



WHO WE ARE



FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



New England Annual Conference Tri-State District
The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop
The Rev. Taesung Kang, District Superintendent

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801

Office Phone 603-436-6038 office@fumcportsmouth.net

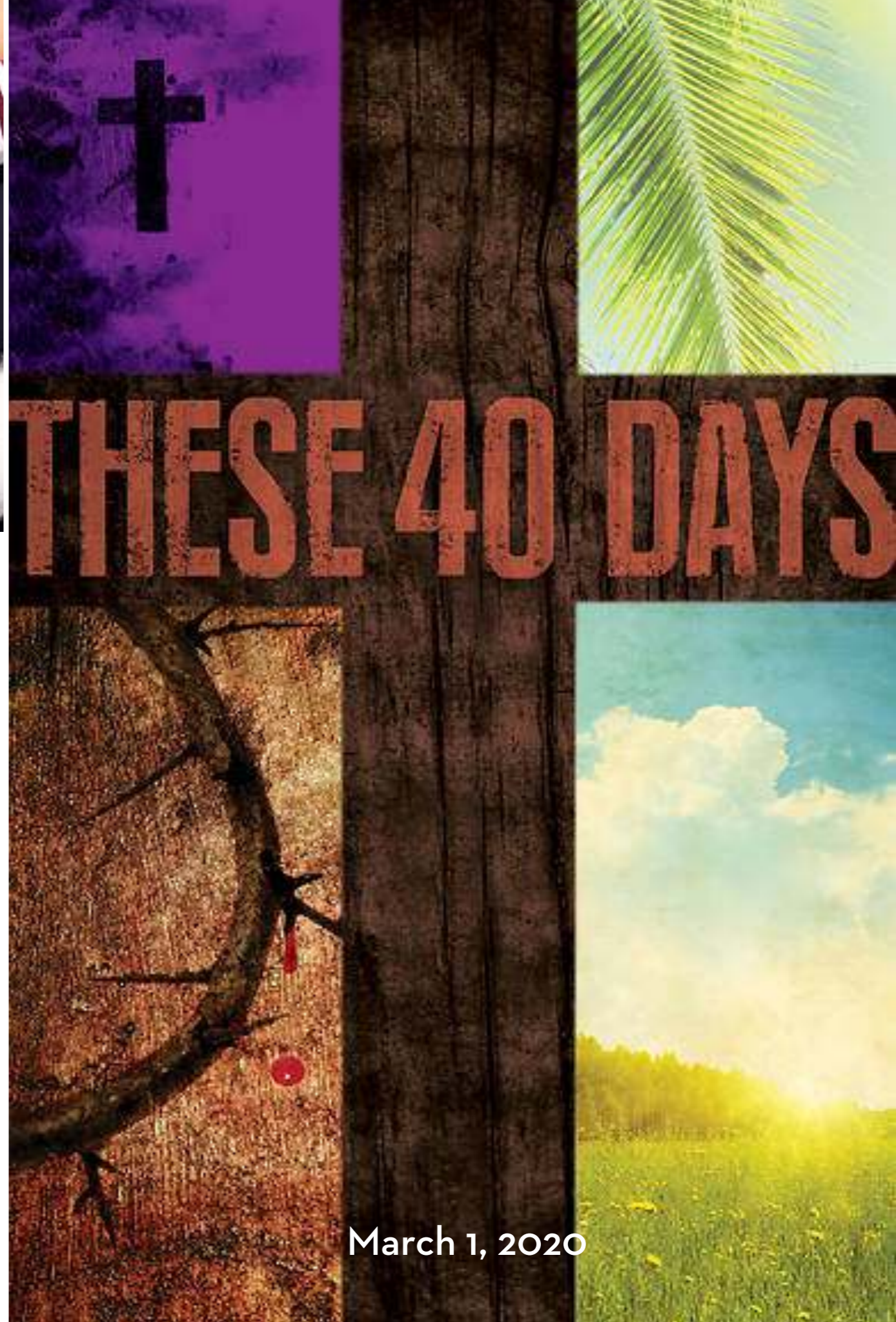
Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

[call to ensure availability]

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at www.fumcportsmouth.com

Like and Follow Us On:



March 1, 2020

We Gather for Worship

Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

Gratitude Moments

*Call to Worship

L: This week we began our Lenten journey.

P: We seek to grow in grace and walk with Jesus during this time.

L: When we worship together, we are reminded of Jesus' presence in our lives. We learn not only from Jesus, but from each other.

P: Let us give thanks for God's love in Christ and the gift of this community of faith.

