



The SPIRIT of Lent and Easter Season

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March / April 2020

The Wilderness is a Place of Beginnings

The wilderness is not where we choose to be, but all too often in life, that is exactly where we are. Yet the wilderness does not have to be destructive, even if harsh.

“For me, wilderness is a metaphor for difficult moments in the day, for challenging aspects of the beautiful blessings of life.” Hannah Garrity

“God calls us to wilderness to use our discomfort to stretch us, challenge us, and equip us to more completely reflect God.” Slat's Toole

It was in the wilderness of the Exodus that the people of God were formed.

It was in the wilderness of temptation that Jesus set his mind on his calling.

It was in the wilderness of conflict, confusion, decision, sin, searching, or loss that followers of God across the ages, came to faith and discovered God was real.

Sarah Are, inspirational author, poetically expresses it as follows:

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Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 26
7:00 pm

a cappella Sunday

Sunday, March 1
9:00 and 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 9
Dinner & Worship at 6:30 pm

Good Friday Jazz Tenebrae

Friday, April 10 at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday Services

Sunday, April 12
8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 am

Men's Easter Breakfast

between 8am and 11am services

Easter Cantata

Come Away to the Skies:

A High Lonesome Mass

by Wes Ramsey and Tim Sharp

Sunday, April 26
9:00 and 11:00 am

Wilderness

The First Week of Lent | THE WILDERNESS IS A PLACE OF BEGINNINGS

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Wilderness Prayer by Sarah Are

“Begin again,” life whispered in my ear;
For some days are beginning days.
Some days are designed to be the day we try again,
And on those days—the sun rises for you.
On those days, the birds sing for you.
On those days, God is cheering for you.
That’s just the way God and beginnings work.
For when your heart is
broken and your life is in pieces,
Or when the addiction or the depression
have found their way back into your bones,
Or when you lose sight of the person
that you were called to be,
The wilderness will sing to you, “Begin again.”
“Begin again” with the person you want to be.
“Begin again” with the person you want to love.
“Begin again” with the knowledge of your faith.
“Begin again.”
The sun is rising for you.

This Lent we will wander and roam in the wilderness.
Not lost, but focused on the reality of God in our
lives and allowing God to “to stretch us, challenge us,
and equip us.” ~ Pastor John

Invitation to the Table

The Maundy Thursday worship service is truly my favorite service each and every year. This service is a time for us to break bread as a family while remembering the night Jesus was betrayed. It’s a time for us to stop what we are doing and just be at the table.

Maundy Thursday worship is such a special night and each and every year more people attend which means, new and creative ways to eat and worship. It is a wonderful problem to have!

If you have attended a Maundy Thursday service you know how much work goes into planning and executing the meal and worship experience. Whether you have attended in the past or have decided this is the year you are going to be there, I am personally requesting (and very much needing) your assistance. This is the perfect opportunity for you to help your church family experience Maundy Thursday.

You are invited to be part of the discussion and planning on **March 8th at 12 noon**. Bring a lunch, your ideas, and join me. RSVPs are appreciated.
~ Raechel Sowa

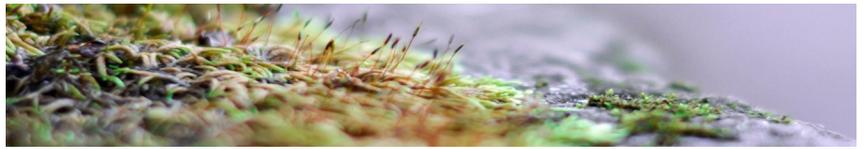


Mark Your Calendar for the RCLPC Easter Sunday Pancake Breakfast...

On Easter Sunday, April 12th, a Pancake Breakfast will be served in Fellowship Hall hosted by the Men’s Breakfast Group. The menu includes pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, yogurt and mixed fruit. Your donations to the breakfast will benefit NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness. Breakfast will be served just after the 8AM service and will continue until just before the 11AM service.

