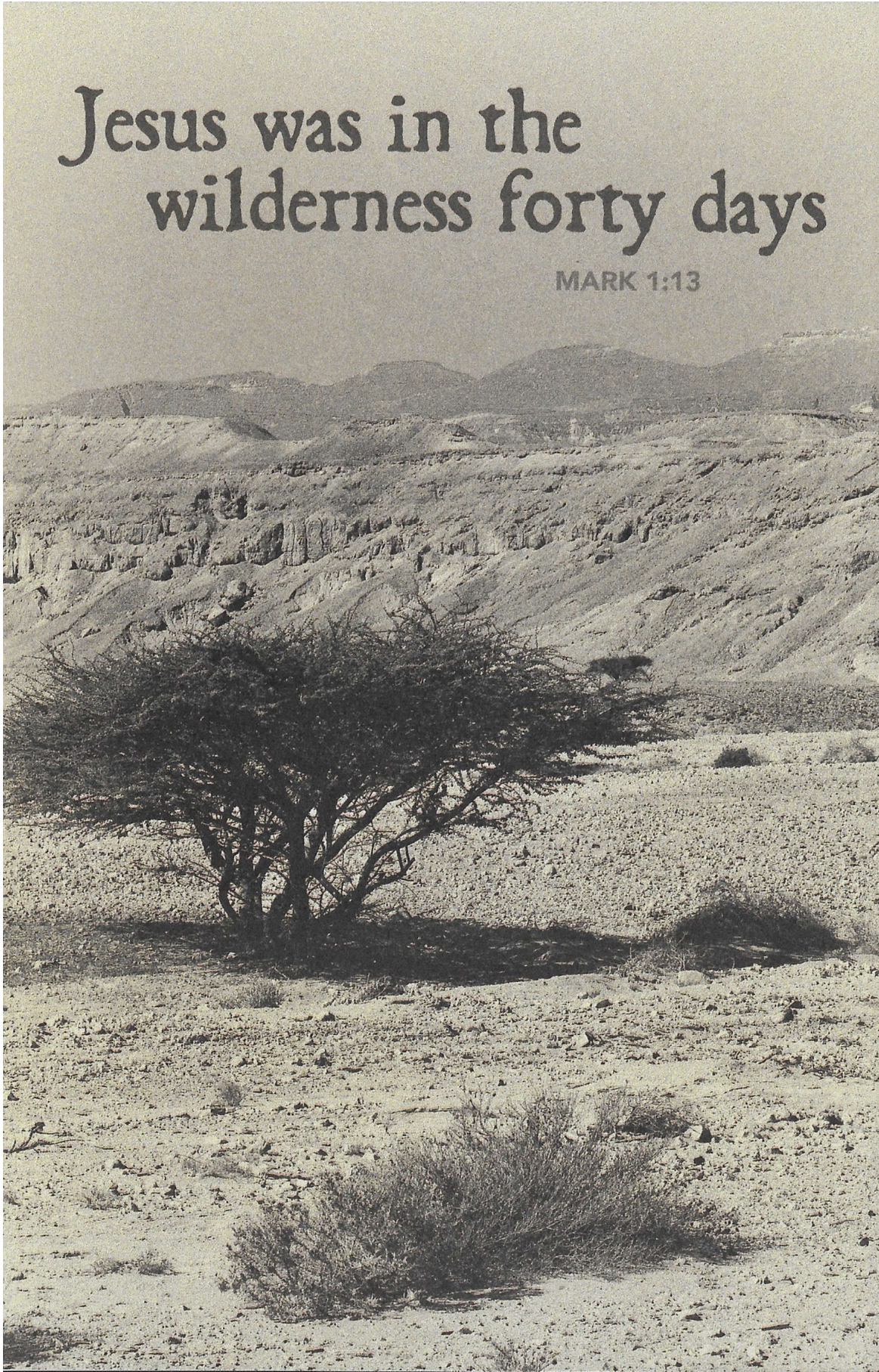


FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Jesus was in the wilderness forty days

MARK 1:13





Service with Communion given by Pastor Joe on Zoom

Church office: 570-223-9422
Church Address: 139 Craig's Meadow Rd.
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
E-Mail: stpaulscraigsmeadow@verizon.net
Web Site: stpaulscommunitychurch.com
Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

Pastoral Care Concerns: Please call the church office to leave a message for an Evangelism member or call Laura Pride direct at 570-807-6114.

