

**COSSO SPIRITUAL FORMATION**  
**FRIDAY Opening Gathering**

February 5-6, 2016

**“ON THE LENTEN JOURNEY”**

*(A service for Ash Wednesday or the beginning of Lent. There are many symbols/devotions you can offer to help guide people through the 40 days of Lent. It is also a way of teaching the meaning of our Christian traditions and holy seasons. This service includes a small prayer box (larger ones are more expensive) which will be filled with prayers of fasting during Lent and then burned at the “first fire” of Easter Sunrise. Always modify services to fit your setting without compromising the sacred intent.)*

**Gathering Music**

**Welcome (announcements of the community)**

**OPENING HYMN - Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (UMH #139)**

**CALL TO THE DESERT**

*(Sally Foster-Fulton)*

Slow us down for the fast.

**Still our restless spirits ... Calm our racing minds ... Centre our being ...**

Let our longing linger.

Let it take root and create a beautiful yearning space that has the time to ache ...

**Slow us down for the fast.**

Silence the noise and voices ...

**Wait for our weary wanting, to meet our need and find common ground ...**

Hold back the driving beat of our hearts, and let the drums of our internal wars fall silent

**Slow us down for the fast.**

Before the journey begins ... Before the desert calls us ...

**Before the wilderness beckons and breaks our searching spirits ...**

Slow us down for the fast.

**A DAILY LENTEN PRAYER**

*(Baker, Kaehler, Mazar)*

**Again we keep this solemn fast, a gift of faith from ages past,**

**This Lent which binds us lovingly, to faith and hope and charity.**

**More sparing, therefore, let us make, the words we speak, the food we take,**

**Our sleep, our laughter, every sense; learn peace through holy penitence.**

**RESPONSIVE PSALM 137 (Psalter 852, v 1-6 without response)**

**SCRIPTURE Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

***Dust to Dust, Ashes to Ashes***

**HYMN - My Faith Looks Up to Thee (UMH #452)**

**PRAYERS FOR DESERT PEOPLE**

*(Sally Foster-Fulton)*

*Sharing our prayers*

Lent is a time to search – to search for yourself. Who are you? Where are you going? Why? ... Called out of the waters of your baptism and into the desert

where you will face your desires, your dreams, your despair ... Lent has begun, and it is time to search. What are you searching for?

Lent is a time to take stock – to take stock of the life you are living, the goals you have set for yourself, the world you'll leave behind: will it be a better place because of your place in it? ... Called out of the waters of your baptism and into the desert where you will face your past, consider your present, contemplate your future. Lent has begun, and it is time to take stock. What do you want God to do for you?

Lent is a time to repent – to repent of your wandering ways, self-centered habits that have a hold on you, hidden things you've buried away out of sight. What do you want to let go and let God carry for you?

*Lift up prayers of the community – what are the things we need to share before we can enter Lent and this weekend....*

### **PAUSE BEFORE THE JOURNEY**

*(Sally Foster-Fulton)*

Life is a journey. We're always heading out to new things – new experiences, new people to meet, new lessons to learn ...

Today, we gather to think about what kind of people we want to be, what kind of people God calls us to be:

what are the lessons we need to learn, in order to walk the way God asks us to go – the way of love, forgiveness, fairness, kindness, friendship ...

For a few minutes now, sit really straight and still.

Close your eyes and feel the ground, solid beneath your feet.

Think about all the places your feet take you:

to church, to your office, to the hospital and back home ...

to visits, to the store, to lunch with friends –

then to bed and up again in the morning – back on your feet.

Today, we come here to think about

where we really want to go in our lives –

but even more important than that, where God is calling us and how we will get there.

What do we want to leave behind as a sign of our lives?

Do you want to leave love, kindness, patience, laughter?

Do you want to leave a fairer, more just and equal world?

Pray that you leave gentle footprints where you've been, not scars where you've trampled.

On this day, at the start of Lent,

decide how you'll walk and live in the desert ...

### **Prayer:**

We've gathered here with friends

to think about where our lives need to go.

With feet firmly on the ground, with hands outstretched to embrace each other,

with minds and spirits open (with stomachs waiting for dinner)

we are ready to journey – lead us on, O Lord, lead us on.

## **BLESSING OF ASHES**

We are invited to begin our journey into the desert with the sign of ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and identifies our commitment to go where God calls us.

**Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and repentance, and a reminder that by your grace we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## **HYMN - O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee (UMH #430)**

### **40 DAYS IN THE DESERT**

*You may come and touch the sand as you ponder a fast for these 40 days of Lent.*

*Feel the dryness of the sand and think of the dry areas in your life that need God's renewing touch.*

### **THE MARK OF THE PENITENT**

*You may also move to the stations of ashes and sign each other with the cross.*

*"Remember you are dust and to dust you will return."*

*"Turn from sin and believe you are forgiven." ... or other appropriate words.*

*We will continue to sing until all have returned to their seats.*

### **COMMIT TO THE FAST**

*As you return to your seat, you may want to sign the box with a commitment to a fast, to remind you to turn to God during these 40 days.*

*Silent Pause*

## **BLESSING**

**Leader:** By the cross and the greatness of God's mercy, we are saved;

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**Leader:** By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can face these forty days;

**People:** **Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, we are committed to God.**

**Leader:** Go and face your wilderness, knowing that your Light will come on Easter morning.

**All:** **Amen and Amen.**

*Prayers adapted from the following sources:*

*Baker J. Robert, Evelyn Kaehler, Peter Mazar. A Lenten Sourcebook: The Forty Days, vol 1.*

*Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990.*

*Foster-Fulton, Sally. Prayers, Meditations, Reflections and Activities for Lent. Wild Goose Publications (www.ionabooks.com).*

**COSSO SPIRITUAL FORMATION**  
**SATURDAY Morning Prayers – just 10 minutes**

February 5-6, 2016

***Gathering Music***

***Reading for Lent:***

Again we keep this solemn fast, a gift of faith from ages past,  
This Lent which binds us lovingly, to faith and hope and charity.  
More sparing, therefore, let us make, the words we speak, the food we take,  
Our sleep, our laughter, every sense; learn peace through holy penitence.

**SONG - O God, Our Help in Ages Past (UMH #117)**

***Everyday light your small candle – Read Edelman p 7, Behold***

***- Light a candle***

**SONG - Let Your Light Shine**

Let your light shine before others so they will know our God of Love's in the land.  
Let your light shine before others so they will know the Kingdom of God is at hand.

**BLESS**

***Go and let the light of your small candle shine and others will do the same***

**“ON THE LENTEN JOURNEY”**

*ALL TRAVELERS, somewhere along the way,  
find it necessary to check their course,  
to see how they are doing.  
We wait until we are sick, or shocked into stillness,  
before we do the commonplace thing of getting our  
bearings.  
And yet, we wonder why we are depressed,  
why we are unhappy, why we lose our friends,  
why we are ill-tempered.  
This condition we pass on to our children, our  
husbands, our wives, our associates, our friends.  
Cultivate the mood to linger. ...  
Who knows? God may whisper to you in the  
quietness, what God has been trying to say to you,  
oh, for so long a time.*

*Howard Thurman, Deep Is the Hunger*



**Gathering Music**

**Opening HYMN - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (UMH #384)**

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Hungry for the fast**

*(Sally Foster-Fulton)*

We're hungry, Lord – for time that isn't rushed,  
for family and friends, for a chance simply to be.  
And we're starved, for affection and understanding, for love and peace, for a moment to share.  
**We're hungry, Lord.**

**Sung Response:**

We're hungry Lord – for justice and freedom, for equality and peace,  
for a fair chance in this world.  
The haves and have-nots never meet, so how can we share?  
Help us to bridge the gap, and satisfy our hungry hearts.

**We're hungry, Lord.**

**Sung Response:**

We're hungry Lord – for a new path, a different direction, a vision that leads to peace.  
Keep us searching for the bread of heaven which has the power to sustain us.  
Keep us hopeful as we fast, Lord, fill us with the food that lasts forever.

**Sung Response:**

**SCRIPTURE READING 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

**CHOIR - Love the Lord**

**by Lori G. Douglass**

**HOLY COMMUNION**  
*(Service of Word & Table for the Season of Lent)*

**CLOSING HYMN - Lord, Speak to Me (UMH #463)**

***Sending Forth***

*Prayers adapted from sources:*

*Foster-Fulton, Sally. Prayers, Meditations, Reflections and Activities for Lent. Wild Goose Publications (www.ionabooks.com).*