

March 7, 2021 – Lent 3

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning and welcome to worship with McClure United Church this morning. Today we are beginning our 3rd week in this season of Lent... and together we continue to journey through this wilderness time.

(Jordan will be preaching)

And it is out of our desire to share God's love... for everyone, that we remember at the beginning of each service our commitment as an Affirming Ministry of The United Church to do our very best to not only welcome but also to celebrate the beautiful diversity of God's people. No matter your age, class, ability, race, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation we are grateful you have joined us for worship today.

And we are worshipping here in Saskatoon on Treaty 6 territory and homeland of the Metis Nation and we take a moment to acknowledge and pay our respect to the ancestors and keepers of the land.

I have a few announcements to share with you today and I'd just like to note that all of the information I'll share with you now can be found in the weekly email, on the website and the Facebook page – so go there if you need contact info or more information on how to register and attend.

- Lenten book study Thursdays at 7pm.
- Weekly Bible Study Wed at 1pm.
- Book Group
- Friday morning connection at 10am

And now, let's breathe deeply of God's love and prepare our hearts for this time of worship...

Sung Opening

Opening Prayer

Jesus met the blind man at the city gate.
He met the crowds at the edge of the sea,
the leper in his pain,
and the Samaritan woman in her isolation.
So we can know with confidence that Jesus meets us here.
We too are the blind and the broken, the hurting and the bleeding.
Jesus meets our scars, our fears, our prayers and our dreams.
And we light this candle as a reminder of all these things.

Let us pray...

Gracious God,

Today we gather together – in our own places, in our own way – but together in faith. A faith that is strong and yet falters at times. When it comes to our faith, we know we could learn from the Samaritan woman who ran through the streets singing your name.

So forgive us for the times when we remain silent about what our faith means to us.

Forgive us for the times when we choose comfort over bravery.

And forgive us for the times we shut people out, missing opportunities to run into you.

Teach us to be brave like the Samaritan woman, and saturate our thirst for that which leaves us thirsty. With hope and gratitude we confess. With hope and gratitude we pray, amen.

Hymn: Out in the Wilderness sung by Sacred Sounds

Scripture: John 4:3-30 & 39-42 read by Greg Bell of St. Martin's UC

He left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship God in spirit and truth, for God seeks worshippers such as these. God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me

everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Reflection offered by Jordan Cantwell – text to follow

Hymn: MV #144 Like a Healing Stream sung by Sacred Sounds

Prayers

God of Our Lenten Journey, you are a good and generous God.

Since creation's dawn, you have showered your steadfast love upon us that we might be a blessing to others. Ever since you called your people out of Egypt's bondage, you have promised to walk with us through thick and thin.

Sometimes we have followed faithfully. Other times we have stumbled and fell.

In the good times and in the bad ones, your steadfast goodness has been a true constant in our lives.

Thank you for being our God and for calling us to be your people.

Because of your goodness to us, we will praise you, we will hold our hands out to you and call on your name.

And we confess, merciful God, that this journey to which we are called is hard.

Together, as people of faith, we have been called into a wilderness where improvisation is a necessity. We don't know what is around every corner and often we fear what we don't know.

We ask your forgiveness for the moments when we forget to trust in your abundant love for us.

Remind us that whether the way be clear or the way be wild, there is no place we can go to escape your love and compassion.

We give you thanks for the many blessings in our lives that show your abundant love:

for the companionship of friends and family, both new and old...

for the warmth and protection of shelter and the provision of food...

for access to healthcare and medical services...

for a loving community of faith that guides, upholds, and supports...

for the gift of the Lenten wilderness that grows us in new ways...

for the promise of transformation and the opportunity to grow ...

We offer our spirits to you with thanksgiving and rejoice that you are with us in this wilderness journey.

Yet, God of all mercy and guidance, you know that there are those among us who are in barren places. With all honesty and courage, we hold them before you now:

for those missing friends and family, both those alive and those deceased...

for those who do not have the warmth of shelter in this cold months...

for those without access to appropriate healthcare and medical services...
for those seeking communities of support and protection...
for those struggling in wildernesses that only they can name...
for this congregation, that they may be led through this wilderness and brought to a
place of health, joy, and loving discipleship...
for those whom we hold before you either silently or out loud, we pray...

And finally, Gracious God,
we ask that you help us to see our own barren places as opportunities for your spirit to
take root... as opportunity for new life and growth!
Give us courage to see ourselves this way, that we might have hope and faith as we are led
through this wilderness.
Remind us, God of coming resurrection, that we do not go into the wilderness to die but
that we go into the wilderness to discover who we are that we might arrive on the other
side with a renewed sense of life!
This we pray in your Son's name, through the power of the Spirit. **Amen!**

Sung Blessing

Blessing

We continue our journey into the wilderness
Be comforted and encouraged by the truth that we do not journey alone...
We are held in the tender and abundant love of God,
Christ is with us, strengthening us for the times of struggle,
and the Spirit is guiding us every step of the way.
Amen.