The Evangelism Committee is available if you are in need of anything or know of someone else that needs a call, a visit or a card to help cheer them up. Please feel free to contact someone on the committee.

Chair: Kay Malinowitzer (h) 570-223-5049 (c) 570-242-3157

Sam Malinowitzer (h) 570-223-5049 (c) 570-242-3155

Faye Jones (h) 570-223-8035 (c) 570-460-6009

Noreen Manda 570-242-2927 and Alisa Nixon 908-279-5242

February Services

Pastor Joe 24th Wednesday Lenten Service (Bulletin and information will be sent out Tuesday)

Pastor Chris 28th on Zoom

Food Pantry will be Thursday the 25th 9:30am -12:00 noon. Pick-up will be in front of church for the winter months.

Pantry is in need of peanut butter and jelly. Please let Jackie know if you are planning on donating an Easter ham so she can plan ahead.

Please call before dropping off to make sure someone is at the church.

Monetary help is always appreciated.

Portals of Prayer: January–March 2021 books still available for pick-up during the week. The April – June 2021 are now available.

Don't forget to bring or mail in your Weis receipts.

Church office is open Tuesday–Friday 9:00am to 12:00 noon if you need to pick-up or drop off something.



Joan Carpenter, John Young, Tom McGhee, Debbie North, Dale Settlerly (friend of Tom and Judy Smith), John Kennedy (father of Jackie McGhee), Freida Seiple, Sharon Gerhart (friend of Carrie Strohl), Donna Geist (sister of Joanne Albertson), Elizabeth Hahn, (friend of Nancy Fritz), Vicky and Don Lishman, June and son Dale Kelly (friends of Judy and Tom Smith), Matthew Seiple (son of Freda Seiple), Harold J. Litts (cousin of Jim Litts and Patsy Young), Garrett Csepeggi (great grandson of Joanne and Doug Albertson), Earnestine Boone (sister of Kerliene Johnson), Baby Conner Francis Rourke (neighbor of Judy and Tom Smith), Kay Malinowtizer, Maureen Kotowski (friend of Carrie Strohl), Joe Toter (friend of Judy and Tom Smith), Nelson Frutchey (brother of Ruth-Ann Rumbold), Linda Jennings and Ginny Barnes (friends of Noreen and Sal Manda), Margo Kovacs, Kim Kilmurray, Debbie Woo (friend of Laura Pride), Sal Manda, Hilary Lew, Dottie Davis (sister of Patty Jones), Julia and Tom (daughter and friend of John and Barb Edwards), John Einlenberger, Sally Mickosawich (Friend of Patsy Litts and John Young), Ben Huffman, Jason Guzman (family of the Prides and Madeline McCarron), Lester Campbell (friend of the Clements Family), John Tufano, Charles Farley, Lori Osmun (friend of Carrie Strohl) Rosemary Gilchris (friends of the Clements Family), Charlie and Alice Farley, Ken Brown, Felder Dorn (friends of Madeline McCarron and Laura Pride), Marilyn Fackelman (mother of Barbara Hart), Joe Widmer, Mario Vincenzino (uncle of Stephanie Stephens), Stella Rouzer (granddaughter of Linda & Rich Rouzer), John Jones (brother of Madeline McCarron and uncle of Laura Pride), Shirly Bodine & Lou Costello (friends of Joan Carpenter), Bill Kilmurray (family of Kim Kilmurray), Donna Geilmann (sister of Marylee Rehm), Aaron Smith, Robin Mason (daughter of John and Patsy Litts-Young), Ron & Mary Smith (cousins of Tom & Judy Smith and Frank & Emma Smith), Angel Berrios, Tiffany Bass (friend of Tracey Lasslett), Lois Morris & Charlotte Jewell (friends of Ruth Ann Rumbold), Ken and Sue Werkheiser (grandparents and aunt of Meredith Smith).

