



SALTBUSH

UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

Simple worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 3:1-12
Enter God's Wilderness
Advent 2a

Welcome

We come to hear the Good News, to embody the love of God in Christ as we share our lives with others.

Lighting of Christ Candle

God's truth is revealed in Jesus Christ the light of the world. May the light shine for the hope of the world.

Responses & Gathering Prayer

Living God, we give you thanks that you call us to those places of quiet, thoughtful prayer. To those times where we might hear your small still voice speaking into our lives.

Yet it can be unnerving, when we are to be honest and vulnerable with you. When we are to let go of those things to which we cling, that we may call 'god' but lead us only to places of suspicion and hatred. We are called into the unpredictability of your wilderness, a place where we are not in control, where we cannot make you in our image, a place of surrender and acceptance of your movement in our lives. In Christ, we pray. Amen

Song:

[O Come, O Come Emmanuel](https://sufjanstevens.bandcamp.com/track/o-come-o-come-emmanuel) – Sufjan Stevens
<https://sufjanstevens.bandcamp.com/track/o-come-o-come-emmanuel>

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

The Word around the Bush

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”⁴Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

Questions for conversation

- When did you last spend time, vulnerable, honest and exposed (in the wilderness) with God?

Silence in Two Ways

Spend some time in silence sitting still (suggested 5 minutes). Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert.

Allow this time to be present to the Spirit of God.

Prayers for Others

Today we pray for the unlikely vision of the world to come. A world that resembles God’s reign, a world where God’s Spirit rest on all creation, a Spirit of wisdom, understanding, good counsel and valour, a Spirit of the intimate knowledge of God.

We pray for a time when our leaders govern with integrity, honesty and insight.

We pray for a time when we act according to your will of justice, compassion and love. That we are able to let go of what only benefits us but embrace what we believe serves the whole creation.

(A time of silent prayer)

Invite us, to enter into the wilderness of our lives, where we are open to your presence and transformed by your love. In Christ we pray, Amen.

Song for Reflection

[Into the Deep](#) by Malcolm Gordon

<https://malcolmgordon.bandcamp.com/track/into-the-deep-2>

Closing Responses & Blessing

Go from here, listen for the movement of God in your lives, the clear leading of the Spirit, be ready for the presence of Christ and know you journey with hope, love and peace.

Bless us and the people we meet along the way
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**