John Muir's Wilderness

~~~ a Mission Team reflection



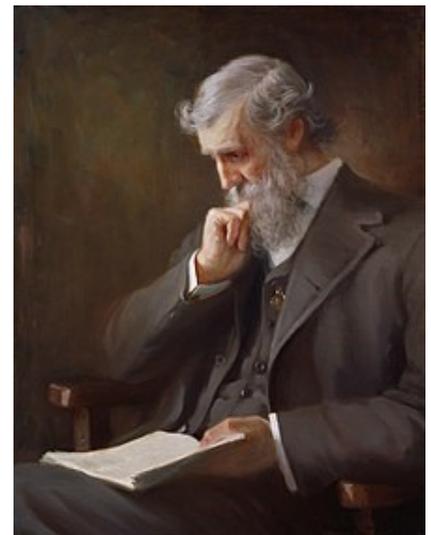
During this season of Lent, we will no doubt be challenged to imagine many varied concepts of wilderness. There is of course the stereotypical image from the Bible, where wilderness is often portrayed as inhospitable, desert-like, full of withered vines and desiccated landscape. Yet another concept comes from the origin of the word: “wild deer,” from the Old English “wilddēornes.” This wilderness is a place of natural beauty, where nature is on full display, teeming with abundant animal and plant life.

This wilderness of natural beauty is the wilderness of John Muir (1838-1914), the naturalist who was a leading voice in preserving America's wilderness areas and helped found the Sierra Club. John Muir was born in Scotland, emigrated with his family to Wisconsin at a young age, and eventually gravitated to California, an odyssey that included walking from Kentucky to Florida, visiting Havana and New York, and then finally on to California. Of further interest is that John Muir was born into the Church of Scotland, but his father apparently found that brand of Presbyterianism “insufficiently strict in faith and practice,” leading to the decision to relocate to America. Religion continued to infuse Muir's thinking, creating a foundation for his love and appreciation of nature.

It was California that firmly established Muir as a prolific chronicler of the wilderness. Prone to taking arduous treks through his wilderness, his observations frequently display a wry humor, as he recorded in 1898:

“In my first interview with a Sierra bear we were frightened and embarrassed, both of us, but the bear's behavior was better than mine. When I discovered him, he was standing in a narrow strip of meadow, and I was concealed behind a tree on the side of it. After studying his appearance as he stood at rest, I rushed toward him to frighten him, that I might study his gait in running. But, contrary to all I had heard about the shyness of bears, he did not run at all; and when I stopped short within a few steps of him, as he held his ground in a fighting attitude, my mistake was monstrously plain. I was then put on my good behavior, and never afterward forgot the right manners of the wilderness.”

Muir found his God everywhere in nature. All Nature – plant and animal life, rivers, rocks, mountains as well as the skies above – was “Godful.” One scholar who has studied the intertwining of Muir's science and theology sees his legacy in three aspects. First, the romantic language and ethereal imagery of his “theology” can acceptably be made to carry many labels, thus satisfying many who reverence the natural world. Second, Muir was drawing attention to the connectedness of the living and non-living parts of the natural world, summarized in his well-known comment, “When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” Finally, in arguing for preservation, he drew attention to the need for humankind to find its “right” place in the natural world.



As we at RCLPC experience the season of Lent, may we be nourished by God in however we define our own wilderness, and may we heed the words of Matthew 25 and continue to care for the least of these – be they animal, plant, mineral or the skies above.

# Let's Go Fishing

## One Great Hour of Sharing Fishing Derby

It's O-fish-ial! RCLPC is REEL excited to participate in the Blackhawk Presbytery **One Great Hour of Sharing Fishing Derby**. No license or fishing gear required, just fill your fish banks with coins, currency and checks and RCLPC may win bragging rights for: the **largest fish** (the fish bank that contains the most money), the **heaviest fish** (the fish bank that weighs the most), and **total catch** (overall gifts from a congregation). Don't let this opportunity be the one that got away. Take the bait and dive into this challenge to help RCLPC win the One Great Hour of Fishing Derby.



### Derby Rules and Regulations:

To enter: Pick up your fish bank on (or after) March 1. Throughout Lent you are asked to fill your bank with coins and currency and then report your catch on April 5 at the weighing station outside Fellowship Hall. It is the responsibility of the contestants to report their earnings (no exaggerating the size of your fish). Internal results will be posted by April 16th and overall results will be announced after the Presbytery's May Mission Meeting.



## Christian Ed During Lent

“There is a time for everything. Lent is a time for discipline. It is a time to study and pray and improve our serving. For the next six weeks until Easter we join Christians all around the world in trying to be better disciples, so come, let us listen, pray, learn, and grow.” *Sharing the Easter Faith with Children*, Karen C. Brown).

