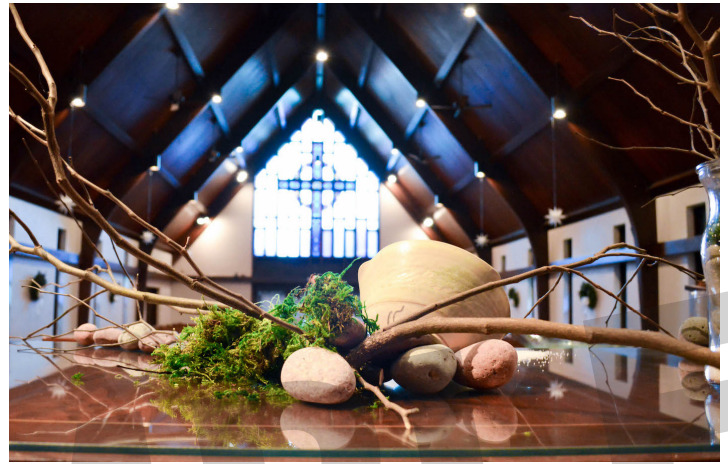


# Wilderness

## BRINGING THE WILDERNESS IN A WORSHIP PROJECT FOR LENT

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### INTRODUCTION

This worship art project includes three phases; however, you are welcome to execute one, two, or all three of the phases. We hope you will adapt the project to best meet the desires and needs of your community. In summary, the three phases are as follows:

#### 1. PHASE ONE | An Intergenerational Contemplative Liturgy to Accompany Creating Wilderness Vase Displays

*Members of all ages create the wilderness vases together using an accompanying liturgy that meditates on the theme of wilderness through poetry, scripture, and song.*

#### 2. PHASE TWO | Create a Wilderness Installation in your Sanctuary

*Using our design guide, adorn your worship space with the wilderness elements.*

#### 3. PHASE THREE | Opening Litany for Worship to Introduce the Wilderness Elements

*At the start of the Lenten season, begin worship with an opening litany to highlight and introduce the wilderness elements adorning the sanctuary.*

## A NOTE ABOUT ADORNMENT

Throughout this guide, we intentionally use the language of “adornment” instead of “decoration” or “décor.” When installing art elements in your worship spaces, avoid thinking about decorating the space. Decoration implies filling a space with items devoid of theological or sacred meaning. Adornment connotes that you are enhancing the inherent beauty of your sacred space. Adornment requires that we think carefully about the items we use in our worship space, asking questions such as: *Do these items add beauty to this space? Do these items deepen our connection to God in worship? Do these items engage our senses so that all of who we are can be present in worship? Do these items connect us viscerally and spiritually to that which is sacred and holy?* In our Protestant faith traditions, we already have many sacred symbols that connect us to God—bread and cup, table and pulpit, water and font. Worship itself is an art form filled with prayer, song, movement, and ritual. Adornment adds to the inherent beauty and art of worship.

## PHASE ONE | An Intergenerational Contemplative Liturgy to Accompany Creating Wilderness Vase Displays

### WHO TO INCLUDE IN PHASE ONE

Decide which group to target for completing phase one. If you are a smaller church with a cozy worship space, you might select a small group to complete the vases and liturgy together. If you are a larger church with lots of young families, you might host it as an intergenerational event. The number of participants for phase one will determine how many materials to gather and use to adorn your sanctuary.

Here are a few ideas of how to host phase one:

- **Intergenerational worship & wilderness art event:** Similar to an Advent wreath-making workshop, phase one could be an intergenerational event. If you choose this option, encourage children and youth to be leaders in creating the vases and proclaiming the liturgy.
- **Youth group event:** Phase one could be completed as a youth event, with youth taking turns leading the contemplative liturgy. If you choose this option, you may wish to play recorded music or sing songs a capella.
- **Contemplative liturgy for a small group:** Complete phase one with a worship arts group, a committee of the church, or hand-select members you think might appreciate being invited to an event like this. A small group could walk through the liturgy more intimately together. View this as an opportunity to provide spiritual nourishment to a small group in need of extra care.



## MATERIALS

### 1. Clear glass vases with large openings at the top

Use vases at least 8"-12" tall. Has your church accumulated glass vases from flower arrangements? Use them for this project. Vases like this are also very easy to find for cheap at thrift stores. Decide how many vases you want to complete for adorning your sanctuary. Members will work together in groups to create the wilderness vases.

### 2. Play sand

Purchase sand used for sandboxes. You can purchase sand from [Home Depot](#). You will need enough sand to fill each vase 2"-3" at the bottom.

### 3. Tree branches

Gather fallen or dead limbs that are skinny and 2'-4' in length. You will need 2-4 branches per vase.

### 4. Smooth stones, about 1"-3"

You can purchase stones from [Home Depot](#). If you gather stones from outdoors, be mindful not to disturb ecosystems like rivers and creeks. You will want 8-12 stones per vase.

### 5. Black sharpies

Members can share these. Place a few at each table.

### 6. Decorative Moss

We purchased moss from AC Moore, but you can find some at [Amazon](#) too. Your local craft or garden store may have different varieties of dried and preserved moss. A little goes a long way, so you may not need as many bags as you think. Hint: we only used one bag to photograph this project.



## PHASE 1

# BRINGING THE WILDERNESS IN

A CONTEMPLATIVE LITURGY TO ACCOMPANY  
CREATING WILDERNESS VASE DISPLAYS

LITURGY BY LISLE GWYNN GARRITY  
POEMS BY SARAH ARE

## WORDS OF WELCOME & GREETING AROUND TABLES

*You are welcome to use or adapt this language for the words of welcome.*

Lent begins in the wilderness. The Spirit guides Jesus into the wilderness where he comes face to face with temptation and struggle. Yet, in his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus is shaped and formed for his ministry. Similarly, through the wilderness of Lent, we are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. We rarely enter the wilderness willingly, but hopefully through our wandering we remember who we are and whose we are.

Today we will explore the theme of wilderness with tangible elements, poetry, scripture, and song. As you can see, together we will be creating wilderness vase displays that we will use to adorn our sanctuary throughout Lent. Our contemplative liturgy includes original poetry by Presbyterian pastor and poet, Sarah Are. Her poems meditate on the different layers of wilderness. While these are personal poems, we hope that read aloud they may become like prayers shared by us all.

*[Optional if you play music during table conversation]*

There will also be moments in our liturgy when we prompt you to share in conversation with those around your table. During our table conversation time, music will play softly in the background. When you hear the music stop, that is your cue to bring the conversation to a close so that we can continue with the next part of our liturgy.

Speaking of your table partners, if you didn't when you arrived in this space, take a moment now to introduce yourself to one another.

Friends, we learn who we are in the wilderness. We learn who God is in the wilderness. We learn how to take the next step, how to find comfort with the unknown, and how to trust God's call in the wilderness. In the wilderness our faith is born, nurtured, challenged, and resurrected. Let us journey together.