LENT

February 14 - March 28, 2021
We are now entering into the liturgical season of Lent. It is the time of year when we, as the church, remember our brokenness and mortality...as if we needed a season demarcated for that this year. While in the past, we may have been able to trick ourselves into the lies and expectation of perfection and consumerism, this year, we have come face to face with our limitedness, as individuals and a collective. Amongst the macro-stressors of societal collapse and global pandemics and the micro-stressors of figuring out how get any work done when my kid is not sleeping and catching every cold this side of the Mississippi, we are all, in one way or another, more aware of our collective and individual brokenness than ever before. This lenten season, it seems very obvious that we are all made of the earth and that we will all return to it.

This year, Lent begins in the wilderness (Mark 1:9-15). The wilderness is a location, a theme, a motif that is found throughout the Bible. In the Hebrew narratives, it is the place where the people of God wander for 40 years after they escape slavery in Egypt, waiting for and wandering toward a new life and new land. And this season, in the gospel of Mark, it is the place where we see Jesus go right after his baptism, echoing the Exodus narrative, just before he starts his public ministry, where he encounters evil and is sustained by the Spirit. The wilderness is treacherous, disorienting, barren, wild, and unpredictable. It is a place of liminality and deconstruction - the space in between where we have been and where we are going. It is the place where most of life happens and yet, it is where we'd least like to be.
But here are a few things we know about the wilderness:

1. It sucks. Just ask anyone that has been lost in it before, the wilderness is a place unlike where we have known or found life before. It is often a place of fear, mystery, and uncertainty.

2. It can feel really lonely. And while I can not promise you that everything will be ok in the wilderness but I can promise you are not alone. Reach out to your community or if you need someone to call, here’s my cell and email: (513)926-9582, btaylor@cccath.org.

3. The God who is found in the wilderness is a generous God who somehow provides enough sustenance for each day.

4. Newness emerges even here. The wilderness can feel like wandering around in the dark. All new things are formed in the dark whether it is the darkness of the wilderness, the darkness of a womb or the darkness of the tomb.

This zine is filled with things to do when you feel like you are wandering out there in the wilderness. You’ll find shared liturgy for when you don’t have the words to pray. You’ll find spiritual practices to ground you when life feels untethered and the gospel readings for each week with questions to reflect on and discuss. There is also original art to guide your imagination, as well as crafts, activities, recipes, books and movies to help usher you through this Lenten season.

-Brooklin Taylor
**SHARED LITURGY**

**Opening**
Bless the Lord who is always with us,  
*God’s mercy endures forever.*

**Prayer**
God has called us to journey for a season  
through the wilderness places;  
And so, as Jesus did before us, we will  
set out once more to wander in an  
uncomfortable landscape and wrestle with  
its challenges, that through the tempering  
action of the Spirit, we may emerge ready  
to do the work of the Kingdom.  
*Amen.*

**Confession**
Let us draw near to God in spirit and in  
truth.

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

God of the lonely places, You call us into  
the emptiness of the wilderness so that we  
can confront our desires.  
*We confess that all too often we continue  
to choose our own comfort rather than  
serving the needs of others.*

God of our fear-filled places, You drive us  
into the dangers of the wilderness so that  
we can engage with your Kingdom.  
*We confess that all too often we prefer*
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 wilderness with you help us watch and wrestle with these things so that we might choose life over death. Amen.

He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. After John had been arrested,* Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:13-15

God of the desert, Jesus was led by the Spirit to fast forty days in the wilderness and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to observe the disciplines of Lent; and as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who is alive with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

Amen.

Bless the Lord who is always with us, God’s mercy endures forever.

Adapted from Iona Abbey Liturgical Resources including Walking the Wilderness by Pat Bennett © 2015.
Closing Prayer adapted from Church of England, Common Worship.
WILDERNESS PRACTICES

The wilderness can often feel like a place of untethered-ness, scarcity and isolation. So for this Lenten season, we’d like to invite you into a weekly rhythm of daily spiritual practices for your wilderness wandering. May these practices be for you grounding mechanisms by which you experience the presence of Christ and others even in the desolate places.

Monday: Listening
It is easy to feel alone in the wilderness but intentionally making time for listening can be a helpful practice. Set aside time today to deeply listen to someone or something you have neglected recently, consciously or unconsciously. What does it feel like in your body to pay attention in this way?

Tuesday: Gratitude
The wilderness knows despair well. In light of that, set aside time today to list the things you are thankful for during such an unsettling time. Give yourself enough space to get specific, articulating moments and life-support structures, you may not have noticed before. If you are feeling brave, find one way you can show your gratitude to another (a thank you note, a phone call or an act of service).

Wednesday: Altar-building
It is easy to lose track of time in the wilderness. Altar-building is one way to mark the holy and the ordinary when time feels arbitrary. In Exodus, God told the people wandering in the wilderness, “You shall make an altar of earth for Me...in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.”(20:24). So today, go on a walk, gathering rocks you find along the way. And when you are ready, take a moment to build an altar or a cairn as an act of marking a holy or an ordinary moment in time. Check out the activity section for specific instructions.

