

## Sunday Service: February 28, 2021 (Second Sunday of Lent) *“Into the COVID-19 Wilderness”*



Zoom service starts promptly at 10 am:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84841981079?pwd=OG1TMThyZFFQZ1Q0dStpZlJCdURUUT09>

### **Lent–Easter 2021 Theme: Going Deep**

Nearly a year ago we entered the world of isolation and virtual connection with which all of us are now familiar. Suddenly the wilderness of Lent has become all too real, as we were stripped of our usual resources, surroundings, activities, and circles of relationship. During this time our world has experienced both deep grief and invitations to a new spaciousness of time, as we needed to release so much of what usually fills our lives.

In the Scriptures and the traditions of Lent, we see a scrubbing away of the excess to get to the core of our Christian journeys and of ourselves. The call to go deeper can be frightening or overwhelming when we feel we are not ready and do not know what we will find. We keep much of our pain in our depths. But only from these depths can the voice of God reach us and transform us.

### **FOCUS for Second Sunday of Lent**

**Deep in the wilderness, called to deep healing:** The wilderness confronts us with our vulnerability and exposes our wounds and our needs. We are called to deep healing by trusting in God, who calls us in love.

## 1. GATHERING

### Musical Prelude

### Call to Worship



**One:** The wilderness is without and within. It too is part of God's path, though we fear wild, barren places, as did the people of old.

**Many:** When the people became impatient, asking, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?"

God answered by bringing healing.

**One:** In our barren places, God calls us to wholeness, even when we

cannot see beyond the danger, isolation, and need.

**Many:** We forget that God is already at work in these difficult, painful places.

**One:** Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Chosen One be lifted up, that whoever believes may have eternal life.

**Many:** For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

**All:** *We call out to you, as you call us to deeper healing.*

*"You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover is yourself."*  
— Alan Alda

### Opening Prayer

### Opening Song

### Prayer of Confession

**Many:** Deep calls to deep. We call to you from the depths of our hearts.

**One:** We confess when we have stayed too close to the surface, avoiding you, avoiding our neighbors. We confess when we have felt in over our heads. Needing you, needing our neighbors.

*(Silence or think about what keeps us from deep healing ...)*

**One:** Deep calls to deep. You call to us from the depth of your love.

**Many:** Calling us to deep relationship. We come to you, God.

### Congregational Singing

## 2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

**Scriptures** (Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21)

**Numbers 21:4** From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. 5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." 6 Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." 9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

**John 3:14** And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the



Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Message:** *"Into the COVID-19 Wilderness"*

Covid has ripped us away from our normal existence. But in the end, those who journey into the wilderness will be unalterably changed. We may not always be able to choose the when or where of our wilderness journeys, but we do have some control over who we are as we exit on the other side!

*"Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit." — Edward Abbey*

*"There are years that ask questions and years that answer." — Zora Neale Hurston*

### 3. RESPONDING TO GOD



#### Response

#### Joys and Concerns

#### Sending Song

#### Sending Blessing

Through the barren lands of our lives, God is calling us to wholeness. Although we may not see this time as possibility, God is already at work. As we rest in the long nights of winter, a cosmic spark restores us. Look to Christ in faith, noticing the many ways his words and eyes and hands and feet brought healing. Go with the healing light of Christ. Amen.

*"I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness; I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more." — Anne Frank*