



Lenten Season Series

Gifts of the Dark Wood

Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 14, 2021

Welcome

Introit

This Path

Chuck Bell & Marcia McFee

Duet: Judi and Wayne Fabrizio

*There's a path... though it winds its way through darkness
We would choose... to avoid it if we could
We awake... to an unexpected calling
God says, "come... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

Moment of Spiritual Reflection

*There's a path (**there's a path**) ... though it winds its way through darkness
We would choose (**we would choose**) ... to avoid it if we could
We awake (**we awake**) ... to an unexpected calling
God says, "come (**God says, "come**) ... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

Opening Prayer (**UNISON**)

**Permeating Love, enter our lives
and open us to the gifts residing deep within the Holy Darkness of our lives.
When we feel overwhelmed
by the twists and turns of life,
quiet us,
open us,
heighten our senses to perceive your nudge toward life.
In your many names, we pray. Amen.**

Opening Song

Be Still My Soul

UMH 534

1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.
2. Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future, as in ages past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the Christ who ruled them while he dwelt below.
3. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.

Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Scripture Psalm 42:1-3, 6, 9-11; 1 Samuel 3:6-9 (CEB)
Reader: Bob Cox

Just like a deer that craves streams of water,
my whole being craves you, God.
My whole being thirsts for God, for the living God.
When will I come and see God's face?
My tears have been my food both day and night,
as people constantly questioned me,
"Where's your God now?"

My whole being is depressed.
That's why I remember you
from the land of Jordan and Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

I will say to God, my solid rock,
"Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I have to walk around,
sad, oppressed by enemies?"
With my bones crushed, my foes make fun of me,
constantly questioning me: "Where's your God now?"

Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed?
Why are you so upset inside?
Hope in God!
Because I will again give him thanks,
my saving presence and my God.

1 Samuel 3:6-9

Again, the LORD called Samuel, so Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

"I didn't call, my son," Eli replied. "Go and lie down."

(Now Samuel didn't yet know the LORD, and the LORD's word hadn't yet been revealed to him.)

A third time the LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy. So Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD. Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down where he'd been.

Sermon "The Gift of Getting Lost" Rev. Pamela Kurtz, Pastor

Special Music "As the Deer" Words & Music by Martin Nystrom

Prayers of the People – Rev. Pam

When Pastor says “*Lord,*”

People Respond: Hear our Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer - Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*We invite you to use any other name to refer to the Divine with which you are comfortable ~
God, Father, Mother, Creator, etc.

**Our *Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Offering Time

Offering Words – Rev. Pam

Thanksgiving Song

Step by Step

W&S 3004

Oh God, You are my God

And I will ever praise You

Oh God, You are my God

And, I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning

And I will learn to

Walk in Your ways

And step by step You'll lead me

And I will follow You all of my days

Holy Communion

Prayer of Confession and Resolve (*Responsive*) Readers: Rev. Pam and **Bob Cox (Bold)**

Leader: For plunging ahead without listening to You,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

Leader: For not recognizing Your still small voice within us,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

Leader: For forgetting to ask for assurance—your greatest gift,

People: Forgive and restore us, O God.

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS AND HOPE

Assurance of Grace

Leader: Hear these words of assurance:

Lost is not lost to God.

You are not lost to God.

God is with you, forgiving and restoring you to wholeheartedness.

People: Thanks be to God! Amen!

Passing the Peace

Pastor: As forgiven people living in the midst of the work of Jesus, let us share peace with our siblings in the world.

*(We go to our windows and doors and share with the world: **the peace of Christ be with you!**)*

SHARING THE HOLY COMMUNION OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Gratitude Times

Closing Song

Guide My Feet

TFWS 2208

*1 Guide my feet while I run this race.
Guide my feet while I run this race.
Guide my feet while I run this race,
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*2 Hold my hand while I run this race.
Hold my hand while I run this race.
Hold my hand while I run this race.
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*3 Stand by me while I run this race.
Stand by me while I run this race.
Stand by me while I run this race.
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*4 I'm your child while I run this race.
I'm your child while I run this race.
I'm your child while I run this race.
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*5 Search my heart while I run this race.
Search my heart while I run this race.
Search my heart while I run this race.
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

*6 Guide my feet while I run this race.
Guide my feet while I run this race.
Guide my feet while I run this race.
for I don't want to run this race in vain!*

Benediction

You have a place in this world; a place where everything comes together in your body and you disappear into a seamless whole. Move with and through those shortcomings that afflict you, and inhabit this world with your fullest self.

May the Spirit of the Living God,
Made known to us most fully within life's Dark Wood:
Go before you to show you the way;
Go above you to watch over you;
Go behind you to push you into places you may not necessarily go yourself;
Go beneath you to uphold and uplift you;
Go beside you to be your strong and constant companion;
And dwell within you to remind you that you are surely not alone,
And that you are loved—loved beyond your wildest imagination.
And may the fire of God's blessing burn brightly Upon you, and within you,
Now and always.
Amen.

Postlude

There's a Path

*There's a path (there's a path) ... and it leads us out together
To the wood (to the wood) ... where the darkness hovers still
We are sent (we are sent) ... and the Spirit goes before us
God says, "go (God says, go) ... be my presence in the world."*