Thursday: Limitedness
In the wilderness, we come face to face with our own limitedness. While the rest of the world runs on the lies and expectation of perfectionism and consumerism, in the wilderness, our vulnera-

WATCH

Rev. Karl Stevens & Rev. Jed Dearing will be hosting a diocesan-wide Lenten Film series. Join the Diocesan Film Club on Zoom, every Thursday of Lent at 7:00pm to discuss the movie selection for the week or check out their accompanying podcast. Visit their website for registration details https://www.2021lentenfilmclub.space/ or just watch these cool movies.

Week 1 Film: Leave No Trace (2017) Dir. Debra Granik.
Free w/Amazon Prime, available to rent on all major streaming platforms. Runtime: 1h59m.

Week 2 Film: A Hidden Life (2019) Dir. Terrence Malick
Free w/Hulu, available to rent on all major streaming platforms. Runtime: 3 hrs.

Free w/Amazon Prime, available to rent on all major streaming platforms. Runtime: 2 hrs.

Week 4 Film: Calvary (2016) Dir. John Michael McDonagh.
Available to rent on all major streaming platforms. Runtime: 1h42m.

Free w/Showtime. Available to rent on all major streaming platforms. Runtime: 1h53m

Free w/Netflix. Runtime: 2h10m


**Read**

- Walden or Life in the Woods, Henry David Thoreau
- John Muir, Wilderness Essays
- Braving the Wilderness, Brené Brown
- Exodus and Revolution, Micheal Walzer
- The Wisdom of the Desert, Thomas Merton
- An Other Kingdom, Walter Brueggemann, Peter Block and John Mcknight
- Peterson Field Guide: Edible Wild Plants of Eastern/ Central North America, by Lee Allen Peterson
- Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, Annie Dillard

**Kids Books**

- Hatchet, Gary Paulsen
- My Side of the Mountain, Jean Craighead George
- Journey, Aaron Becker

**Listen**

- “T rails” - Kelly Latimore
- “Films in the Wilderness” Podcast, accompanying the Lenten Film Series (next page), https://shows.acast.com/films-in-the-wilderness/


**Friday: Covenanting**

Throughout scripture, covenants are most often made in wilderness places. Labyrinths can be interesting tools to discover and reflect on the covenants we have made (or will make) with God and neighbor. Set aside time today to walk one with your feet or with your finger. As you walk, reflect on God’s love and what that love calls you to do. Enter the labyrinth with a question and listen for God’s invitation. As you exit, reflect on what promises or commitments you might be called to live into. If you don’t have a labyrinth, just go for a prayer walk with God wherever you are.

**Saturday: Enoughness**

Even in the wilderness, somehow God provides enough for each day (Exodus 16-17). It might not have been what the people of God expected but through some dewy-bread and water dripping out of rocks, they found they had everything they needed. The same is true for us. Even in our places of wilderness, fear and scarcity, God shows us there is enough - we have enough and we are enough. One simple reminder of our enoughness is our breath. Unplug and take time to return to your breath today. Noticing the breath of God that sustains you through each inhale and each exhale. Breathing in “I am enough.” Breathing out “This is enough.”

**Sunday: Anointing**

In the wilderness, it can be hard to see the holy amidst all the unknown. So today, in communal worship, take time to notice the holiness of our connection to one another. What does it feel like to look into the eyes of a member of your community and see the face of Christ? If you are able, take it one step further by anointing someone (a friend, a child, a partner, a neighbor or yourself) with oil or water in the sign of the cross as a blessing and an acknowledgement of the holiness that dwells within them.
Ash Wednesday
February 17th, 2021

The first day of Lent each year is called Ash Wednesday. Since the Middle Ages, it has become customary to be marked in ashes with a sign of the cross as a ritual to begin the Lenten season. Ashes are an ancient sign of repentance and by the intimacy of this marking practice, we have the chance to look into each other’s eyes and recognize our shared brokenness and mortality. It is in this sharing, even if just for a moment, we experience our collective need for repentance and the creative power of God to one day bring new life again, even to us.

The peculiarity of this covid season gives us the chance to lean into this practice. So, make fire, gather some ashes and if you are able, find another person you trust to look deeply into their eyes, confess your brokenness to and receive/give a mark that reminds us of God’s scandalous and transformative grace.

Ingredients:
1 tbsp. dry yeast
1 tbsp. sugar
1 1/2 c. warm water (approx. 100 degrees)
3 c. white whole wheat flour
1 c. all purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
Water Bath: about 4 c. very hot (near boiling) water with 4 tbsp. baking soda

Step One: Mix water, yeast, and sugar and let stand for 5-10 minutes until creamy. Add flour and salt.

Step Two: Knead the dough together for 5-8 minutes until it is pulled together and uniform. Set aside to let rise until doubled about 1/2 hour or so.

Step Three: In wide pot, create your water bath by mixing together the hot water and baking soda. Then bring to simmer.

Step Four: Punch down dough and cut into 12-18 pieces, depending on how big you’d like your pretzels. Snake-roll the dough until it is the thickness of a pencil and shape into pretzel.

