

Mennonite Church of Normal
Fourth Sunday of Lent March 14, 2021
Deep in the wilderness: Called to deep healing

Worship Focus: The wilderness confronts us with our vulnerability and exposes our wounds and our needs. We are called to deep healing by trusting in God, who calls us in love.

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude

Dorothy Loepp

Rend your Heart (Clokey) Ah Holy Jesus (Young) I Want Jesus to Walk with me (Petersen)

Welcome/Congregational Life

Gary Martin

Call to Worship

Gary

One: The wilderness is without and within. It too is part of God's path,
though we fear wild, barren places, as did the people of old.

**Many: When the people became impatient, asking,
"Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?"
God answered by bringing healing.**

One: In our barren places, God calls us to wholeness,
even when we cannot see beyond the danger, isolation, and need.

Many: We forget that God is already at work in these difficult, painful places.

One: Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Chosen One be lifted up, that whoever believes may have eternal life.

**Many: For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.**

All: *We call out to you, as you call us to deeper healing.*

Opening Prayer

Gary

Spirit of peace, quiet our hearts,
heal our anxious thoughts,
free us from our fretful ways.

Breathe on us your holy calm so that
in the stillness of your presence,
we may open ourselves to trust
and be transformed. Amen

Calm Me, Lord #680 (also STS 45)

Praising the Name of Jesus

Song of Praise

What Wondrous Love Is This #564 (also HWB 530)

Words of Praise Adapted from Psalm 30

Marcia Rossi

Sing praises to God, O you saints, and give thanks to God's holy name!
We exalt you, O God, for you have restored us to life!
We may cry through the night, but your joy comes with the morning.
You hear us, O God, and you are gracious in our distress.
You turn our mourning into dancing! Our souls cannot be silent!
O God our Savior, we give thanks to you forever!

Hearing God's Word

Children's Story:

Annette Harnish

Invitation to Listen: VT 405 Listen to the Word

Scripture Reading: Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21;

Marcia Rossi

Sermon: "Deep Healing: Have You Been Bitten by a Bronze Serpent?"

Joe Culpepper

Receiving God's Grace

Response Song: When Pain or Sorrow #612

accompaniment: Charlotte Hedberg

Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

Gary

Many: Deep calls to deep.

We call to you from the depths of our hearts

One: We confess how the wilderness has revealed our need,
uncovering our impatience,
lifting up our pain.

We confess how the wilderness has revealed your truth.
We are created for good works.
We can turn and live.

(Silence. Or name the forces that keep us from deep healing.)

Deep calls to deep.

You call to us from the depth of your love.

Many: Calling us to deep healing.

We come to you, God.

Response Ritual: Stone of deep wisdom Possible questions for reflection and response: Gary

- How is God calling you to deep healing?
- What in your life needs God's healing today?

Affirming our Faith: VT 701 You are All We Have

Sharing Joys & Concerns, Prayer

Gary

Sent in the Spirit's Power

Sending Hymn God of the Bible #420

Benediction

Gary

Postlude

Gentle Voice

Treble Choir 3/26/17

Numbers 21:4-9 NRSV

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

John 3:14-21 NRSV

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."