

*As you enter, please take a stone to hold during worship*

**COSSO SPIRITUAL FORMATION  
WEEKEND: February 13-14, 2015**

**THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY INTO LENT:  
“FROM STONE TO STONE”**



**FRIDAY GATHERING  
Gathering Music  
Welcome & Announcements**

**NOTE about the service:** This is a candlelight Lenten service adapted from various sources, and you are encouraged to adapt it even further to fit the environment of your church. The service is designed to be held at the beginning of Lent and focuses on the passion of Christ in Word and song. Seven candles are extinguished during the service and one is relit at the end of the service. Various symbols of the passion are used to encourage reflection. People pick up a rough rock or landscape gravel when they enter, and leave the rock at the foot of the cross when they leave. This may be done each Sunday of Lent as part of confession and prayers. On Easter morning, they receive a smooth pebble symbolizing the forgiveness of their sins. (For more detailed suggestions see Journey of Stones by Steven Molin; also see “Ashes to Stone: Symbols of Lent, A Lent by Candlelight Meditation” at [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).)

## **INTRODUCTION**

**HYMN (TFWS) 2128 “Come and Find the Quiet Center”**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *(adapted from Lenten prayers in Stages on the Way)*

L: When the world could wait no longer, the carpenters took up their tools and made God’s son into a cross,

**All: For us he grieved, for us he died**

L: An enemy of the state, he was summoned to the judgment hall

**All: For us he was judged, for us he died**

L: He was nailed to the cross by human hands

**All: Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh**

L: And yet, he gathers us in and brings us into new life

**All: The stone the builders rejected, the rock of our salvation**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**God of mercy and kindness, guide us through the wilderness of Lent, protect us, encourage us, shepherd us, walk with us, and bring us to the glory of another Easter morning. Open our hearts of stone to your love. Amen.**

*(extinguish first candle)*

□(ASHES) **First Reading: JOB 42:1-6**

While we may no longer clothe ourselves in sackcloth and sit in ashes, it is fitting to mark our Lenten journey with ashes, remembering with Christians of our past and reflecting on our sin,

### **A Blessing for Ash Wednesday**

Will you meet us □ in the ashes □  
will you meet us □ in the ache  
and show your face □ within our sorrow □  
and offer us □ your word of grace:

That you are life □ within the dying  
□ that you abide □ within the dust  
□ that you are what □ survives the burning  
□ that you arise □ to make us new.

And in our aching □ you are breathing □  
and in our weeping □ you are here  
□ within the hands □ that bear your blessing  
□ enfolding us □ within your love.

*By Jan Richardson (see more at: [paintedprayerbook.com](http://paintedprayerbook.com))*

### **269 (v 1) “Lord, who throughout these forty days**

*(extinguish second candle)*

#### **(PALMS) Second Reading: John 12: 12-13**

The palm frond catches our attention on Palm Sunday. It was a symbol of triumph and a national emblem of Palestine. It was like a Jewish flag as precious to the people as our flag. In times of war, the triumphant general would be greeted with people singing and waving palms.

Jesus is our king of kings, to whom we give all glory, laud and honor,

#### **HYMN 280 (v 1,3) “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”**

*(extinguish third candle)*

#### **(SILVER COINS) Third Reading: Matthew 26:14-16**

Silver coins may not be the first thing we think about when we think about the Lenten season, but they played an important role in the events of Holy Week. These coins affected not just one man, but us as well.

Peter knew something about struggling with sin when he wrote: “for you know that it was not with things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18)

*(extinguish fourth candle)*

## CONFESSION & PRAYER

Once a heart has turned to stone, it is difficult to soften it again. Sometimes it takes guilt or humility to turn the heart around. Sometimes it takes confession. Sometimes it takes a tragedy. Whatever it takes, I invite you to lay your heart at the foot of the cross as you leave today, and let the journey through Lent help you take a step closer to the heart of God. Now let us spend a moment in silence as we prepare to present our confessions to Christ,

(silence)

Christ our Lord, we meet beneath your cross, friends, strangers, observers, grieving for the loss of love in the world. We meet because we have questions and want to understand. We meet because we want to grow closer to you and meet you on your cross.

It is with emptiness and longing hearts that we humble ourselves and confess our sin in the truth of your Spirit,

**Most merciful God, we your Church confess that often our spirit has not been that of Christ. Where we have failed to love one another as he loves us, where we have pledged loyalty to him with our lips and then betrayed, deserted, or denied him, forgive us, we pray; and by your Spirit make us faithful in every time of trial; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ. But Christ suffered and died for us, was raised from the dead and ascended on high for us, and continues to intercede for us. Believe the good news: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! (*Holy Thursday prayers, BOW, p 352*)

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.**

(CROWN OF THORNS) **Fourth Reading: Mark 15:16-18**

Thorns aren't something you go looking for, unless you need them for a Good Friday service. Florists usually remove thorns from roses. You don't go strolling barefoot through a garden full of thorns. And yet, imagine the agony of a crown of thorns pressing into your head. He endured not only the pain of thorns but the agony of our sin.