Our Service men and women: Nicholas & Ian Hopkins, Christina Perez, Raquel Berrios, Luke Biddulph, Corey Walton, Case Hofgen (cousin of Tim Lasslett), and Angela Anglada (niece of Lisa Dassaro).



Celebrate

First Sunday in Lent

February 21, 2021

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

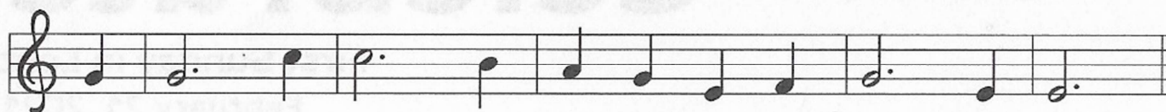
First Reading

Genesis 9:8-17

Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow

in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."



Your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithful-ness.

To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.

2 My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

3 Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

4 Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths. **R**

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.

6 Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

8 You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way. **R**

9 You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

10 All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies. **R**

Second Reading

1 Peter 3:18-22

As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few,

that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel

Mark 1:9-15

The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God's reign.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

¹²And the Spirit immediately

drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

In Jesus your realm has come near to us in every place and time. Give your church throughout the world a spirit of humility and repentance; teach us to trust always in the good news of your salvation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have made a covenant of mercy with every living creature. Protect all the earth's creatures from destruction (*especially . . . here local environmental concerns may be named*). Empower the work of biologists, conservationists, and science educators. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All your paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Direct the words and actions of leaders in our community and throughout the world, that they may maintain justice for the lowly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Even in the wilderness you are with us. Walk alongside migrants and refugees crossing dangerous lands. Tend to those whose lives feel desolate. Give healing and strength to all who suffer (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the covenant of baptism you claim us as beloved children. Nurture us in our baptismal identity and teach us to live within it for the sake of others. Strengthen this congregation's ministries of care and concern (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In baptism you join us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We praise you for all those who have died trusting in your faithfulness. Bring us with them to the fullness of your reign. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 77. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156) 1 Peter 3:8-18a. **Wednesday** Proverbs 30:1-9. **Thursday** (commemoration of Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, 1921) Psalm 22:23-31. **Friday** Genesis 16:1-6. **Saturday** Mark 8:27-30. **Second Sunday in Lent** Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38.

CELEBRATE February 21, 2021

Volume 52, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 510 Marquette Ave, Suite 800, Minneapolis, MN, 55402. Periodicals postage paid in Twin Cities, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Thomas Keesecker. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year B* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). Please visit our Web site at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year B. CELEBRATE is protected through trademark registration in the U.S.A. and Canada.

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Secure Even When It's Not Safe

The world is unsafe in countless ways. It contains wilderness after wilderness, places where temptation and danger seem to reign. Struggle, pain, fear, violence, hate, death, and suffering are all part of the uncertain world that we wake to each day.

Today, the Gospel of Mark discusses Jesus' own encounter with the wilderness. After he was baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus was driven into the desert wilderness, where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. What's more, when Jesus left the wilderness to re-enter society, he encountered another kind of dangerous wilderness, a world where John the Baptist had just been arrested for confronting Herod Antipas and his wife Herodias with some hard-hitting truth.

After forty days of temptation, Jesus was met by yet another temptation: to play it safe in a world that had just silenced his friend for doing exactly the kind of thing that Jesus came to do. Despite the risk posed by worldly power players like Herod, Jesus proceeded to teach, heal, and spread the good news of God's kingdom. Despite the danger, Jesus trusted in the promise that God's love was bigger than the wilderness of human wiles.

The world is not safe, and believing in Jesus does not change this fact. However, we are secure in an unsafe world because of the promises made by God in baptism. Think of children who are secure in the love of their parents. They may go to school and face bullies—a painful experience, for sure—but they are less likely to trust the lies of the bullies because they know a deeper truth about themselves, a truth instilled by the love of their parents. So it is with us. There is danger and wilderness all around, but we are secure in the truth of our baptism: we are God's beloved children, with whom God is well pleased. Grounded in this secure love, we derive courage to set out into the wild.

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