Step Five: Dip pretzel into water bath for about 20-30 seconds and then place on baking sheet (oiled, non-stick, or lined with parchment!).

Step Six: Bake at 425 degrees approximately 8-10 minutes until golden. If you want, brush them with melted butter and sprinkle on some coarse salt, cinnamon sugar, or any other toppings.

(For original recipe see: https://www.maryhaseltine.com/2012/04/pretzels-for-lent.html)
Homemade Pretzels
A story is told that an Italian monk made a simple bread to remind his brother monks that Lent was a time of prayer. He rolled the bread dough in strips and shaped them in the form of arms crossed over the heart in a prayerful gesture. The bread was then baked as a soft bread, just like the big soft pretzels one can find today. Because these breads were shaped into the form of crossed arms, they were called bracella, the Latin word for “little arms.” From this word, came the German word bretzel and our word pretzel.

A Prayer of Confession
Most holy and merciful God:
We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.
Have mercy on us, Lord.
Accomplish in us the work of your salvation, That we may show forth your glory in the world. Amen.
First Sunday of Lent
February 21, 2021

Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 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. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

The reflection and discussion questions this season were provided by the diocesan-wide movement, “Becoming Beloved Community.” Every Thursday of Lent this year, you are invited to gather with them over zoom to engage in the sacred practice of StorySharing, from 7-8:30pm. StorySharing invites us to listen each other into wholeness: by listening for God, for belovedness, we remember that more than belonging to one another, we share one body.

For more information and registration, visit https://dsobeloved.org/story-sharing/. Questions? Contact Amy Howton at ahowton@diosohio.org.

Use this treasure map to discover Labyrinths throughout our city!
Or Check out this website for more details on where to find the hidden labyrinths in your area: https://labyrinthlocator.com
HINT: there’s one at Christ Church Cathedral!

Art by Brianna Kelly
Critical self-talk and “inner voices” are sometimes our biggest enemy or obstacle during moments of trial and/or self-imposed asceticism. From the perspective of Jesus’ humanity, how important do you think the affirmation that Jesus received from God, the Father, at his baptism was during his wilderness experience?

Discussion Questions
Share a story about a time in your life that positive affirmation and self-talk helped carry you through a difficult and trying experience.
Second Sunday of Lent
February 28, 2021

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

What is a labyrinth?
Labyrinths are geometrical patterns used for walking or tracing, as a tool to assist the consciousness in prayer. They have been around for thousands of years and even though no one is exactly sure where they first originated, they have been used by different cultures and religious traditions worldwide.

Once I find one, how do I walk a labyrinth?
First of all, there is no “right or wrong” way to walk or trace a labyrinth. You might walk it as a body prayer or a symbolic journey. Or maybe you move through the labyrinth with the intention to unwind, to let go of a worry or burden of some sort -letting it go when you reach the center. Allow your own creativity to be present and walk the labyrinth in the way you think will work best for you. If you are not able to go somewhere, you can always make your own. For some tips check out:https://www.labryinthos.net/layout.html. Or trace through the labyrinth on the next page with your finger.
Build your own Cairn
Throughout time, pilgrims have been constructing cairns, or small piles of rocks, as markers of holy spots throughout the wilderness. They also act as markers on trails or boundary markers to remind us of the presence of others along this journey.

**Step One:** Gather an assortment of stones; long ones, flat ones, round ones, small ones, jagged ones, smooth ones.

**Step Two:** Find a special place outside. Or maybe just a very ordinary place. Try to stack the stones from biggest to smallest, finding the right grooves and balance for each one.

**Step Three:** Allow it to topple, allow it to rest, rebuild it, knock it over, until it feels right. Let it go and forget about it. Maybe one day you’ll return to this ordinary place and the stones will still be stacked. Maybe you’ll add another stone on top.

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**Reflection Questions**
In this moment on their journey together, Jesus gets “real” with his disciples, and what he has to say is not well received. What words, feedback, or constructive criticism about you have you received recently? How did you respond? What would you have to lose if you internalized it and accepted it as truth?

**Discussion Questions**
Share a story about a time in your life when you told the truth or spoke plainly and lost something because what you shared was not what someone wanted to hear.
Mark 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Reflection Questions
What do you expect from Christ today? within you? and in the world?

Discussion Questions
Share a story of a time in your life when, like Joseph of Arimathea, prepared and acted from a place of faith and expectation. (example: planted a garden or coordinated a fundraiser). What beliefs about the future led to your action in the moment?

Reflection Questions
Some things have to be torn down in order for something better and more life-giving to emerge. What do you need to let go of? What do you need to zealously tear down in your life?

Discussion Questions
Share a story about a time in your life when something positive developed after something negative happened.
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
March 14, 2021

John 3:14-21

Jesus said, “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“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.

“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. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion,
Mark 15:1-39, [40-47]

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him

Reflection Questions
Many of us struggle to protect what we love, yet God, the Father, freely and somewhat perilously offered up an extension of God’s self, God’s beloved, for the salvation of the world. What gifts and talents do we hold back from the world that would bring peace and light in their own right?

Discussion Questions
Share a story of a time when you shared a talent with those around you. What was the outcome?
John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.