

**THE DESERT WAY:  
A SERVICE FOR THE LENTEN JOURNEY**

**PRELUDE**      **"Gather Us In"**      **TFWS 2236**

**WELCOME**      Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator

**INTRODUCTION**      Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Spiritual Formation Director

**GREETING**

LEADER: Let us continue to make our way through the desert.

**ALL: We will walk the road that Jesus walked.**

Let us celebrate these forty days with songs of praise.

**We will fast and pray with Jesus on the way.**

Let us remember the times we turned away.

**We will confess our sin and turn back to him.**

Let us face those desert places in our lives.

**We will not go alone, Jesus has gone there before us.**

We will walk this desert way to reach the cross of Easter.

**We will walk this desert way, Jesus has gone there before us.**

**A UNISON PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

**O Lord, throughout these forty days you prayed and kept a fast,**

**May we do the same, repent and turn to you.**

**Be with us on the way, and guide us when we break our fast,**

**Give us strength to start again and follow you,**

**And see the mystery of your grace shining through at last.**

**All glory be to Christ our King. Amen.**

**CELEBRATION OF THE WORD:** A reading from the gospel of Matthew (4:1-11)

Response:      Lord have mercy.

**Christ have mercy.**

**REFLECTION**      Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples

**HYMN**      **"Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross"**      **UMH 301**

**ON THE LENTEN JOURNEY:** A reading from the prophet Joel (2:12-15)

Response:      Lord have mercy.

**Christ have mercy.**

Lord have mercy.

**Christ have mercy.**

## **ACT OF RECONCILIATION**

*(Pause for writing/reflecting on letting go or taking on something for a Lenten fast.)*

Our God is merciful and the Source of our salvation, who desires not that we live in sin or guilt but rather that we turn from evil, confess our wrongdoing, and accept forgiveness. Therefore, may the One who came to restore life, bless us and restore us by the Holy Spirit, for the living of new life in Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, know that you are forgiven.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, know that you are forgiven.**

**HYMN**

**“Lamb of God”**

**TFWS 2113**

## **A COMMUNION LITURGY FOR LENT/HOLY WEEK**

*adapted from The Soft Petals of Grace, by Thom M Shuman ([www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com), 2016)*

LEADER: May the Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

Open your hearts to God.

**We open them to the One whose heart is broken for us.**

In the midst of our fears, we will praise God.

**Our thanks are offered to the One whose love is with us.**

Creator of the heavens and earth, when the hour had come,  
you lifted up the cup of creation, pouring it into the emptiness of chaos.  
Rivers flowed through the valleys, stars sparkled in the night, joy danced in the fields.  
Given that fountain flowing with living water, we drank, instead, from betrayal's cup.  
Offered the feast of faith, we sat down, instead, at sin's groaning table.  
We turned to the prophets to remind us of your promises,  
but we continued to embrace our hopelessness.

Then, because we are your own, you sent Jesus, to save us from ourselves.

Therefore, with those who want to follow you and all who have tried and failed, we join our hearts with them and with the choirs of every time and place, singing your praises:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of desert places.**

**We join heaven and earth in praising your name.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the One who became Saviour and Servant for us.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, God of redemption,  
and blessed is Jesus Christ, our Servant and Saviour.

When the hour had come, he got up from the table of grace, took off his glory,  
and tied humanity around his heart, to cleanse us of our sins.

In the midst of his friends, in the presence of his enemies,  
he kept the promises made to us: to love us to the very end;  
he welcomed all; he showed us the life of love and faith;  
he endured death, that we might have life.

And now every time we eat the bread, our brokenness is made whole;  
every time we drink from the cup, we receive unending grace;  
every time we come to the table, we remember the mystery of our faith:

**We mourn Christ's death.**

**We look to the day of resurrection.**

**We await his return to us.**

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of bread and juice and upon us gathered before you,  
make them be for us what we can never be without you. Fill us with compassion and healing for  
our brokenness and our shattered world.

And when there are no more hours to come,  
when there is only eternal peace and life with you,  
we will gather in that upper room of your heart,  
in communion with you and each other,  
singing your praises now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **SHARING COMMUNION**

The bread we break is a sharing in the bread of life.

The cup we drink is a sharing in the forgiveness poured out for us.

*(all eat and drink the elements)*

### **UNISON PRAYER**

And now as we continue our journey through Lent, let us pray together,

**God of all love and grace, we give you thanks for this holy mystery.**

**Accepting your forgiveness, we pray that this Lenten journey will be a time of turning to you,  
that your ways will become our ways:**

**Let us feed the hungry; let us give the thirsty drink;**

**Let us clothe the naked and welcome the stranger;**

**Let us visit those in prison and the sick;**

**Let us tear down walls and build bridges;**

**Let this be our prayer and our way of life, so that when all is said and all is done,  
all will be welcome and inherit a place at the table you have prepared for us.**

**This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **BLESSING & SENDING FORTH**

Follow the desert way to places God calls you to go,  
and be what God calls you to be.

And may the blessing of Almighty God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
go with you and remain with you always.

**POSTLUDE    "We are Marching in the Light of God"    TFWS 2235b**