

# ***Wandering in the Wilderness***

## **Lent Celtic Worship**

### **Service of Prayer and Praise**

#### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 6pm**

#### **Gathering words**

Sometimes we feel like we're walking through wilderness:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

When our spirits feel dry, help us trust in your Spirit:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

Fasting seems difficult, prayers seem unanswered:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

The world howls like wild animals all around us:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

We can choose to worry, or to trust you to provide:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

Temptation is everywhere, doubts can overwhelm us:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

You know what it's like to walk through the desert of life:  
**All** **Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

#### **Approach**

Jesus began his ministry to the world,  
led by the Spirit into the wilderness.  
**All** **As we continue our Lenten journey,**  
**let us be led by the Spirit,**  
**even into the uncomfortable places.**

In those forty days, and in that place,  
Jesus was faced with hunger, doubt  
and temptation.  
**All** **As we seek to follow Jesus,**  
**we would be led,**  
**even into the uncomfortable choices.**

Jesus left the wilderness,  
faithful and obedient to God,  
rejoicing in the One in whom he trusted.

**All As we continue on our path to faithfulness,  
we will be led by our Christ,  
rejoicing in the Lord our God.**

**Worship Video – Creation Calls**  
(performed by Sara, Claire and Mike)

**Poem – Temptations (by Brother Eckhart)**

Creature comforts  
And why not?  
All you have to do is  
Give up a few rocks  
These sun-baked stones  
That burn your hands and cut your feet  
Could soon become a desert treat!  
Stop being so hard on yourself!

Fame  
All yours for the taking  
All you have to do is  
Leave this lonely wilderness  
Head right to the center of the noisy crowd  
Drop in your branding clear and loud  
Start showing what you've got!

Power  
Not as easy, but well within your reach  
All you have to do is  
Want it more than anything  
Make it your top priority  
Your one and only deity  
Instead of your strange, silly God  
Of Suffering  
Solitude  
And Silence

*We have a time of shared silence.*

## Saying sorry to God

Forty days alone,  
a wilderness of thoughts,  
tempting and inviting thoughts,  
which could so easily have distracted you  
from your task, your mission,  
your vision.

Yet you emerged, stronger and more attuned  
to all that had to be done,  
despite a time constraint  
that to our eyes would have seemed hopeless.

We too live in stressful times,  
that leave so little  
for the important things of life.

We are easily distracted  
in the wilderness of our lives,  
by every call to go this way or that,  
to turn stone to bread  
leap from mountains,  
and do all that would keep us from the truth.

We listen to the voices of this world,  
and ignore the one who endured all this  
and so much more,  
and emerged triumphant,  
that we might not have to suffer so.

Forgive us, Father,  
when we get distracted from our task.  
Forgive us those times when we try  
to be all things to all men,  
and fail to be anything to anyone

*We have a time of silent reflection.*

God of the liminal places,  
you draw us into the quietness of the desert  
so that we can encounter ourselves...  
But we confess that all too often we stubbornly cling  
to false images rather than face the necessity of change.

Lord have mercy.

**All Lord have mercy**

You call us into the emptiness of the desert  
so that we can confront our desires...

But we confess that all too often  
we continue to choose our own comfort  
rather than serving the needs of others.

Christ have mercy.

**All Christ have mercy**

Forgive us, O God,  
wherever we have chosen to be, or do,  
or dare less than you have asked of us;  
and as we walk on in the desert with you  
help us watch and wrestle with these things  
so that we might choose differently in future.

Lord have mercy.

**All Lord have mercy**

May the God of love bring us back to himself,  
forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Amen.**

### **Bible reading – Luke 4.1-14**

<sup>1-2</sup> Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.

<sup>3</sup> The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: “Since you’re God’s Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to really live.”

<sup>5-7</sup> For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. Then the Devil said, “They’re yours in all their splendour to serve your pleasure. I’m in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. Worship me and they’re yours, the whole works.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: “Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness.”

<sup>9-11</sup> For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, “If you are God’s Son, jump. It’s written, isn’t it, that ‘he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you; you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone?’”

<sup>12</sup> “Yes,” said Jesus, “and it’s also written, ‘Don’t you dare tempt the Lord your God.’”

<sup>13</sup> That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

**Reflection – a desert planet**  
(written by Sue Wallace & adapted by Joe)

**Worship Video – Psalm 23 (The Lord’s my shepherd)**  
(performed by Sara and Esther)

## **Time of prayer**

We pray today for all who are walking a hard journey:

for those whose daily paths encounter barbed wire and guns;  
for those who did not want to leave home but were forced to;  
for those who set out today in search of food and water;  
for those whose journey is shattered by economic hardship;  
for those whose journey is marred by pain or despair,  
and for those who faithfully journey alongside them;  
for those who are journeying through life alone;  
for those who are making a move and beginning again;  
for those who are clinging on to something that has ended;  
for those who are being bullied, and for those who are bullying;  
for those who are weighed down by sorrow and loss;  
for those who have just taken their first breath, and  
for those who today will take their last.

May this Lenten journey, with its stories  
about the hard places of Jesus’ experience,  
give strength and courage to all  
whose journey is far from easy.

And may it inspire us to risk Christ's Way of love  
as we share the journey with other travellers.  
We make this prayer in his name.  
Amen.

## **Act of commitment**

**All** O God,  
grant that we may be sensitive to Your presence in our lives;  
by taking time to pause for reflection and remembrance.

Lord Jesus, may we use the freedom You have given us;  
to liberate those with burdens too heavy to bear.

During this Lenten season, O God,  
You enlighten us to walk in truth and in love;  
lead us to share the blessings we receive from You.

Creator God, enkindle within our hearts;  
a cheerfulness of spirit as we approach each day.

O Christ, Lent is the season to renew our lives;  
may Your Spirit help and guide us.

Lord Jesus, You count as done to You all that we do for others;  
help us to love others as You love them.

Christ Jesus, You are the Way, the Truth and the Life;  
come to the aid of those searching for meaning in life.

God of mercy,  
as we journey through this season of Lent,  
opening ourselves to Your grace,  
we ask that You will guide us into a true change of heart  
and reorientation of our lives.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Brother and Saviour,  
who showed us how to live and to love.  
Amen.

**Worship Video – *Were it not for grace***  
(performed by Sara and Ann)

## Sending out

May the dust of the wilderness hold our footprints  
lovingly  
shaped as they are by your hurt  
for dust remembers

May the journey into wilderness unfold  
honestly  
for honesty is the gift  
your soul recognises as you

May your time in this wilderness  
be shaped by space  
rather than minutes  
so there is time enough for all of you

May the stones in this wilderness  
cry out your name loudly  
that your spirit recognises the voice  
that has been calling you always

And may you know this wilderness  
has been expecting you  
and you find between the stones  
a promise growing

Go now with God, on your journey through Lent.

**All We will discover the new name given to each one we meet.**

Go now with Jesus, walking wherever he leads.

**All We will put all our fears, as well as our longings, behind us.**

Go now with the Spirit, who is always full of surprises.

**All We will share the good news called Jesus with everyone.**

Go in the peace of Christ

**All Thanks be to God.**