***Hymn** "Come and Find the Quiet Center" TFWS #2128

Children's Moment

Ministry of Music

Prayer (unison)

O God, Jesus was led up the mountain where he was tempted. He did not give in to the temptations, and he came down the mountain into the world to minister, teach, heal, and love the people. We long to be able to turn away from temptations that face us every day, but often we don't succeed. Yet, you have promised us that we can persevere, knowing that, in Christ, we are forgiven and have another chance. We are thankful for your forgiveness that helps us to keep on living into your grace. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

L: Know this, through Jesus Christ, we are loved with a love we can never fully comprehend. Your sins are forgiven because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

ALL: Thanks be to God!

Sung Response "Dona Nobis Pacem" UMH #376

We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word Matthew 17:1-9

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

Message "Mountains of Temptation" Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

***Hymn** "Bread of the World" UMH #624

We Respond to God's Word

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our Father, who are 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

***Doxology** (Please join in singing the following) UMH #87

This gift we now bring, this present, this token, these words can convey it, the joy of this day! When grateful we come, remembering rejoicing, this song we now offer in honor and praise.

***Prayer of Dedication** (unison)

Gracious God, we offer our gifts with humble gratitude and confidence that you will transform them into ministries that help others and empower us to offer hope to the world. Amen.

A Service of Holy Communion - insert

Prayer Team Yvonne Griffin and Sue Richards

We Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn** "Amazing Grace," vs. 1,2,3,6 UMH #378

***Choral Benediction** (Congregation encircles the Sanctuary)

May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and seek his face and his grace forever. May the Lord, mighty God bless and keep you forever.

***Pastor's Charge**

Postlude

**Please stand as you are comfortable*

TFWS = The Faith We Sing UMH = United Methodist Hymnal
Large print bulletins are available from the greeters



UPCOMING EVENTS

3/3 - Finance Trustee Meeting, 6 pm at the Parsonage. All are welcome.

3/7 - Visioning Committee 9 am - 12 pm at the church.

3/8 - Daylight savings begins. It is time to spring forward.

3/10 - Peace Circle meeting, 9:30 a.m. at either Yvonne's or Darlene's.

3/17 - Church Council, 6:00 pm at the church. All are welcome.



THINGS TO KNOW

Altar Flowers - From Sue and Woodie Lange, in honor of all those that support the Wentworth Senior Living residents. Your cards and visits are greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Kids First - Last month, Kids First was introduced. Increased emergency placements and the willingness of FUMC to meet this challenge head on represents the support in making a difference in our community.

This month, the need is for new, neutral color twin bed sheet sets and/or new twin blankets. Please drop off donations in the basket in the office. A complete list of needed items includes:

Deodorant	Dry Shampoo	Toothbrush & Toothpaste
Hairbrush	Hand Towels	Notebook & Pen
Baby Wipes	Chapstick	Small First Aid Kits (bandages, pain reliever, small cleaning wipes)

For monetary donations, please make check out to FUMC, with Kids First in the memo section. Please direct questions to any church council member.



PRAYER LIST

Sue Ellery

Dave Richards

Dan Strange

Bobbie Noble

The Westcott Family

Julia West

Judy Doyon

Rev. Charles Hartman

Emily - for the Fernandez Family

Our Denomination

Our Church Family

All those living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound

2020 Flower chart - is posted in the Narthex. Bring your own arrangement or have the church order them at a cost of \$25. This is a great way to honor, remember, thank or let someone know they are appreciated.



WORSHIP TEAM

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor's Assistant - David Richards — Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Liturgist - Dave Atkinson — Acolyte - Alexa Langs

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek — Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott

Greeters - Ken & Shannon Corpron & Marilyn Stebbins

Ushers - Nancy Chesser & Art Munson

Sunday School - Rosie Buswell & Aerial Sillanpaa

Photographer - Dave Atkinson



A Service of Holy Communion

(From Bread for the Journey, R.C. Duck, ed.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

L: God be with you.

P: And with your spirit.

L: Lift up our hearts.

P: We lift them up to God.

L: Let us give thanks to God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

ALL: Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O Ruler of the ages. We give you thanks, for you have created all things, and by your will they exist. You have delivered your people from bondage, and you have given us Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, Savior of the world, who has won for us the victory over sin and death and all evil. Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your majesty, O God, Most High.

L: Glory be to you, O Christ, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed for God people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. You have made them a nation of priests to serve our God, and they shall reign on earth.

P: The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive power, wisdom and might, honor, glory, and blessing.

