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Feb

Mercy on the Wilderness Road

Renewed in Mercy

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, YEAR A

The First Sunday in Lent invites us to consider how to set the space for the journey ahead.

REFERENCES

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

COLORS

Purple

CALL TO WORSHIP

Today, we follow Jesus into a wilderness full of isolation, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and temptation. We follow, trusting in God's mercy.

We witness Jesus resist the siren calls of sensationalism, notoriety, and misuse of power for selfish gain.

We recognize God's mercy at work in the face of temptation.

We notice the angels who tend Jesus, messengers of care in a harsh and lonely place.

We pay attention to God's merciful presence that did not abandon Jesus and does not abandon us now.

We come to the wilderness together, clinging to the truth that we are not alone—God is with us. We gather to worship God, whose unfailing mercy journeys with us into the wildernesses of our

lives. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, July 2025.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Holy God, by the grace of Jesus Christ,
you know the tests and trials we face.
Journey with us through this wilderness.
Come to us with ministers of healing
and visit us with messengers of hope,
so that we may return to you in faith,
believing the good news of the gospel;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Adapted from the Presbyterian Church USA website, <https://pcusa.org/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/02/prayer-for-lent-1-b.html>.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and merciful God,
we confess to you our reluctance to enter the wilderness places
where we are confronted with our true selves.
The places where we are tempted to put worldly values
before our desire for you,
and when our hunger for power and wealth is greater
than our hunger for seeking and doing your will:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use the gifts you give us
to benefit ourselves at the expense of serving others:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use sensational means to increase people's faith,
rather than being guided by the humility of Christ:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use bribery to influence and control people:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to manipulate you, O God, to satisfy our own needs:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

A time of silence for personal confession

Merciful God,
save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
Forgive us our sins and fill us with the joy and peace of your salvation.
So strengthen us with your Spirit during this Lenten season
that we put our whole trust in you as confidently as Jesus did.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Words of Forgiveness

As the apostle Paul wrote:
“...if you confess with your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord
and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)
These words contain the good news
that in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

Written by Moira Laidlaw and posted on Liturgies Online, <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/confession-wilderness-places.html>.

BENEDICTION

Go, now, in the comfort and blessing of God's mercy, trusting that wherever you go, God's steadfast love surrounds you, sustains you, and supports you for the journey ahead. Amen.

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