

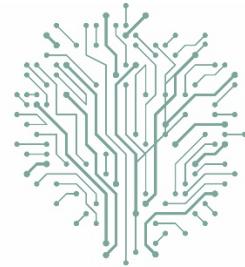
## Closing Responses & Blessing

Lord, lead us into the wilderness with courage,  
and bring us back renewed by your grace.

May God who walks with us in the desert  
strengthen you in temptation,  
deepen you in faith,  
and lead you in the way of life,  
through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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**SALT BUSH**  
UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

## Worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 4: 1-11  
Into the Wilderness

### Welcome

Welcome and greet your congregation and/or  
faith community.

### Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves  
of God's grace, which serves as the illuminating  
light of the world.

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of  
these lands and waters where we meet, the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Nation (of the \_\_\_\_\_ peoples).

We pay our respects to their elders, past and  
present, and to all descendants of this/these  
nations who have cared for this place since  
creation.

We also honour all other Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander Peoples here today.

Stuart McMillan

Assembly Consultant Covenanting Assembly Resourcing Unit

### Music for Reflection

*Suggested song:*

**Voice in the Wilderness**

**God's Offspring**

<https://open.spotify.com/track/68XoRDQvFI4qXOxxHn3okk>

## Passing the Peace

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

## The Word around the Bush

### Matthew 4: 1-11

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

#### The Testing of Jesus

**4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. **2** He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. **3** The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” **4** But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth  
of God.’ ”

**5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, **6** saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’  
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a  
stone.’ ”

**7** Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

**8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, **9** and he said to him,

“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” **10** Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”

**11** Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

## Questions for conversation

- What is something you have heard for the first time?
- What do you reach for first when we are hungry; physically, emotionally, spiritually?
- What are we willing to compromise to feel successful, secure, or relevant?

## Silence

Please take a moment to find a comfortable position and prepare yourself for five minutes of complete silence. Gently close your eyes and allow yourself to relax, while remaining fully present and aware of your surroundings.

## Prayers of Confession and For Others

God of mercy,  
we confess that we have wandered from your ways.  
We choose comfort over courage,  
silence over justice,  
and self over love.  
Forgive us, renew us,  
and turn our hearts again toward you.

Faithful God,  
we pray for your world,  
for those who hunger,  
for those who are weary,  
for those who face temptation, fear, or loss.  
We pray for your church,  
that we may walk the way of Christ  
with humility.  
We pray for one another,  
that in this Lenten journey  
we may be strengthened by your grace  
and guided by your Spirit.

We place all our prayers in your hands,  
through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## The Message

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