

A Series to Help with the New Normal

Worship Resources

Week 1: Living in the Wilderness

Call to Worship:

Leader: We are on a journey.

People: We find ourselves in a wilderness that has become all too familiar.

Leader: Yes, but this is a journey of faith.

People: Isolation, pandemic, death, economic chaos, need we go on?

This is a wilderness that is trying our very souls.

Leader: This is why I bid you come.

Come with the Spirit's power and remember God's faithfulness.

Come, rest, worship in the presence of the abiding love Jesus and be renewed.

All: Let us worship the Lord our God in spirit and in truth.

Or

Leader: "That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud." (Num. 14:1)

People: What is the meaning of this journey on which we find ourselves? Wouldn't it be better to go back to the way it was?

Leader: "The glory of the Lord appeared in the tent of meeting to all... and said, 'How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?'" (Num. 14:10, 11)

People: We are gathered in the shelter of your tent, O Lord. Forgive our wandering away from you. Gather us in spirit and truth to center ourselves as we worship you.

Opening Prayer:

God of hope, we lift our praise to you as we draw together in your presence.

Bless this time of worship as we center ourselves on your faithfulness.

Be our place of refuge on this journey in the wilderness.

Be our center in this tent of worship and praise.

We bring you our hearts, our minds, and our souls as we worship you. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Ever present God, we come to you as followers who stray from you.

We feel a pull to go back instead of looking for your guidance in the journey ahead.

We give into circumstances around us and are anxious and stressed.

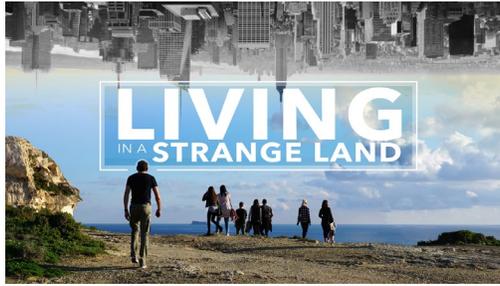
We get focused on how we can control our situation instead of focusing on your presence.

Forgive us and open our fearful hearts to remember that you are forever with us.

Help us to gather around you as our shelter and strength.

Help to lean upon your faithfulness.

In Jesus, our Deliverer, we pray. Amen.



Words of Assurance:

Leader: Jesus knows our every weakness and still we are forgiven and encourages us to continue on the journey of faith.

People: This is good news! Praise be to God.

Prayer for Illumination:

Your word, O Lord, is a light in this journey of faith.

Open our eyes that we may see your way.

Open our ears, that we may hear your truth.

Open our hearts that we may know your presence.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

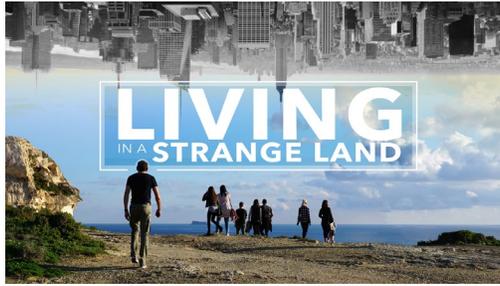
Or

(Repeated each week of the series)

Go forth to proclaim the Good News – God is with us.

Then come, gather again so that we might join in the centering power of Jesus' love.

Let the Holy Spirit guide you on the journey ahead.



Week 2: Living in a Strange Land

Call To Worship:

Leader: God is with us.

People: We are not alone.

Leader: Christ is with us.

People: The Risen One has met us, blessed and fed us on the road that leads us home.

Leader: The community of the Holy Spirit is with us.

People: We gather with the communion of the saints in light throughout history and with God's people around the world. (Order of Saint Luke, 2020)

Unison Prayer:

Lord, for all that you have planned and purposed for all your children we pray with thanksgiving. As your disciples we thank you that all things work together for good and we offer ourselves as your presence in this world. Give us this day a spirit of trust to rest in your word as the truth for our journey. We pray that you continue to keep us focused on the gift of being your called people as you lead us into the places you desire us to be. Amen

Prayer of Confession:

Gracious God,

As we gather today, we confess that there have been times when we have dimmed our light and have not faithfully shared the love of Christ.

