



I am among you as one who serves.

Ash Wednesday Service

February 26, 2020 6:30 p.m.

Hunter Presbyterian Church Undercroft



Day of the Lord
by Hannah Garrity

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

Call to Worship

This day

Is the start of something new.

This day

Marks the beginning of a season.

This day

Reminds us who we are.

This day

Reminds us who we long to be.

So on this day,

Let us worship God.

Prayer of Confession

Creator God,

You breathed life into dust. You dreamed me up and brought me into existence. The least I could do would be to follow you, but even that is hard. Forgive me for my distracted ways. Remind me that in life and in death, I belong to you. On my best days and on my worst days, I belong to you. Amen.

(moment for silent reflection)

Words of Assurance

Passing of the Peace

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Hymn 450

"Be Thou My Vision"

SLANE

HEARING THE WORD

Reading

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Readers narrate adornments for the worship space

VOICE A:

Today marks the first Day in the season of Lent. This season, we will journey together using the theme of wilderness, for Lent begins in the wilderness. The Spirit guides Jesus into the wilderness where he comes face to face with temptation and struggle. Yet, in his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus is shaped and formed for his ministry. Similarly, through the wilderness of Lent, we are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. We rarely enter the wilderness willingly, but hopefully through our wandering we remember who we are and whose we are.

VOICE B:

As you can see, our worship space is adorned with elements of the wilderness. Instead of running away from the wilderness, we have brought the wilderness in—to face it, confront it, and find our way through it. These elements remind us of the many layers of the wilderness—in these layers we find meaning and the courage to carry on.

Instructions: As this is being read, pour 2-3 inches of sand into the vase at your table.

VOICE C:

Sand accumulates slowly over time, wearing away from rock and stone, crystallizing tiny organisms and minerals into hard matter. In the deep crust of the earth, grains of sand compress into stone. Sand reminds us that the wilderness has history, for as long as there has been creation, there has been wilderness. Friends, the wilderness is somewhere we've been before.

VOICE D:

In the winter, many trees let go of their leaves. Some trees need to be pruned in order to bear fruit. Trees remind us that we have to let go in order to start anew. And every spring, trees show us what it looks like to become new. In the wilderness, God is cheering for you. Friends, the wilderness is a place to begin again.

Instructions: Carefully place 3 branches in the sand at the bottom of the vase at your table during the reading.

VOICE A:

In the bible, the wilderness was often like a maze for the lost. Jacob wrestled with a mysterious angel through the night in the wilderness. The Israelites escaped to the desert and then wandered there for forty years. Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman alone by a well in the midday heat. But often, the wilderness was also a place to encounter the divine. When Jacob dreamt of a ladder leading to heaven, he placed a stone to mark the spot. He called the holy place "Beth-el"—God's house. Even when we are lost or walking in the dark, stones remind us that God is transforming our terrain into holy ground.

Instructions: Each person place one stone in the vase during the reading.

VOICE B:

Moss has no roots and requires no soil. Instead, it grows on the face of stone. Moss is known for its hardiness—it can sustain drought, too much rain, and cold temperatures. Some mosses can grow again after being frozen for over a thousand years. Moss reminds us that the wilderness is a place of new life, of resilient life.

Instructions: Someone places a small bit of moss atop the stones.

VOICE C:

Friends, we learn who we are in the wilderness. We learn who God is in the wilderness. We learn how to take the next step, how to find comfort with the unknown, and how to trust God's call in the wilderness.

VOICE D:

In the wilderness our faith is born, nurtured, challenged, and resurrected.

All: Let us journey together, trusting that God is with us every step of the way.

Reading

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Imposition of the Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Hymn 451

"Open My Eyes, That I May See"

OPEN MY EYES

Closing Litany Prayer

○ Christ, out of your fullness we have all received grace upon grace. You are our eternal hope; you are patient and full of mercy; you are generous to all who call upon you.

Save us, Lord.

○ Christ, fountain of life and holiness, you have taken away our sins. On the cross you were wounded for our transgressions and were bruised for our iniquities.

Save us, Lord.

○ Christ, obedient unto death, source of all comfort, our life and our resurrection, our peace and reconciliation:

Save us, Lord.

○ Christ, Savior of all who trust you, hope of all who die for you, and joy of all the saints:

Save us, Lord.

Jesus, Lamb of God,

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

Grant us peace.

*Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
Wilderness liturgy by: Lisle Gwynn Garrity
Closing Litany from [The Book of Common Worship](#)

Hunter is an Earth Care Congregation. Please Recycle.

Hunter Presbyterian Church

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Hyunjin Kwak, Director of Music Ministry; Allen Fletcher, Organist;

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