L: Spirit of God, touch our lives deeply, and make us truly yours; and bless these gifts of the bread and cup. O living Christ, bright morning star of this darkened world, come and be our guest. Name us, mark us, and claim us as your own. Free us from bondage to the powers of this world. Glory be to you!

ALL: Amen.

Invitation:

L: Friends, God prepares a feast for you and all people; a feast of good things, a feast of peace. Come and taste. Eat and be filled. Drink deeply and never thirst again. Come to the feast God prepares.

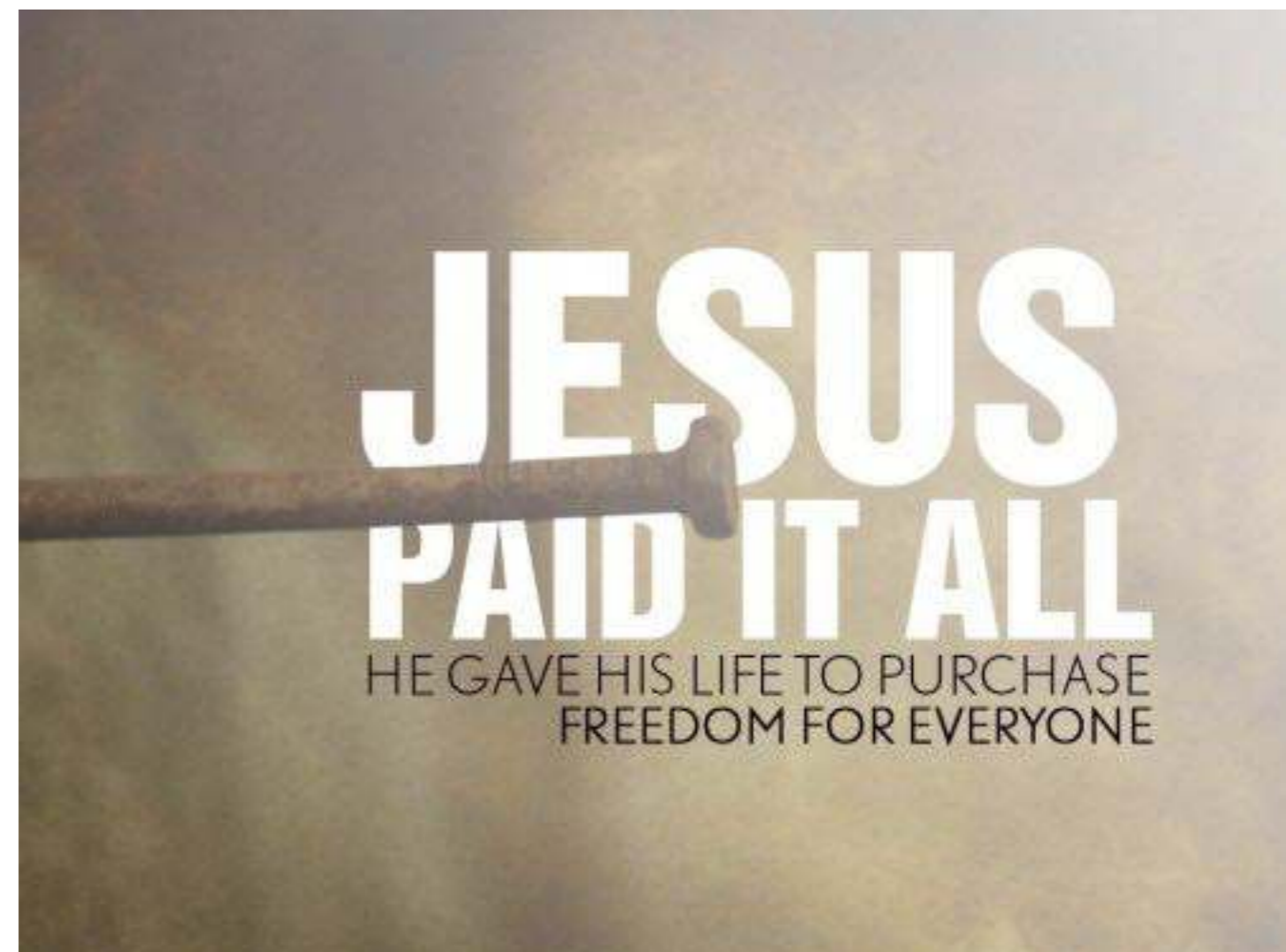
Words of Institution

L: On the night of his betrayal, as Jesus sat at the table and broke bread with his friends, he said: 'Take and eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Remember me each time you do this.' After they had eaten, he took the cup, and said: 'Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you - the beginning of a new relationship with God.'

