**New Kilpatrick**

**Podcast**

**6th March 2022**

**Luke 4:1-13**

**Centring**

Not every wilderness is a desert

Not every wilderness is a place

Not every wilderness is lonely

In these first moments of lent

Wilderness becomes a journey

A direction to travel

So let us pause here

Orientating ourselves

Finding bread and wine

To direct us

Call us

Nourish us

Even as Jesus did not

In his wilderness

As many do not

In Ukraine

Syria

Yemen

And gather them all here

At this table

Where peace waits

Grace is offered

And love shared

Let us together

Move into the wilderness of Lent

**Introduction**

Hello… I’m Roddy Hamilton the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish and thank you once more for the invitation to travel with you today… It is the beginning of Lent and so we change the colours of the season and the tone of our stories. So much is happening in the world now that brings us down, we maybe don’t need to create that atmosphere: it is very real for us. In that: where do we turn? Where do we go for good news, for light, for strength and hope?

We begin isn the wilderness and that colourful and dramatic story of the temptations. , But before we get there, let us pause, and draw breath and reflect.

**Prayer**

Holy God

May we feel your breath

In the words we whisper

In this place

Of broken prayers and hesitant confession

And the long pauses

Where there are no words

Holy Jesus

May we know your presence

In the stuff of life

We bring to this place

Of laughter and hurt

The anger and fear

Our whole humanity

That clashes with too much inhumanity

Holy Spirit

May we be aware here

Of something sacred

In story and hope

In sanctuary and heaven

Laid here for all

In bread and wine

And word and community

And in this place

May we reshape our community

And hold our world

Speak words of love

Into the words of fear

Live into the peace of God

In the conflicts of the world

And make this place holy

Simply by being here

Honestly

Fully

Just as we are

And meet you

Among us and between us

One of us

Here

Hear our prayer

As we share the global prayer together

Our Father, who is in heaven

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, the power

And the glory, forever

Amen

**Imagining the Wilderness**

Imagining the wilderness… Not everyone is comfortable with the image of a physical devil and Jesus having this theological conversation… climbing mountains where you can see the whole world… We can try and get around it by imagining the voice is in Jesus head… his conscience if you wish… or Jesus was having a vision of it all…

Or we can imagine the wilderness as metaphor… and the conversation is never intended to be a piece of history… Like so many dramas we watch on TV… the story isn’t literal history… but it is true in a deeper sense as it draws you into the story… and brings you the feelings and emotions of the tale… And that’s the point… It contains a bigger truth… of what it felt like…

Imagining the wilderness can be like that… It can for us, be a historically accurate piece of history… or it can be a metaphor… a picture, in story form… that challenges us… provokes us… invites us into the moment Jesus opts for humanity, chooses his side… confirms he is continuing the story of God… met in the original wildness of Exodus… The story continues now in Jesus… and is still about freedom… and renewal… the movement towards the promised land of a new community… a new relationship with God…

Imagining the wilderness… Let’s imagine it in whatever way we need to, as we listen to Luke’s retelling of the story of the temptations…

**Scripture Reading Luke 4:1-13**

**Reflection**

How many times have we felt our brain is just not big enough to cope with the multitude of things that are happening at the moment?

When are we able to switch off and let our minds destress? I think we are all living in a permanent state of anxiety. Our brains can’t switch off and we are exhausted trying to cope with constant change. Symptoms are tiredness, forgetfulness, waking up in the night, disinterest, lack of concentration… recognise these?

When Russia invaded Ukraine last week, I had to switch the news off. I’ve never done that before. I’m a bit of a news-aholic. When I wake up in the night, which I do regularly at the moment, I put my earphone in and listen to the world service, but that day, for the first time ever, I had to switch over to Radio 2. That’s how bad it was. I just couldn’t do it.

I genuinely couldn’t cope. I had to force myself to listen to what was happening later, rather than live, because I didn’t want to take the easy option while so many in Ukraine were fighting for their lives. But it was difficult and felt useless and angry.

But that exhaustion our minds are experiencing. We all need a break. Maybe one huge Collective seaside holiday for the entire planet would be a good idea at some point soon. World leaders building sandcastles with each other, and then clearing up their own mess before they leave the beech.

There is a huge sense of helplessness at times in this great existential paradigm shift we are coping with at the moment. And we get angry, and cynical, fear things, that we are not good enough, can’t do anything about it.

And we are surrounded by things that feed into that all the time. That’s how you sell products, politics and religion at the moment. You are inadequate, you fear, you worry, but here’s a product or a policy or a doctrine that will make you feel better.

What this does to us, is draw us away from who we know ourselves to be. We are being drawn away from our essential, core beliefs. That’s temptation. It’s not about doing something wrong. It is about not being ourselves. Tempted in a plethora of ways to lose our faith in God and confidence in ourselves.

That is the corrective Jesus shows us in this story. He refuses to be drawn away from what is life-giving and hope-filled. He reasserts his own identity as a child of God.

Here at the table, is that same place, where that identity is restored and renewed. A place that calls us, remind us of who we are and whose we are: and tells us: that is enough. We come to the table and we are reminded of, and given again, our identity as beloved children of God

There is no substitute for the love of God, it is enough. Who we are, is enough. Come back to those essential truths, those creative moments, those words and acts that remind us of who we are, and that we are enough.

So, an honest place today. A broken place for many who are stressed and worried and fearful. A difficult place for those who are in conflict. But here, at this table, with this bread and wine, it is enough: we are enough. Come and be restored, renew our identity. You are enough.

**News**

Tuesday: SingSong! 2pm, Quiz 7pm

Midweek: 11am each Wednesday in the hall

Thursday: Sofa Surfers: Community Connections with a focus on youth organisations

Friday: Coffee Pot

Online: nkchurch.org.uk

**Prayers for Others**

Loving God

The wildernesses feel like a place we know

Too well

Present danger

And unknown futures

Existential questions

Amid much uncertainty

What might we cling to for security?

What might we believe in to guide us?

In this uncertain place

We bring all our uncertainties

Especially the conflict in Ukraine

Our fears and our helplessness

Our anger and our disbelief

It is hard to believe justice is enough

Right is enough

Love is enough

But we pray in love

And we work with justice

Towards all conflict

inUkraine

And Syria and Yemen

And we pray for leadership in our world

And the stresses of that

But for something beyond the short term

Between elections

That will bring bigger vision

And greater morality

Find common truths

And deeper humanity

And as we pray for these things globally

We choose to live them here locally

Shaping in this place

The way the kingdom works for the world

Hear us

And for our local community

And all that happens there

The folk that are forgotten

Whose lives are limited by the limits of our welfare

Who cannot afford the cost of living

Who are cold and hungry

In our own neighbourhood and parish

Even here there are wildernesses

And so we pray for a vision

Beyond the immediate stones to bread

Or easy power

But the most costly

More faithful

More generous way of love

And that we live in this way locally

Shaping in this place

The way the kingdom works for all

Hear us

And for our friends and for our families

Those we know who are ill physically and mentally

Those anxious and tired of being anxious

Those who are low and tired and overwhelmed by things now

Who worry about tomorrow and the days beyond that

In this wilderness

May we meet the one

Who has been here before

And finds a way

That calls us on

Into what is yet to be

In hope

In faith

In love

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**