We have kept our distance from the people you call us to serve.

We have in our own isolated places used these days to become numb
To the needs of those around us.

We pray that in the depth of your mercy, that you will
forgive our sins and free us to be the people you need us to be.

We offer ourselves as those who find joy in our salvation

as we continue to be your people and as you continue to be our God. Forgive us.

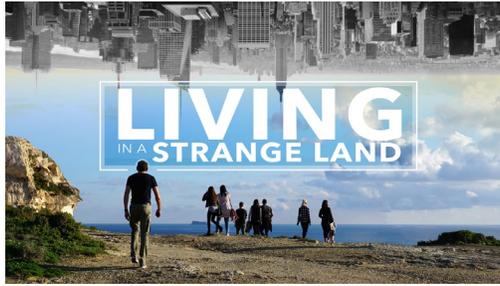
(Silence)

Words of Assurance:

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Benediction:

As we leave this place may we know that we are not alone. In our time together Christ has met us, blessed and fed us on the road that leads us home. As we go our separate ways the community of the Holy Spirit is with us now and until we meet again. Amen.



Week 3: Living in Isolation

Call to Worship:

Leader: The world around us pulls us and bids us come to them. Still, there is a higher calling, "Worship the Lord, your God."

All Sing: "Lead Me Lord", UMH #473

**Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only,
that makest me dwell in safety.**

Leader: We have all felt the struggle of isolation. Come and worship our God who never abandons us.

All Sing: "Lead Me Lord", UMH #473

**Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only,
that makest me dwell in safety.**

Or

Leader: This is the time, this is the space, when we come together in spirit to worship our God who never leaves us.

People: Sometimes it feels as if the isolation imposed by the world circumstances is sealing us up in a den of lions. It is overwhelming and feels like our doom.

Leader: Remember the words given to Daniel when he was thrown in the lion's den: "Your God—the one you serve so consistently—will rescue you." (Dan. 6:16 CEB)

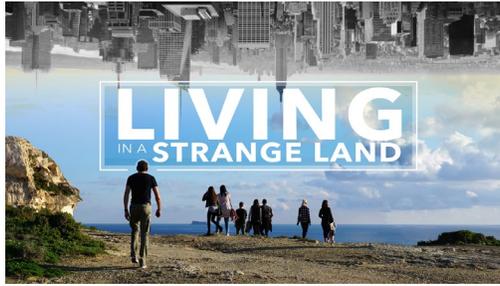
People: We come together to worship through the victory of our delivering God.

Opening Prayer:

**O God, our refuge and our strength, we bring to you hearts of worship.
When we feel isolated, you are with us. When we feel uplifted, you are with us.
When our hearts break, you are with us. When we rejoice, you are with us.
We bring our whole being to your holy presences as we lift our worship to you. Amen.**

Prayer of Confession (modified from Daniel 9):

Please, my Lord—you are the great and awesome God, the one who keeps the covenant and is truly faithful. We have brought guilt on ourselves and rebelled, ignoring your commands and your laws. We haven't listened to your servants who spoke in your name. We didn't listen to the voice of the Lord our God by following the teachings God gave us. We have sinned and done the wrong thing. But now, our God, listen to your servants' prayer and pleas for help. Shine your face on your ruined sanctuary, for your own sake, my Lord. Compassion and deep forgiveness belong to my Lord, our God. Righteousness belongs to you, my Lord! Amen.



Words of Assurance:

Leader: Friends, hear the Good News: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting.

Let us proclaim the Good News:

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen and Amen.

Prayer for Illumination:

Lord, you are our way, truth, and life.

Open our ears to your word so we may hear the way.

Open our minds to your word so we might know your truth.

Open our hearts to your word that our lives might be transformed.

In God the Creator, Jesus our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit our Guide we pray. Amen

Benediction:

You are not alone. God has been with you and is with you on each step of the journey ahead.

Spread the Good News in whatever way you can, by all the means you can.

Go in peace and assurance. Amen.

