

**Sunday, March 6, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Luke 4:1-13  
“An Opportune Time”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes) In groups of two or three, respond to the following, “What are your hopes for this coming Lenten season?”

**Luke 4:1-13 Context.** The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness as an interlude between Jesus’ baptism and his ministry is reported without any detail in Mark. But both Matthew and Luke give an expanded version, although the two versions differ in the order of the temptations. It is fair to say that the temptations are ordered from least to greatest. In Luke, the first temptation is to material security; the second is to the idolatry of worldly political power; the third is to test or tempt God. In the last, the tempter even quotes Psalm 91 to make his point. Jesus rebuts all three temptations with texts taken from Deuteronomy.

**Read Luke 4:1-13**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Luke 4:1-13 again.**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

Read together (either in unison or participants reading aloud specific lines) the Invitation to the Observance of Lenten Discipline:

**INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:  
the early Christians observed with great devotion  
the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection,  
and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration  
there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.  
During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.  
It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins  
and had separated themselves from the community of faith  
were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness,  
and restored to participation in the life of the Church.  
In this way the whole congregation was reminded  
of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ

and the need we all have to renew our faith.  
I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,  
to observe a holy Lent:  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

- After reading the invitation, discuss the following question as a group: “What practices will you observe this Lent to ‘renew your faith’?”
- Why might it be important that the devil adds the conditional “If you are the Son of God...” to begin his temptations?
- We believe that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. Thus, these were actual temptations for Jesus (otherwise, Jesus would not fully understand temptation and be able to empathize with us). How are these three scenarios actual temptations for Jesus?
- What might it mean that the devil tempts Jesus using Scripture passages?
- When might be the “opportune time” that is referred to in verse 13? [Perhaps the Garden of Gethsemane, perhaps on the cross, perhaps all along?]
- Read Luke 4:1 and Luke 4:14. How did what happened in verses 1-13 enable Jesus to return “filled with the power of the Spirit”?
- How might our Lenten practices help us to fully surrender to God’s will and be more fully engaged in where God is guiding us?

### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Father, Son, and Spirit, we give thanks that because of Jesus, you can empathize with our weakness and temptations. We give you thanks that in moments of trial and temptation, you will not leave us or forsake us. When we have failed to obey, and have fallen short of your glory; when we have not lived up to the calling of our identity as baptized believers, help us to know we can run to you for forgiveness and mercy. Empower us to live a life of repentance and mercy. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven  
    hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
    on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,  
    as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
    but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
    and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.