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Because the broken bread has meant our healing, because the outpoured cup has meant our life, because our common sharing has meant the communion of our souls, and because we have been graced by your presence here, God, we give you thanks and pray that our lives may be renewed in the life and the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.





SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:1-11

THEME: Jesus sets the example for trusting God.

Temptation is all around us, and we always have a choice about whether or not to give in or avoid it. There is a story about a Weight Watchers member who proudly announced at her meeting just after Easter that her diet was finally working. She claimed that this was the first year her children knew that chocolate Easter bunnies had ears. (Amusing Grace, p. 317, #1253)

For me, certain foods have been my greatest temptation – sometimes I give in and sometimes I don’t. That’s because those “trigger” foods are what I use for comfort, and often, I make sure I’m eating those foods when no one else is around.. Rev. Vince Amlin shared his reflections on this in a morning devotion: “Can You Keep a Secret?”

I tend to eat my secrets. The things I can't say get baked into cakes or lumped into mashed potatoes and are transformed into the love handles that hang un-lovingly over my jeans. The feelings I can't share, the actions of which I am ashamed, are sweet going down. For a while, I believe I have locked them in the vault of my stomach. But soon the secrets return, demanding ice cream.

... Whether we eat our secrets, or starve them, or drink them, or scream them, or sleep with them, the results are the same. Secrets are destructive. To families. To congregations. To bodies. They divide us. They drive us to avoid each other. They make understanding impossible. Secrets zap our strength and lay heavy on us as the hand of God.

But here's the secret about secrets. They are never as powerful as when they are hidden. The moment they are shared, they begin to waste away. Want to test it? ... Start with God. Put down the cake, and say a prayer! Share your secret, and let the healing begin. (Vince Amlin, Still Speaking on line devotional from the UCC, February 13, 2016)

“Start with God.” That’s what we find Jesus doing in today’s scripture passage from the gospel of Matthew, and he didn’t just start with God, his total focus was on God. Prior to this passage, we heard about Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River. The writer of Matthew reports that during that celebration God named and claimed Jesus as God’s own Son. Then, Jesus was immediately led into the wilderness up a mountain where he was tempted. It’s interesting that he no sooner had this “mountaintop experience” of being named as God’s Son and being proclaimed God’s Beloved child when he is then led to a different type of mountaintop in the wilderness. It almost sounds as if he didn’t go of his own choosing.

But then, there are many of us who resist the wilderness journey. It’s often frightening, feels isolating, and brings loneliness. Any of us who have gone through the wildernesses of our lives can attest to the idea of feeling abandoned and in despair. Most of us feel pushed into the wilderness because of what happens to us in our lives, and when we read Mark’s account in chapter 1, verse 12, we find “And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.” (NRSV) Jesus was, after all, also human; maybe he didn’t want to go to such a challenging place, and this is what it often feels like for us, too.

On the other hand, we have other people who choose a wilderness experience: going to a place where they can BE alone, where they can think and reflect and not be distracted by the “stuff” of life. In some ways that is what Lent is all about. It’s a time for us to focus on simplifying our lives and consider what our relationship with God, and maybe even asking what we are doing to build the relationship.

In the Christian church it has been a tradition to “give something up” for Lent. This has been a way to exercise self-denial so we could understand more clearly the sacrifice of Jesus and his self-denial. Being tempted in the wilderness was the beginning of denying himself and what he wanted. He didn’t eat, and he was tempted by the devil. In each temptation of food, power, and safety, he countered the devil’s attacks and misquotes of scripture. Each time the devil twisted a passage, Jesus countered what the devil had said with a passage that pointed to God’s intentions.

And each time, Jesus claimed his trust in God’s provision as he resisted the temptations presented to him. Temptations are really lies that tell us we would be better off by having something else, something other than what God offers us. Their nature is to strip away our identity as God’s beloved children. Children often reflect their parents, and that was especially true during Jesus’ day.

One commentator wrote: “in the families of the ancient world an adult son was often understood as the father’s representative and the father and the son would work together to

accomplish the family goals. The son's identity, honor, and status are rooted in his family's honor and status. Jesus does not need to gain these things by giving into the devil's temptations." (Ruth Ann Reese, Text This Week under the commentary section for today's gospel lesson.)