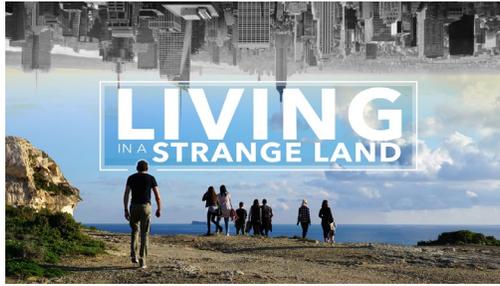
Or

(Repeated each week of the series)

Go forth to proclaim the Good News – God is with us.

Then come, gather again so that we might join in the centering power of Jesus' love.

Let the Holy Spirit guide you on the journey ahead.



Week 4: Living in Community

Call To Worship:

Leader: In this worship let us return to the Lord our God,

People: for in our returning our God will be gracious.

Leader: In this season let us confess to the Lord our God,

People: for in our confession our God will be merciful.

Leader: As we wonder let us repent to the Lord our God,

People: for in our repentance our God is slow to anger.

Leader: As we spiritually find our place let us praise the Lord our God,

People: for as we find home God abounds in steadfast love. This day may we worship God with one voice of praise.

Unison Prayer:

As your people we gather in worship as those who truly try to be what you desire. We are thankful for all the times when you lift us up after we have fallen and failed. So as we worship we pray that you will know that we humbly desire to be disciples of yours that make a difference in the world in which we live. We pray, in this moment, that we will discern your role for us in this awkward time of opportunity that we call life and that we will demonstrate to those around us your grace, mercy and powerful love.

Prayer of Confession:

We confess that we have

not always joined together in anticipation of joy,

not always thought of others before ourselves,

not always done your will.

In your mercy, forgive us.

We confess that we have...

often journeyed as lone rangers rather than disciples,

often followed those around us rather than you,

often sought justice for ourselves and punishment for others.

In your mercy, forgive us.

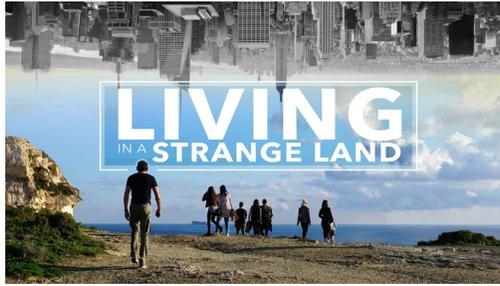
We confess that we need...

to listen for your voice more,

to seek your Spirit more,

to demonstrate your love for us more.

In your mercy, forgive us. (silence)



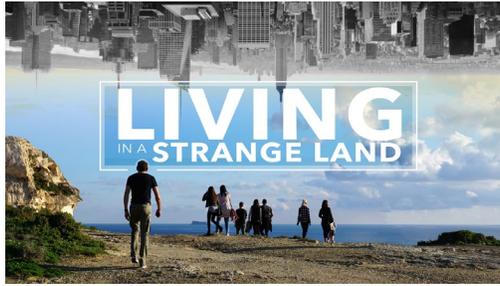
Words of Assurance:

Hear the good news:

Those who are in Christ are a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God to whom we have been reconciled through Christ. And so I declare to you, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. (2 Corinthians 5: 17)

Benediction:

This day and all days, may the power of God, the love of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit be with you, and all those you hold dear to your hearts, until we meet again. Amen.



Week 5: Living in New Places

Call to Worship:

Leader: We come to this time of worship, reorienting our focus on the One who loves us always, yet our lives as so different now.

People: But we are not the first people to find ourselves living in a strange land. How do we learn to live in this land from the people who have gone before us?

Leader: Let us look at the story, the experiences, the struggles, and the victories and be led by the Spirit's power to face this new thing.

People: As disciples of Jesus we know wherever we are living, God is there.

All: Let us lift our worship, our prayers, and our praise in the presence of our God.

Or

Leader: Welcome to this time of worship. Come and know that our God's love is unchanging.

People: There is a lot of the unknown going on around us. We feel scattered.

Leader: Do you remember what happened to the early church? How did they respond to the upheaval and new direction?

People: Acts chapter 8 verse 4 says, "Those who had been scattered moved on, preaching the good news along the way."

