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LENT 1A

22nd February 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Now is the time to worship,
Now is the time to open your heart,
Now is the time to receive God's blessing,
Now is the time to be inspired to follow Christ again this week,
Now is the time to be attentive to what the Spirit may be asking you to do.
Now is here, come Lord Jesus.

Christ, the forgiver and redeemer, I praise you.

How wonderful that you know what it is to be in the wilderness, walk with me today and every day as I navigate my own wilderness, especially as we head into the Lenten season.

Now is the time, come Lord Jesus.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Reading: Matthew 4:1-11 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

As the season of Lent begins, we are drawn into the wilderness with Jesus.

After his baptism, after the sky splits open and he is named Beloved, Jesus is "led by the Spirit into the wilderness" to face temptation. It's not the path we might expect for someone newly affirmed by God. But it is honest. Real. Human.

And perhaps that's the point. In this barren, quiet place, Jesus faces three temptations. Not temptations to do something obviously evil, but subtle invitations to use his power in self-serving ways.

Turn stones into bread. Use your gifts to satisfy your own hunger. But Jesus knows that true nourishment is more than physical, it comes from being grounded in something deeper.

Throw yourself down. Test God's faithfulness. But Jesus chooses trust without spectacle, faith that doesn't need constant proof.

Worship power. Bow down, and all the kingdoms will be yours. But Jesus rejects the lie that domination and control are the ways to bring about God's reign.

In each case, Jesus resists not with force, but with rootedness, in Scripture, in identity, in purpose.

For us today, this story invites us to reflect on our own wildernesses, the inner landscapes where we wrestle with insecurity, ego, and the pull to prove ourselves.

In a culture obsessed with productivity, performance, and power, Jesus' time in the wilderness reminds us that our worth is not something we earn. It's something we carry. Belovedness doesn't vanish in the desert. In fact, it might become even clearer there.

Lent is not about proving our strength or impressing God with sacrifice. It's about letting go of what is false so we can return to what is true. It's about facing our temptations, not with shame, but with honesty, and letting them teach us where we are hungry, tired, or afraid.

So as you reflect today, consider:

- Where in your life are you tempted to grasp for control, certainty, or approval?
- What would it look like to trust your belovedness even in uncertainty?
- How might this wilderness season become not a punishment, but a place of quiet growth?

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, but did not leave him there. And the same is true for us. The wilderness is not the end of the story. It's a space of clarity, of resilience, of becoming.

May we walk it with courage. May we face what is real. And may we come through it more deeply rooted in love.

Hymn/Song

657 STF – You give rest to the weary – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Grace flows from this moment, and from this space,
Grace that changes everything, even you.
Go from this worship point, to see God's grace at work in the world around you,
And take the love of Christ with you in your hearts,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 23rd February

- Gracious God, show me how to love without borders or restrictions, how to radically live out your calling on my life and your challenge to all of us to live in the way of love.
- Show me how to be the kind of shepherd who would always go in search of the one most in need, how to reach out to the lost sheep in my life and community.
- Show me how to love as you love, O Christ.

Tuesday 24th February

- The German theologian Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you", that will be enough'.
- Today, throughout the day (or whatever is left of the day), simply look for opportunities to pray the words 'thank you' to God.
- Thank you for the sunrise. Thank you for that I have enough food for the day. Thank you for my health, such as it is. Thank you for that lovely conversation with a friend. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Amen.

Wednesday 25th February

- God of all grace, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Thursday 26th February

- Today, take some time to observe nature. The first signs of spring are starting to show. We are nearing the end of the season the Celts refer to as 'Imbolc', the ending of the depths of winter and the time when new life starts to show.
- Are there signs of new life in your spiritual journey, your discipleship? Are you able to discern some sense of what you are supposed to do next?
- However those questions make you feel, spend some time praying about them, and maybe find time to talk to a trusted friend or someone from the pastoral team at your local church about your answers.

Friday 27th February

- The next time you open your fridge, why not pray this little prayer:
- Generous God,
Thank you for the blessings you have given me, and the food for this day.
Thank you for all the work of creation, all the work of farmers and supermarket-workers and delivery drivers that means this food can be here, in my house.
Thank you for all that I have received.
Thank you. Amen.

Saturday 28th February

- Take time to find something in your home that you hold as precious and important. It may be a photograph, a flower or personal item. Whatever you choose consider:
 - o What is it that makes it important to you?
 - o What memories does it hold?
 - o How do you feel about it and what would happen if you lost it?
- Now imagine that God is holding you as precious and important:
 - o Loving and caring for you and your unique character
 - o Following your journey of faith
 - o Wanting never to lose you
 - o Bring all that to prayer, knowing that whatever you offer in this moment is precious and important.