



Mercy on the Wilderness Road

MILFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 22, 2026 | First Sunday in Lent

10:00 AM Theme: Renewed in Mercy

Jennifer Lovallo, Pastor

Jeffrey Fornoff, Music Director

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Today, we follow Jesus into a wilderness full of isolation, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and temptation.

We follow, trusting in God's mercy.

We witness Jesus resist the siren calls of sensationalism, notoriety, and misuse of power for selfish gain.

We recognize God's mercy at work in the face of temptation.

We notice the angels who tend Jesus, messengers of care in a harsh and lonely place.

We pay attention to God's merciful presence that did not abandon Jesus and does not abandon us now.

We come to the wilderness together, clinging to the truth that we are not alone—God is with us.

We gather to worship God, whose unfailing mercy journeys with us into the wildernesses of our lives. Thanks be to God! Amen.

* CONGREGATION STANDS AS COMFORTABLE CONGREGATION RESPONSE IN **BOLD Italic**

Key to abbreviations: OT: Old Testament; NT: New Testament UMH: The United Methodist Hymnal
TFWS: The Faith We Sing ++ Indicates Someone's Favorite Hymn

*OPENING HYMN “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days” (vs.1-3) UMH 269

PRAYER OF CENTERING

Holy God, by the grace of Jesus Christ, you know the tests and trials we face. Journey with us through this wilderness. Come to us with ministers of healing and visit us with messengers of hope, so that we may return to you in faith, believing the good news of the gospel; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 4:1-11

NT p.3

SERMON

“Mercy on the Wilderness Road”

BELL CHOIR

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and merciful God, we confess to you our reluctance to enter the wilderness places where we are confronted with our true selves. When our hunger for power and wealth is greater than our hunger for seeking and doing your will:

Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use the gifts you give us to benefit ourselves at the expense of serving others:

Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use sensational means to increase people's faith, rather than being guided by the humility of Christ:

Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to use bribery to influence and control people:

Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

When we are tempted to manipulate you, O God, to satisfy our own needs:

Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

Merciful God, save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. Forgive us our sins and fill us with the joy and peace of your salvation. Strengthen us with your Spirit during this Lenten season that we put our whole trust in you as confidently as Jesus did. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

PARDON

The apostle Paul wrote: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

These words contain the good news that in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

LORD'S PRAYER

UMH 895

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

"My Tribute"

UMH 99

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of Mercy, you meet us in wilderness places and walk beside us through trial and temptation. In this moment of giving, we offer not just our resources, but our trust that you are already shaping us through challenge, strengthening us through sacrifice, and surrounding us with unseen angels. Use these gifts to bring hope where there is hunger, healing where there is pain, and light where there is despair, through Jesus Christ or Lord. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

"Jesus, Walked This Lonesome Valley"

TFWS 2112

*BENEDICTION

For all that has been...*Thanks!*

For all that will be...*Yes!*

*SENDING FORTH

*POSTLUDE

GREETER | Hancock Family LITURGIST | Lorna Cuevas
FELLOWSHIP/COFFEE HOUR | Sara and Breanna Lubrano

PRAYER LIST: Family of Marshall Cooper, Jackie & Dani Pentecharsky, Maryann Schneider, Julie Oberstoetter, Pat Corcoran, Connie & Fred Lamando, Terry Coupell, Gary Psarudakis, Pat Mystkowski, Barbara Urban, Hernandez Family, Dianne Siconolfi, Rhonda Leister, Greg Hunt, Patrick Singer, Mark Geleyn, Carolyn Grossmann, Linda Ryder, Beth Klopffleisch, David Scheer, Mike St. Jean, Joanne Green, Sue and Gregg Rhodes, Jacob Hernandez, Rebecca Suarez, Barbara Brown, Nazareth, Joe Schneider, Jim Schneider, The Tedesco Family, John Rodriguez, Geoff & Pam Sackett, Armando Avila, Agnes Halsey, David Kent, James Bennet, Joan Pauley, Lori Sheppard, Nancy McKeen, Steve Urban, Brian Sheppard, Lee Malone, Ellen Lee, Henry Salidino, Jim Lordi

IMPORTANT CHURCH INFORMATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL/CHILD CARE (IN COMMUNITY RM/NURSERY AFTER CHILDREN'S MESSAGE)

CHOIR PRACTICE: SUNDAYS 8:30AM SANCTUARY

BELL CHOIR PRACTICE: SUNDAYS 11:30AM SANCTUARY

LIFE TALK : SUNDAYS 12:30PM in COMMUNITY ROOM– VIRTUAL LENTEN

STUDY WILL BE HELD DURING THIS TIME UNTIL 3/29.

CRAFTY LADIES: WILL RESUME IN SPRING

MEETING SCHEDULE and MEETING ZOOM LINK: bit.ly/MUMCZoom

- **Sundays 12:30PM, February 22nd—March 29th—Virtual Lenten Study**
- **Mondays 6PM, February 23rd—March 30th —Lenten Soup & Study**
- **Wednesday, February 25th 6:30 PM—One Board/Trustee Meeting (Conf. Rm)**
- **Friday, March 6th 6-8PM—Pizza & Game Night (Fellowship Hall-RSVP to Office)**
- **Friday, March 13th 6PM—Ecumenical Food Pantry at Good Shepherd**
- **Sunday, March 15th 11:15AM—GREEN TEAM MEETING**
- **Sunday, March 15th 4-7PM—Tastefully British Fish & Chips Fundraiser**
- **Wednesday, March 25th 6:30 PM—One Board/Trustee Meeting (Conf. Rm)**

The Green Team Plastic Drive is going strong- we've currently reached **300 pounds!** We're on track to earn a bench this year!

Our next meeting will be **March 15th** after church to plan our spring hikes and earth day activities! All are welcome, come with ideas!



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