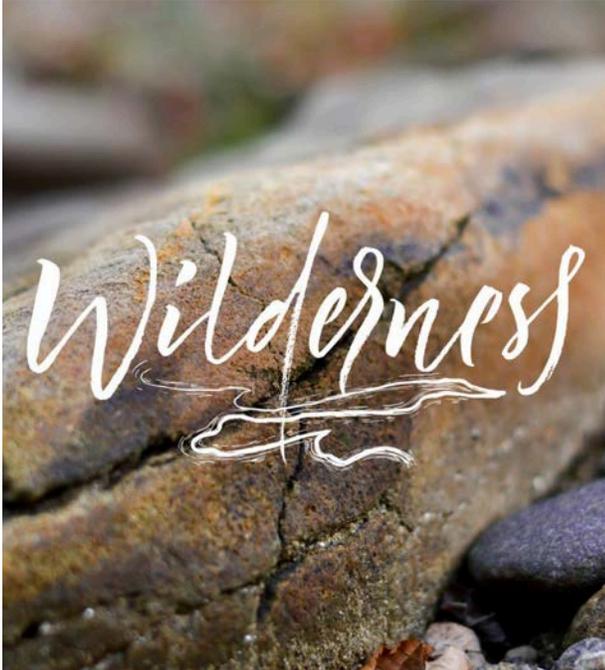


LENT: WILDERNESS

Match 8, 2026

Preaching: Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



John 9:1-12

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of

Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Have you encountered this idea that a disability, condition, or disease is somehow the result of a sin? What do you make of Jesus challenging this theology of disability that his disciples ask about?
3. Note: Jesus does not say that the glory of God is revealed *after* the man born blind is healed. Jesus

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seems to imply that the man is worthy of revealing God's glory through the entirety of his life and person (from birth). Indeed, this is how disability theologians engage this story, as affirming the dignity and worth of the man from the beginning, *inclusive of his blindness*. Notice that the man born blind *listens* to Jesus ("go, wash") before he is healed—he has the ability to hear and understand that many in the gospels lack. How might blindness be a gift, strength, and opportunity that can reveal God's artistry, glory, and beauty?

4. How can this story shape the way faithful people and faith communities seek to affirm, include, and engage people with disabilities? What can we learn from Jesus and the man born blind?
5. The impact of Jesus on this man leads to him testifying before others. In what ways has God "opened your eyes" to understand or notice or pay attention to something about others, the world, or yourself? Has someone, like Jesus, helped you see the world in a new and life-altering way?
6. If you are practicing Lent in some intentional way this year, what have you begun to see, notice, or learn?

RESOURCES FOR LENT

South Elkhorn's Lent Guide provides a brief overview of Lent and Ash Wednesday, and provides ideas on how you might practice and experience Lent. A printed version is available in the foyer, or you can view and download online using the QR code or the link below:



southelkhorncc.org/Lent

On the webpage above, you can also find a **Digital Fast** along with worship services, fellowship opportunities, and special gatherings during the Lenten Season.



Lenten Devotional
Weekly Devotional with scripture, poetry, images, and reflections.

Walk through these weekly readings and prompts at your own pace throughout the season of Lent. The art, reflections, poetry, and journaling allow you to wander and wonder your way through the wilderness, which is always where Lent begins.

Listen Online

Sermon audio available at southelkhorncc.org/sermons