**HYMN 286 "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"**

*(extinguish fifth candle)*

(CROSS & NAILS) **Fifth Reading Mark 15:22-26**

Crucifixion was a Roman means of execution in which the victim was nailed to a cross. Heavy wrought-iron nails were driven through the wrists and the feet. Only slaves, criminals, and non-Roman citizens were executed this way. This was the death that Jesus suffered.

The words of John ring true, as we say together:

**"God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."**

*(John 3:16)*

## **HYMN 288 (v 1,5) “Were You There”**

*(extinguish sixth candle)*

**(STONE) Sixth Reading: Mark 15:42:46**

*(extinguish seventh candle)*

In those days, it was common to cut tombs out of the rock on the side of a hill. After a body was laid to rest, a large stone would seal the tomb shut.

The stone is our final symbol on our journey today. Peter refers to Jesus as our cornerstone. Indeed, he is the rock and foundation of our faith. He promised that he would rise again, and he did. We do not remain in the dark, and so we relight one candle to remind us of the promise that the Son of God will rise on Easter morning.

*(relight one candle)*

## **HYMN 368 “My Hope is Built”**

*(close with silent prayer and soft music, as you leave you are invited to leave your confession rock on the table at the foot of the cross)*

### Resources:

“Ashes to Stone: Symbols of Lent, A Lent by Candlelight Meditation,” (pdf available at [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)).

Journey of Stones: a sermon series for Lent and Easter, by Steven Molin, Lima, OH: CSS Publishing Company, Inc, 2002.

Stages on the Way: Worship Resources for Lent, Holy Week & Easter, by Wild Goose Worship Group, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 1998.

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**SATURDAY WORSHIP & EUCHARIST**

*Gathering Music  
Welcome*

**“Easter Glory Fills the Heaven”** *(adapted, Leith Fisher in Fire & Bread)*

**\*HYMN (UMH) 657 “This is the Day”**

**\*Litany for A New Day** *(adapted, Sarah Pascoe in Fire & Bread)*

Leader: February frost clings as snowdrops fall

**All: A new day dawns.**

Lent begins, birds sing, waiting for the promise of spring.

**A new day dawns**

Proud crocus peek through frozen ground as tree buds begin to swell.

**A new day dawns**

In a garden far away, the story of your passion slowly unfolds.

**A new day dawns**

New life shines through crowns of golden daffodils.

**A new day dawns.**

A promise kept, a gift for all, new life comes

**Receive. Begin. Alleluia. Amen.**

**\*Prayer of Approach** *(adapted, Thom M Shuman in Fire & Bread)*  
**with The Lord’s prayer**

**\*HYMN (UMH) 657 “This is the Day”**

**SCRIPTURE: John 20:1-18**

**“The Stone is rolled away, love is here”**

*(for Lenten ideas with stones see Steven Molin, Journey of Stones)*

**ANTHEM by the COSSO CHOIR “Because He Lives”**

**HOLY COMMUNION FOR EASTER**

*(from UMH The Great Thanksgiving & Musical Setting)*

**HYMN (UMH) 302 “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”**

**BLESSING**

(adapted, Chris Polhill, in Fire & Bread)

The power of the Creator who brings life out of death,  
be in this place.

The risen Christ be your companion.

The healing of the Holy Spirit be your strength

May the stones that block your way be rolled away

And may you see resurrection all around you.

Amen.

**SOME RESOURCES FOR LENT:**

Dirt, Mess and Danger: Liturgies and Worship Resources, by Glendon Macaulay,  
Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2011. (see [www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com))

Eggs and Ashes: Practical & liturgical resources for Lent and Holy Week, by Ruth  
Burgess & Chris Polhill, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2004.

Fire and Bread: Resources for Easter Day to Trinity Sunday, ed. by Ruth Burgess,  
Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2006.

Journey of Stones: a sermon series for Lent and Easter, by Steven Molin, Lima, OH:  
CSS Publishing Company, Inc, 2002.

Stages on the Way: Worship Resources for Lent, Holy Week & Easter, Wild Goose  
Worship Group, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 1998.

*MORNING PRAYERS*

*The invitation of Easter (from Fire & Bread, p. 66, Peter Millar)*

*SONG 304 "Easter People"*

*PRAYERS of the Heart, (Chris Polhill, from Fire & Bread, p 68)*