

Trinity United Methodist Church
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Prayer Ministries of TUMC
offers this monthly brochure
to provide members of TUMC
and a circle of interested others
a compact source of meditations
as an aid
to their ongoing spiritual development,
in a way that provides the reader with
grace-full, image-evoking language that fosters
appreciation for our faith tradition,
so that we may be strengthened
to carry out our church's mission statement:

Know God. Be transformed. Love.



March 2017

Lent: Wilderness

March 1, Ash Wednesday

At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky split open and God's Spirit, looking like a dove, came down on him. Along with the Spirit, a Voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life." At once, this same Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions,
and angels took care of him.

Mark 1:9-13

Thursday, March 2 The word Lent comes from Lencten, Old English for "spring season." Spring season may suggest lighthearted springing about. But for Christians, Lent is meant to be solemn, a season of self-discipline. Lent calls us to remember and share the forty days Jesus secluded himself in the wilderness...Forty days...the number of perseverance, of difficulty, of change. Forty days of what brought me here, and what next?

P. Dishman, "Gumption and Grace: Seeking God's Face"

Friday, March 3

Oh God, you are my God;
at first light I seek you.
My soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you,
as in a dry and weary land
where there is no water.

From Psalm 63, a prayer of David
when he was in the Wilderness of Judah

Saturday, March 4

Remember every road that God led you on for those forty years in the wilderness, pushing you to your limits, testing you so that he would know what you were made of, whether you would keep his commandments or not. He put you through hard times. He made you go hungry. Then he fed you with manna, something neither you nor your parents knew anything about, so you would learn that men and women don't live by bread only; we live by every word that comes from God's mouth. Your clothes didn't wear out and your feet didn't blister those forty years. You learned deep in your heart that God disciplines you in the same ways a father disciplines his child.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, *The Message*

Sunday, March 5

And the tempter came and said to Jesus,
"If you are the Son of God,
command that these stones become bread."
But Jesus answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4

Monday, March 6

Take a good look at My servant. I'm backing him to the hilt. He's the one I chose, and I couldn't be more pleased with him. I've bathed him in My Spirit, My life. He'll set everything right among the nations. He won't call attention to what he does with loud speeches or gaudy parades. He won't brush aside the bruised and the hurt and he won't disregard the small and insignificant, but he'll steadily and firmly set things right.

Isaiah 42, *The Message*

Tuesday, March 7

Again, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Jesus, "All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

Matthew 4:8-10

Wednesday, March 8

Jesus, tempted at the temple,
high above its ancient wall:
"Throw yourself from lofty turret;
angels wait to break your fall!"
Jesus shuns such empty marvels,
feats the fickle crowds request:
"God, whose grace protects, preserves us,
we must never vainly test."

UM The Faith We Sing #2105
"Jesus, Tempted in the Desert,"
words by Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr.

Thursday, March 9

Then the devil left Jesus; and behold,
angels came and began to minister to him.

Matthew 4:11

Friday, March 10

We are the supporting cast
of a great and ongoing drama,
and it is our inestimable privilege
to be part of it.

Harold Kushner

Saturday, March 11

Different translations of Mark's gospel:
 The Spirit *drove* Jesus. *Sent* Jesus.
Urged Jesus. *Compelled* Jesus. *Forced* Jesus.
Pushed Jesus. Quoth the Spirit: "Go!!!"
 P. Dishman, "Gumption and Grace: Seeking God's Face"

Sunday, March 12

There is something immense going on.
 Say you're in love with God, and it's mutual.
 Say you're aware, more or less,
 that love requires of you all that you are.
 Now what?
 P. Dishman, "Gumption and Grace: Seeking God's Face"

Monday, March 13

There is continual testing in the life of faith.
 Oswald Chambers

Tuesday, March 14

The great insights
 do not come from smooth and easy days.
 Bill Kerley

Wednesday, March 15

Difficulties when accepted for God's sake
 tend to accelerate the spiritual journey and to
 move it beyond the routines of selfishness
 that are so deeply rooted in us.
 Thomas Keating

Thursday, March 16

What if Wilderness is our salvation?
 What if Wilderness contains an energy field,
 where certain energies we need for
 development are more available than they are
 in our normal domesticated environment?
 Wilderness: Here we take refuge,
 we seek direction,
 problems arise and we face them.
 Wilderness becomes the place of theophany:
 God is revealed.
 P. Dishman, "Gumption and Grace: Seeking God's Face"

Friday, March 17

Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
 darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
 yet in my dreams I'll be
 nearer, my God, to thee;
 nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee.
 UM Hymnal #528, Sarah F. Adams, 1841

Saturday, March 18

A few practical disciplines for Lent:
 Be still, and reflect.
 Check in with God at the end of each day.

Sunday, March 19

Study the Gospel accounts
 of Jesus' time in the Wilderness.
 Read them over again.
 Let them speak to you as they will.

Monday, March 20

Delve into a book of the Bible you don't know
 much about. Read commentaries on it.
 Pray the Psalms aloud. Learn a new hymn.

Tuesday, March 21

Learn a breath prayer:
 "Holy Spirit [breathe in]...
 "Let me feel your joy" [breathe out]

Wednesday, March 22

Spend a day or a season or the rest of your life
 living simply. Eat sparingly. Think about your
 own Wilderness, your places of testing.

Thursday, March 23

Take an electronic fast. "Too many of us have
 become slaves to the devices that were
 supposed to free us...Most people now check
 their smartphones 150 times per day..."

Friday, March 24

Apologize to someone and make amends.
 Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it.
 Try to understand a different point of view.

Saturday, March 25

Hold the tension of a situation
 without rushing to closure.
 Abstain from forcing solutions.
 Lay down the burden
 of straightening other people out.

Sunday, March 26

Write a letter. Or a poem. Or a story.
 If you're a visual psalmist, take pictures.
 Learn to make iMovies.

Monday, March 27

Serve your church in a new way.
 Attend worship more regularly.
 Join the Intercessory Prayer Team.

Tuesday, March 28

Be gentle when you can.
 Be kind.
 Serve people in need.

Wednesday, March 29

Visit the lonely.
 Tell others you love them.

Thursday, March 30

Say thank you.
 Cultivate a life of gratitude.
 "Be infinitely grateful to all things past.
 Be of infinite service to all things present.
 Bear infinite responsibility for all things future."
 P. Dishman, "Gumption and Grace: Seeking God's Face"

Friday, March 31

The Lord your God is with you.
 He is a hero who saves you.
 He happily rejoices over you,
 renews you
 with his love,
 and celebrates over you
 with shouts of joy.