

**WORDS OF HOPE FROM THE WILDERNESS
DURING THE FOURTH WEEK IN LENT**

from Rebeka Maples, COSSO Director of Spiritual Formation

So here we are in the Fourth Week in Lent, and who would have thought we would be doing everything from home?? I do pray, along with the rest of the COS staff and the support team at MTSO, that you are coping. I know we are all in different situations and different settings but please know that we are in this together, in these unknown times of COVID-19. An uninvited guest seems to have invaded our journey through the wilderness. But know also that we will travel through this with the One companion who never leaves us, the One who called us onto this path of ministry.

As pastors you will navigate through the days ahead carrying additional burdens. Even as you lead your churches and those in your communities, many people are looking to you to be a steady and calming guide through this wilderness. And you can do this, you can be part of calming the storm but you must take care of yourself. This is the time and this is the challenge – to open your heart and mind to the Voice that still speaks through the many voices that are clamoring for your attention.

Like it or not, we are all stuck at home, so be sure to take time each day to sit in the quiet for a while. Read some Lenten devotions or lectionary passages, journal and meditate on the reading, then set it aside and be still, contemplate and be held in the sacred arms of God, slowly breathe in and out, listen to the sounds and thoughts that come to you and practice letting them go. During this tumultuous time, we need to do this more than ever, not only for ourselves but for those dear to us and those we serve. Who knows? We may come out the other side with a regular prayer/devotion and meditation routine! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Please send any prayer requests or thoughts and let me know if it is okay to share them or just hold them in my prayers. I'll send something out each week to help us stay connected in a 'distancing' kind of way.

So, I send my blessings to you and leave you with a few words that flowed out of my prayers this week:

IN THE WILDERNESS WITH CO-VID19

So much sadness, so much sorrow
But there is a tomorrow

We hold each other by helping each other
We help each other by praying for each other

Time passes anyway
Life happens everyday

Hope restores the soul
While storms take their toll

Waking to each morning
There is fear and warning

Sounds are made
And silence stayed

Yet truer than all truth we know
Grace will grow and continue on to flow.

~Rebeka Maples, March 2020

DAILY PSALMS FOR THE FOURTH WEEK IN LENT (lectionarypage.net):

SUNDAY Psalm 23
MONDAY Psalm 30
TUESDAY Psalm 46
WEDNESDAY Psalm 45
THURSDAY Psalm 106
FRIDAY Psalm 34
SATURDAY Psalm 7