All: Let us worship our faithful God and be strengthened for the journey ahead.

Opening Prayer:

You are amazing, God. You lift hope out of chaos, victory from perceived defeat.

We bring to you our hearts in worship and praise as we open our eyes to see this season as one of opportunity, a fertile ground of new beginnings. May our souls shine with your love as we draw closer to you and exalt your name.

Amen

Prayer of Confession:

God of grace we open our hearts to you and offer the truth of our lives:

We bring to you the times when fear has pushed aside our trust in you.

We bring to you the doubt we have placed before our faith in your provision.

We bring to you the brokenness and pain that our prejudice and ignorance has caused your beloved children.

We bring to you the spiritual blindness that comes from believing we do not need you.

We bring to you those things we have not done that we should have done and those things we do that break your heart.

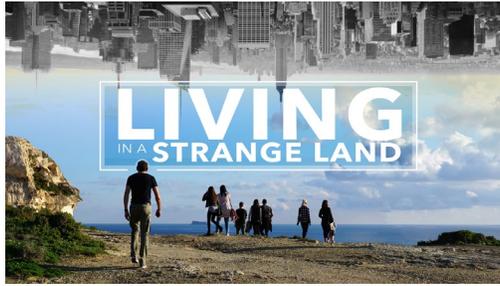
We pray for your forgiving grace that we might find courage in unlikely places and experience your presence of hope on each step in the journey.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Leader: Good News! We are forgiven and set free to go out into the world as the loving, gracious and hope-filled people of God.

People: Let us praise our God in word and in deed. Amen and Amen.



Prayer for Illumination:

Your word is ancient, Lord, but ever new and unfolding.
Be with us in its hearing that we may be blessed by its foundation,
renewed by its grace, and open to where you lead us forward.
In the Spirit's power we pray. Amen

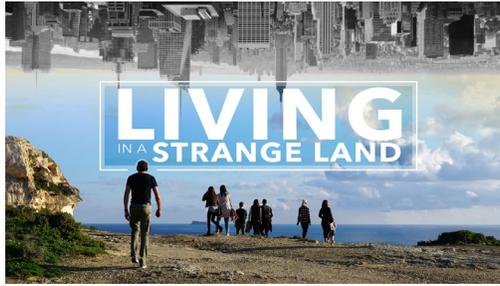
Benediction:

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish,
abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus,
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20,21)

Or

(Repeated each week of the series)

Go forth to proclaim the Good News – God is with us.
Then come, gather again so that we might join in the centering power of Jesus' love.
Let the Holy Spirit guide you on the journey ahead.



Week 6 – Living in a New Kingdom

Call To Worship (sung response)

Leader: We gather in this moment to be your people of praise, your people of grace; simply to be the people who seek your spirit. We ask that as gathered people that your Spirit of strength and power would be ours as we do your will and your work.

People: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, Allelu Alleluia

Leader: As we worship in this moment we call upon your Spirit to hear us as we pray, to be with us we listen and to be with us we ask.

People: Ask and it shall be given unto you seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, Allelu Alleluia

Unison Prayer

As we gather today in prayer we sense what a privilege it is to be part of your heavenly family as one of your children. Even in our wandering, we thank you for the grace and love that you pour out on us to make us your people. We pray that throughout our days ahead that we may glorify Your holy name in my conversation and conduct, in Jesus name I pray, AMEN.

Prayer of Confession (adapted from 1 Peter 2)

Gracious God, we attempt to live lives so that others see our “good deeds.” Yet, sadly, we often hope that our good deeds are looked at as our work and not what you desire of us. So in our confession we ask that our good deeds would be in submission to your will for our actions. As foreigners and those in exile we hear your voice that desires us to abstain from our earthly desires that wage war against our souls. Forgive us.

Assurance

God will bless our confession and keep us.

God will look upon us and be gracious to us in forgiveness.

God will, in our humbleness, look upon us with kindness and give us peace.

Benediction

Today and in the season to come may you remember that “once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people.” As God’s people may you receive and live within God’s mercy, God’s strength and God’s grace today and always. Amen.