

From the Pews, Cathy January Bailey

Genesis 21: 8-21 recounts Hagar and Ishmael being sent out into the wilderness by Abraham. He gave them bread and a skin of water. The two wandered about until Hagar set her son under a bush and walked far enough away from him so she would not see him die. As a mother, as a grandmother, I shudder with grief and horror.

But the story did not end there. God, through his angel, gave Hagar a task. "Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand." It was then Hagar saw the well and water and gave Ishmael a drink. God's promise for Ishmael would be fulfilled.

We too, are in the wilderness, brought in sharp focus by an invisible virus.

So many people are so sick. So many loved ones are dying. So many families are in crises. This pandemic has laid bare tragic shortfalls in our national and local communities.

George Floyd was murdered. He was not the first. It cannot be denied. It is not that I did not know that these deep disparities exist in our society. I hold myself accountable. I humbly thank God for His grace.

Each one of us, no matter our status, our politics, our actions, our inactions, our secret thoughts, our spoken proclamations, our faith, wherever we are in this wilderness, somehow each of us is in need of God's grace.

Therein lies our hope. Christ is in our wilderness with each and every one of us, even with those I do not like. I think He gives us a task. I imagine He might say, "Come, lift up one another. The Holy Spirit is with you." Ordinary people, needing God's grace as they stand, not knowing exactly how or where they will end, step out.

It will be hard. In each of us, there is some part of this injustice that we must recognize as our own, that we must let go. We will at times, hold on tight to what is wrong, to our prejudices. Even the best of us will make mistakes, but our saving grace will be Christ. The Bible shows His great love, His perfect example and His everlasting promise- He is with us.

There are men, women, and even children who continue to follow Christ despite real dangers. Many, in our families, in our church, and around the world, already confront injustice. I suspect you may be one of them. More will follow. We will know some of their names and will remember their great deeds. Many, we will never know, but we will be blessed by their acts of great courage. None, not one, was perfect yet they stood when Christ called, and He did not forsake them.

This, I think, is what I know now and the task I see before me. God's grace will correct me along my path.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sunday, June 14, 2020 | online, 10:00a | Second Sunday After Pentecost



Prayer of Preparation

"To be commanded to love God at all, let alone in the wilderness, is like being commanded to be well when we are sick, to sing for joy when we are dying of thirst, to run when our legs are broken. But this is the first and great commandment nonetheless. Even in the wilderness—especially in the wilderness—you shall love him."
Frederick Buechner

Gathering and Preparing for God's Word

Prelude *All Creatures of Our God and King* arr. Evanovich
Welcome and Announcements

Sentences of Scripture, *selections from Psalm 8*
O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honor.

Hymn #645 *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* MIT FREUDEN ZART
See hymn sheet.

Morning Prayers
The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**

Response Do Not Be Afraid Morris

Hearing God's Word

Prayer for Illumination
Gospel Lesson, *Mark 1:12-13*
Time for Children
Old Testament Lesson, *Genesis 21:8-21*
Homily "In the Wilderness"

Responding to God's Word

Affirmation of Faith, *The Nicene Creed*
We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication
Hymn #65 *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* CWM RHONDDA
See hymn sheet.

Charge and Benediction
Postlude *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* arr. Limbaugh

Leading Worship this Morning

Ben Dorr, *preaching*
Mary Kathleen Duncan, Lauren Slingerland, Leigh Stuckey, *liturgists*
Nancy Smith, *organist*
Mark Kemp, Emily Sweezey, *soloists*

645 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

1 Sing praise to God who reigns a - bove, the God of all
 2 What God's al-might - y power has made God's gra - cious mer -
 3 The Lord is nev - er far a - way, but, through all grief
 4 Thus all my toil - some way a - long I sing a - loud

cre - a - tion, the God of power, the God of love,
 cy keep - eth; by morn - ing glow or eve - ning shade
 dis - tress - ing, an ev - er - pres - ent help and stay,
 thy prais - es, that all may hear the grate - ful song

the God of our sal - va - tion. With
 God's watch - ful eye ne'er sleep - eth. With -
 our peace and joy and bless - ing, as
 my voice un - wea - ried rais - es. Be

heal - ing balm my soul is filled, and ev - ery faith - less
 in the king - dom of God's might, lo! all is just and
 with a moth - er's ten - der hand God gent - ly leads the
 joy - ful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and bod - y,

mur - mur stilled:
 all is right: to God all praise and glo - ry!
 cho - sen band:
 take your part:

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah 65

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.