God knows us and loves us anyway.

That is a powerful statement, and yet one so true for entering our time of Lent.

Has life felt hectic or out of control for you this winter? Have you not been able to participate in church and Sunday School as much as you would like? Have things like schedule conflicts, travel, exhaustion, illness, or any other chaotic fill in the blank prevented you from having your worship time at RCLPC? Are you ready to reinvigorate your relationship with Christ and think about your part in Christ's story?

I know I am. I'm ready to understand my wilderness, and more importantly, I'm ready to understand Christ's story too. It is learning His story and our wilderness that we break down barriers and find ourselves closer to Him.

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## Parent's Night Out

Our next PNO is **April 4 from 5:00-7:30 pm**. All children ages 6 mos-6th grade are invited to participate. Invite your friends, neighbors, cousins, nieces/nephews, and grandchildren to participate in a fun evening of games, dinner and a big Easter Egg Hunt. Sign up in the Gathering Space or by contacting Raechel at youthleader@rclpc.org. Adults, don't miss this opportunity for **FREE** childcare. **Make your dinner reservations today!**

In keeping with the importance of this season, CE is offering TWO extraordinary intergenerational days, TWO times when adults can gather for study and ONE unforgettable walk through Christ's life. Additionally, we are trying some new ideas too: **Join us every Sunday at 10AM for prayer and announcements in Fellowship Hall before heading to class. Join the Adult Ed class that is best for you--Sunday or Wednesday.**

## INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS



**March 1st - Wilderness Devotion Tree.** Join us as we open the Lent season with creating a Devotion Tree. Like the Advent wreath during Advent, the Devotion Tree will help you to stay vigilant on the Lenten season. We will enjoy some special treats and a chance to make a tree that can be used throughout your own 40-day journey of Lent.

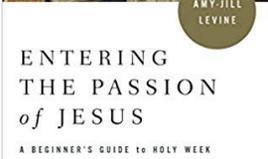
**April 5th - Holy Week Senses Stations.** Embrace Holy Week with your whole being on Palm Sunday. We will have stations set up to reflect on the events of Holy Week through the sounds, smells, tastes, feels and sights, and we will also have a station to put God's love into action. Join us in Fellowship Hall at 10am and awaken your being to the Passion of Christ.



## CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

K-4 will join Anthony, Tiffany and Daniel in exploring Christ's life and big events. 5-8 will study with Raechel and Deb. What can we learn about our own wilderness when looking at the stories of Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the blind man and Lazarus? We will start at 10am in Fellowship Hall and then take the time to find out!

## ADULT EDUCATION



In Adult Education, we will be studying the book *Entering the Passion of Jesus*, and diving into the history behind the texts of the Passion. John and Paula will teach this class on both **Sunday mornings at 10am and Wednesday evenings from 6-7:15pm**. If you would like to attend Wednesdays, we will provide dinner and have a freewill offering. If you would like to attend either Sunday or Wednesday, grab your copy of the book so that we can delve together into the richness of the Gospels.



**Books for Adult Education will be available beginning February 23rd in Fellowship Hall during Gathering Time at 10am. Sign-ups for Wednesday study will be available there as well as in the Gathering Place.**

**Would you like to know a little bit about the book we will be studying? Check out what the author says in her introduction:**

“The Passion accounts in all four Gospels speak to my heart. They are stories of failure and courage, despair and hope, political machination and theological inspiration. I want all readers of the Gospels to read the Passion stories with compassion: to see how much more meaningful they become when we learn the history behind the texts and study the texts themselves to see what brilliant writers the Evangelists were.” (*Entering the Passion of Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine).

An hourglass with a black metal frame and glass bulbs, containing white sand, stands in a field of tall grass. The background is a soft-focus sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon. The overall scene is bathed in warm, golden light.

***Reminder...***

***Daylight Saving Time  
Begins Sunday, March 8***