

## **The Wilderness is about more than not having food.**

The theme of the “wilderness” has been recurrent while living in the midst of a pandemic and the accompanying restrictions in order to contain it. The past year has been a journey of stops and starts, with possibly more yet to come. If you pardon the pun, there is a feast of spiritual nourishment for us when we reflect on the Biblical passages which refer to “wilderness”.

As we approach the season of Lent, I would invite you to join with us live in our evening worship “Jubilee for All” (Details on the Holburn West Church website) or catch up with the recording of the service. We are building our worship from chapter headings in an inspiring book “The Grace-filled Wilderness” (A Journey Through Lent) by Magdalen Smith. Lent is traditionally observed by considering Jesus’ period in the wilderness where he is tempted by the Devil. Focussing on these, leads us to consider poignant themes such as appetite, identity, vocation, pain, vision etc. Something to bear in mind is that fasting and prayer are good for us. It’s worth noting that food is only the incidental appetite the devil focusses on. Today, we live with other elements that we consider essential for our survival- electronic media being one. In the wilderness, Jesus is stripped of things that could take up his time in this case, eating. Instead, resisting what his body craves, he embraces the space of nothingness, immersing into a deeper spirituality to hone himself, which will ultimately be for the good of the Kingdom. Or, to use other words, the exercises of self-discipline, self- denial and service enable us to be more open to God’s calling on our particular lives. And thankfully, following the fast there is a feast: Advent to Christmas, Lent to Easter, the return of the prodigal son to the waiting father. When we started to gather physically in the Holburn West sanctuary, following the easing of restrictions, we journeyed with the people of Israel, through the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness, to the promised land. It was certainly not a straightforward journey; starts and stops, rebellion against God’s laws, the challenges faced by Moses, who had been called by God to lead them.

God could see further than they could. There was indeed a land waiting for them, flowing with milk and honey. Following Jesus’ testing time in the desert, there was a fruitful time of his teaching, his life and ministry that brought transformation to many he encountered. Following his suffering and death there was the glory and joy of the Resurrection. Following Paul’s time in the desert he began a dynamic mission across the world, sharing the powerful message of the Gospel.

I firmly believe that good times lie ahead. The journey may be tough and challenging, but we can all do our bit to encourage one another. Some words exchanged here and there, some practical support, some prayers given, can all make a very big difference in what just now, appear to be drab days.

“The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you.

The Lord be gracious to you

and give you His Peace” .

Amen.

from

Rev Duncan C. Eddie

## WORSHIP

As you will know, due to the present lockdown, it is unlikely that there will be a resumption of physical services in the Sanctuary in the immediate future.

However, the **West End and City Centre Grouping Services** are continuing on YouTube. These can be accessed through the Holburn West website from 10am each Sunday morning. The link will remain on the website for a few weeks afterwards so that you can view it at will.

Holburn West's own "**Jubilee for All**" is live online via Zoom each Sunday evening and all are welcome. We meet from 5.30pm for chat moving into Worship at 6pm. Following the service which lasts between 35 and 45 minutes there is a further short opportunity for chat. Worship (not chat) is recorded, edited and uploaded to YouTube (usually by Monday Evening) and a link to this is posted on the Home Page of the Church website and on the Facebook page.

If you would like to join us live on Zoom please email the church office.

In the period leading up to Easter "**Jubilee for All**" will be taking chapter headings from Magdalen Smith's book "**The Grace-filled Wilderness**" (**A Journey Through Lent**) and using these as topics for reflection. The full programme is yet to be finalised but over the next four Sundays we have:

### APPETITE

24th January	Fast or Feast	led by Duncan Eddie
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### IDENTITY

31 <sup>st</sup> January	Name, Friendship and Community	led by Isabel Jackson
7 <sup>th</sup> February	Loneliness and/or Solitude	led by Alan Jackson

### LONGING FOR FREEDOM

14 <sup>th</sup> February	Boundary and Safety	led by Audrey Dawson
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## INSTANT NEIGHBOUR

Although there is no food collection at Holburn West planned for this month you may like to make a donation on their website as there are so many families struggling at this time. [www.instantneighbour.co.uk](http://www.instantneighbour.co.uk)



If you look on the Church of Scotland website you can find information on **'The Listening Project'**. It is open to anyone to take part but they are very keen to hear from those without access to technology and there are measures in place to enable this to happen with a phone number for the initial contact.

**Introducing the project, Dave Kendall, the Church of Scotland's Chief Officer, said:**

**“With buildings closing and some worship services moving online, we have had to quickly adapt to a time like no other for our Church, society and the world.**

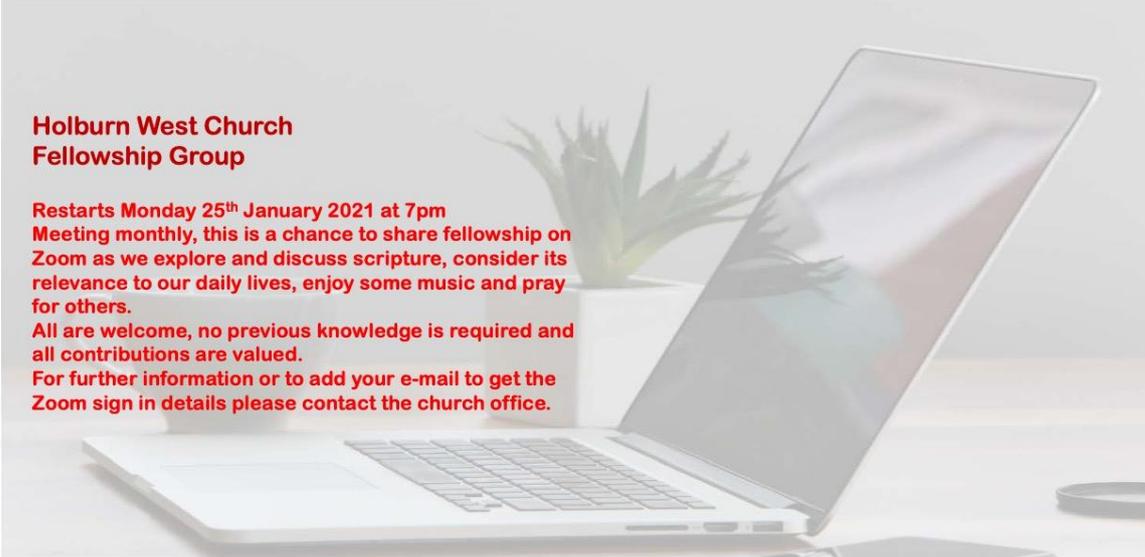
**“The coronavirus pandemic has affected all our lives and it is important that we, as a Church, listen to one another's experiences and share what we have been learning.**

**“Of course, each experience will be unique, but there is no doubt that there will be some shared themes for many of us and perhaps there are things that we need to be learning together.**

**“We want to hear from everyone from across the Church; people of different generations, living in different circumstances in every corner of the country and further afield.”**

*‘It is vital that we reflect, pray and share what we are experiencing.’*

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**Holburn West Church  
Fellowship Group**

**Restarts Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7pm**  
Meeting monthly, this is a chance to share fellowship on Zoom as we explore and discuss scripture, consider its relevance to our daily lives, enjoy some music and pray for others.

All are welcome, no previous knowledge is required and all contributions are valued.

For further information or to add your e-mail to get the Zoom sign in details please contact the church office.

## **Holburn West Church Office**

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