

The Season of Lent



“I Delight in You”

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

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“Love God, Serve Neighbor”



Again & Again: God Meets Us “I Delight in You”

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Mark 1:9-15 | *Digital Painting with collage*

During Advent, we learn that the good news begins with John the Baptist shouting in the wilderness and “everyone in Judea and *all* the people of Jerusalem” following him out of the city to the Jordan river to be baptized, to repent, to change their hearts and, consequently, their lives (Mark 1:5). This is a moment of mainstream conversion, of widespread openness to truly hear the cries of one shouting out, to leave what they had known behind to follow a new path. This, Mark tells us, is when Jesus’ ministry begins—with a community earnest and eager for change.

Mark tells us nothing about Jesus’ life prior to this moment, omitting any details of his miraculous birth or the years of his youth. Instead, Mark notes that Jesus comes from Nazareth of Galilee (over 100 km north of Jerusalem) to join John the Baptist’s movement. We might expect the long-awaited Messiah to greet his new followers like the kings before him have—with a pompous coronation, with hunger to exert power and control over his populous. Instead, Jesus steps in line along the river’s edge, blending in with the crowds, joining in solidarity with those around him. Jesus doesn’t demand any attention, but as soon as the water washes over him, creation is summoned to celebrate. I imagine him wading into the waters and leaning back to receive the blessing that falls upon him like rain: *You are my beloved. I delight in you.*

In this moment, God-in-flesh joins alongside those he will heal, beckon, teach, challenge, and comfort. Simultaneously, God-in-Spirit meets Christ at the water’s edge, at the threshold of his ministry. Before Jesus faces the pain, betrayal, and challenges of what will come, before he does anything to prove himself, God grants him unconditional belovedness as his essence. From this, all his subsequent teachings and actions flow.

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity



GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Pastoral Welcome

Call to Worship

L: God meets us in the night—

**C: Before the sun rises,
Before there are answers,
Before there is closure.**

L: God meets us in the light—

**C: Where joy and laughter are contagious,
And where people gather around the table.**

L: God meets us at the threshold—

**C: At the edge of the water,
At the beginning of the wilderness,
At start of something new,
On the edge of faith.**

L: And *if* God meets us in all those places, we believe that God meets us in between—

C: Staying with us through the wilderness.

L: We are not along. God is all around.

C: Let us worship the God of the here and now.

Prelude

“Just A Closer Walk with Thee”

Annette Nolan

Confession and Forgiveness

L: We gather in the name of the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit.

L: God of compassion, have mercy on us according to your steadfast love. In your great compassion blot out the stain of our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our guilt and cleanse us from our sin.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

L: God of compassion,

C: We turn toward you and open our hearts.

Forgive our pride and forgive our insecurities.

Forgive our self-absorption and forgive our self-destruction.

Forgive our doubts and forgive our confidence.

Forgive our longing for attention and forgive our desire to hide.

Forgive each step we take away from you.

L: May you know that the God of compassion, who is gracious beyond understanding and who loves beyond measure, has completely forgiven all your sins. With clean hearts and renewed spirits, live into the joy of God's salvation.

C: Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Greeting

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer for Illumination

L: Holy God, faith often feels like water in our hands.
No matter how hard we try to hold onto it,
some of it always slips through—like droplets of truth
running down our wrists, back toward our hearts.

We pray that once again, you would meet us here.

Meet us in our hope and our heartache.

Meet us in our fear and our joy.

If the water keeps running,
and we do not have a sky-parting moment of clarity
or hear the words, "This is my beloved," ringing in our ears,
we will trust that you are near,
always and forever meeting us where we are,
running toward our hearts.

Gratefully we pray,

C: Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

“Jesus, Restore to Us Again”

Carol Riddell

%

Em⁷ A^{sus} D Em⁷ A^{sus}

1. Je - sus, re - store to us a - gain the gos - pel of Your ho - ly

4 D F#m/C# Bm Em⁷ A^{sus} D F#m/C# Bm Em⁷ A^{sus}

name, that comes with pow'r not words a - lone, owned, signed and sealed from heav - en's

8 D Em⁷ A F#m⁷ Bm G Em⁷ A^{sus}

throne. Spir - it and word in one a - greed; _ the prom - ise to the pow - er wed. _____

13 A A/B Bm A A/G G Em⁷

_ The word is near, here in our mouths and

16 G/D D D/A A F#m⁷ A/B Bm A

in our hearts, the word of faith; Pro - claim " " "

Last time to Coda ⊕

19 A/G G D/A A D G/D

Spir - it's breath: Je - sus! _____ 2. Your word, O

The Gospel

Mark 1:9-15

The Message



1 Driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
 2 Tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
 3 An - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
 4 "You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
 tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
 an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
 "You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.



when the Spir - it says, "Go," you can't say, "No."
 though you try to be strong, it's been so long.
 you are far . . . from home where wild things roam.
 When you were . . . bap - tized, you re - a - lized



You lis - ten for the voice when you're bend - ed low;
 He whis - pers in your ear and you know he's wrong;
 There's dan - ger ev - 'ry - where but you're not a - lone;
 you'd heard the voice of God from the o - p'ning skies:



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness.
 tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness.
 an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness.
 "You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.

Text: Jay Beech

Music: OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, Jay Beech

Text and music © 1999 Jay Beech

Affirmation of Faith

L: We believe in a God who is everywhere and right here,
Bigger than the sky and in the smallest details,
All at once and in every moment.

