I began to realize that the success of our ministry really depends on how we love those that crucify us. And how we seek to lay down our lives when they hurt us the most. This path is not an easy path to walk. Everything in the world teaches us not to do this, but we desperately need it. We need people to exhibit the spirit of Christ. We need to lay ourselves down and stop the violence. This is why we need Lent.

One of the things we do in Lent is we fast. Fasting of course is self-denial intentionally saying no of ourselves in order that we can say yes to God. Traditionally it was about giving up food and water, but we can fast from just about anything. You can say no to just about anything in our lives as a way to deny ourselves so that when the real test comes, we can say yes to God. Maybe your struggle is you put your trust in created things in this world, so maybe then your fast becomes to live more simply. Maybe your struggle is to be spectacular and to try to become famous like those famous people. Maybe your fast then becomes to scale back on the TV and the social media. Maybe your struggle is power and control. Maybe your fast becomes to allow yourself to be interrupted by other people when they hurt your agenda. The question though is this: If you've not already decided to fast, would you consider it would you consider? Because we're not going to make it very far in the journey unless we learn to say no in order to say yes to the people God has created us to be.

*HYMN #544

"Like The Murmur Of The Dove's Song"

*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"Duo." by G. Lasceux