Our families do not only form our identity, but being part of the family of God also forms it. In the society we have today, baptism is often seen as a thing we do rather than as part of our identity. In fact, many people forget that baptism isn't a one-time event that just happens in church, but it is God's act of naming and claiming us as God's own child – just as God did with Jesus at his baptism. Baptism is what leads us into a life in Christ, and that life is full of temptations wherever we are. We learn from Jesus that we can trust God to be with us through all of life, even in the temptations. Temptations don't draw us into something but actually push us away from God. Those temptations can come in any form or shape or through any experience. Most of them push us away from God saying that we can't trust God.

Rev. Christopher Girata shared what happened to his grandfather: We all walk through a significant wilderness at one time or another, and thinking about a true wilderness experience makes me think of my grandfather. My grandfather had a significant impact on my life. He was a very good man, a child of the Great Depression who served courageously in World War II. And after returning from the war, he met a feisty young lady who would become his wife of over 60 years, and together, they had three daughters. My grandfather was a typically quiet man, a very hard worker who became a successful business owner at a young age. He had all the things he was supposed to have and lived the kind of life people work hard to build. Life was good.

Then one day, as his oldest daughter, just a teenager at the time, was riding in a car with some friends, the driver lost control. As the car flipped off the road, all four passengers were thrown out. Three of them walked away from the accident, but the car rolled over my Aunt Nancy. Nancy was rushed to the hospital where she lay in critical condition for a few days before my grandfather and grandmother made the impossible decision to end life-support. In an instant, the life they had built changed forever.

My mother, who was barely a teenager when her older sister died, said that my grandfather never really talked about the accident. He simply got quieter and worked harder. Years ago, as I was beginning my life as a priest, I asked my grandfather how it felt to lose a child in such a tragic way. He was quiet for a few minutes and then told me about the years that followed Nancy's death. He said that losing Nancy was the worst experience of his life and made him question everything. He had always been a church-going man, but when he lost Nancy, he didn't want to go back to church. He said he realized that his faith wasn't much deeper than obligation--that he had been going to church and being kind and good and charitable only because he was supposed to be, not because of any real, deep faith. He spent years questioning God, angry with God for taking his child. He was confused and hurt and the anger was overwhelming--he was truly in his personal wilderness.

Then one day, he said, something changed--changed inside him. One day, he realized that his anger and hurt were all because he thought he knew how life was supposed to work. He thought that if he lived a good life, an upstanding life, and if he worked hard, then he should expect, even deserved, good things in return. He finally realized that he had been cutting a deal with God, rather than trusting God. He told me that he realized he had a choice--either he could ignore God's presence in his life and let anger control him, or he could accept that God was there, that God was always there, and trust that God's presence with him was all he really needed. My grandfather had been in the greatest wilderness of his life, walking a journey that was raw and exposed, and he was tempted with the most significant of all temptations--that God cannot be trusted.

(The Rev. Christopher Girata is rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, TN. Day 1, found at Text This Week under "sermons" for today's gospel lesson)

Jesus teaches us that God CAN be trusted, even when we don't always understand it. When we feel "driven" into the wilderness, maybe it would be more productive to ask, "What am I supposed to learn from this?" Even when it doesn't feel like God is there, we can trust that the Spirit is there. It was the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness, and it was the Spirit that led Jesus out – we never hear that Jesus was left alone there without the Spirit of God with him. The wilderness of temptation or trying to figure out some experience in life that has left us reeling doesn't have to be a desolate and despairing place.

It can also be a listening place where we invite God in to help us heal, rejuvenate, restore, and be ready to move forward. During one of the wildernesses of my life, someone gave me a framed sign that reads, "The wilderness will lead you to your heart where I will speak." (author unknown)

God speaks to us even in the wildernesses, and we can listen. We can let the temptation to reject God seduce us into thinking that God has left us alone or doesn't care about us, OR we can recognize that even Jesus had wilderness times where he faced the temptation to satisfy himself rather than relying on God. He stood firmly in his identity as God's Son, and so can we.

We are called to witness to our faith and how faith can bring us through whatever our wildernesses may be. No matter what life brings or how much those events make us feel like we are in wildernesses, we truly aren't alone. We have more strength than we realize because we have the power of God's love and the presence of the Spirit to guide us. We CAN trust God and turn to God for strength, support, and direction. And God has sent companions in life and in our church family to walk with us and to support us with friendship and prayer. Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: We can trust in you, O God. No matter what happens in life we can hold on to you Lord, because we know you are with us, caring for us, loving us, and delivering us. Lord, we can call on you anytime and anywhere, and we can believe and trust that you will answer. You are our refuge, our place of safety; you are our God, and we trust you. Amen.

(excerpt from a prayer by Rev. Abi, posted on revgalsblog.com, found under the liturgy section for today's lectionary at Text This Week)