We believe that God meets us where we are—
In heartbreak and high hopes,
Around crowded tables and in quiet homes, In joy and in suffering,
In loneliness and in connection, In sanctuaries and in living rooms,
In marches and in waiting rooms.

We believe that nothing we do or leave undone
Can distance us from God's love.
God is forever drawing us close and pulling us in.

Again and again, God meets us where we are
And invites us into wholeness.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Prayers of the People of God

L: Let us pray.
Loving Jesus, who spent 40 days in the wilderness alone, help us now in
this time of prayer to come alongside others as we pray from them and
with them, especially those who may feel isolated, alone, tested and
tempted as you were.

A brief silence.

L: We pray for those leaders of the world who are tempted by the lure of
power, without considering the cost to others. We pray for those at the
root of conflict, division and violence whose desire 'to have things their
way' prevents them listening to your voice of peace.

C: May the gift of your life, bring them out of the wilderness

L: We pray for those in the world who through the greed and unequal
distribution of the world's wealth are hungry and thirsty. We pray for
those who are denied education and health care. We pray for those who
are denied freedom of speech and suffer persecution for sharing the
good news of Christ.

C: May the gift of your life, bring them out of the wilderness

L: We pray for your church. We pray for all Christian communities seeking to be the salt and light to those around them. We pray for the those who are discouraged, those feeling vulnerable, those who are looking for a new direction for their work and mission.

C: May the gift of your life, bring them out of the wilderness

L: We pray for those whom we know, for whom illness, frailness or bereavement have left them isolated and cut off from the joy, support and encouragement of human encounter. As we hold them up to you, show us how we may practically make a difference to those in need.

We especially pray for:

- Lizzie Akins
- Kathleen Basilice
- Lemont Bell
- Regina Bressler
- Paul Coleman
- Dallas Collins
- Eileen Folkerth
- Mary Jo Gouge
- Nylah Howard
- Dick Kuklantz
- Waylon Kuklantz
- Ray Matthews
- Hilda Mertz
- Justin Mertz
- Robert & Kathryn Mertz
- Rick Messina
- Pastor Raymond Peters
- Richard Schulz
- David Townsend
- Stephanie Vincent
- Herbert Watson
- Jenny Weems
- Beverly Williams
- Lewis Williams
- Renate Wilson

L: We now pray aloud or in the silence of our hearts for those we wish to name (*give time for community to pray*).

L: We remember and celebrate the lives of those who have died, especially, those we name now:

- Charles Barrett, father of Charlene Bakke
- Chrisy Mertz, niece of Diane Jowers
- Fran Whitaker, friend of Karen Schwartz

By your Holy Spirit, comfort their families, and all who grieve, give peace to those who mourn, strengthen all through the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

L: We pray for all healthcare professionals and relief workers, especially those who find themselves on the frontlines to bring healing, comfort and care to all impacted by the coronavirus. We are grateful for the development of a vaccine and for those who are assisting in making it available. Strengthen, encourage, and empower us to be people of peace in the midst of anxiety, impatience, worry, and dread, as we hunger for life to be normal again.

C: May the gift of your life, bring them out of the wilderness

L: And we pray for ourselves. We ask forgiveness for the times when our actions have been influenced by the desire for others to like us. When we have wanted to control rather work together. May the gift of your life, bring us out of the wilderness and into the fullness of your grace; that inspired and strengthened by your love we might mirror that love to the world.

C: Amen

The Lord's Prayer (*spoken*)

C: 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 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 and ever. Amen.

Benediction

L: May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ go with you wherever he may send you. May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm, and may he bring you home rejoicing at the wonders he has shown you. May he bring you home rejoicing, once again into our doors.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE

Sending Song

"Again and Again"

Traven Harrington

Words by
Claire Cloninger

Music by
Robert Sterling

♩=108

☞ VERSE

B \flat ²/F



1. Lord of the man - ger,	Lord of the cross, —
(2. Lord of all mer) - cy,	Lord of all joy, —
(3. Lord of all a) - ges,	Lord of all days, —

4

Gm

Dm

C^{sus}



* You gained a king - dom	for the life that You lost. —
You claimed the vic - t'ry	death can nev - er de - stroy. —
we stand be - fore — You	for - ev - er a - mazed —

8

F

B \flat ²/F



— You lived a - mong — us,	our Sav - ior and friend. —
— You give us new — life	that nev - er will end. —
— at how You have loved — us	and called us Your friend. —

12

Gm

B \flat



And we praise You, — Lord Je - sus,	a - gain and a - gain. .
And we praise You, — Lord Je - sus,	a - gain and a - gain. .
And we praise You, — Lord Je - sus,	a - gain and a - gain.

15

1, 3.

F

2, 4.

F

Fine



— 2. Lord of all mer -	—
— 3. Lord of all a -	—

CHORUS

19 C/E B \flat ²/D F F^{sus} F F^{sus} F

Glo - ry to _ the One _ who walks _ be - side _ us.

23 C/E B \flat ²/D F F^{sus} F F^{sus} F

Glo - ry to _ the One _ who al - ways will. _ We

27 C Gm Dm

praise You for _ Your awe - some love _ that guides _ us. And when Your

31 E \flat ²(#4) E \flat E \flat ²(#4) E \flat C^{sus} D.S. al Fine

king - dom comes, _ we _ will praise _ You still! _ 3. Lord of all a -