

LENT HAS BEGUN: STEP INTO THE DESERT: A Service for The Beginning Of Lent

PRELUDE

“Search Me, O God”

Orr/Scott

WELCOME: Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator

INTRODUCTION: Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Director of Spiritual Formation

OPENING WORDS: Lent Has Begun (from Isaiah 55)

“Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?”

Lent is a time to search. Called out of the waters of your baptism and into the desert where you must face your dreams and your despair. Lent has begun and it is time to search.

Reader: Lent is a time to reflect on your life, your goals, the world.

Called out of the waters of your baptism

and into the desert where you will face your past, the present and future.

Lent has begun and it is time to reflect.

Lent is a time to repent from our wandering ways, those self-centered habits, those things buried out of sight. Called out of the waters of your baptism and into the desert where you will find your way home again to God. Lent has begun, and it is time to come home.

A CONFESSION/CALL TO WORSHIP for the start of Lent (from Psalm 32)

Leader: Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

All: Confession is good for the soul.

Blessed are those whose sin the Lord does not count against them, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Confession is good for the soul.

When I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long

Confession is good for the soul.

Then I said, “I will confess my transgression to the Lord,”
and God forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore, let all who are faithful offer prayer to God.

Confession is good for the soul.

Let us pray to God:

God of all, we confess that we do not like to confess.

It reminds us of our weakness and that we need to change.

God of all, we confess that we do not like to confess.

We ask for your forgiveness and your help so that we may change.

Assurance of pardon

Forgiveness comes as the words are said.
God holds no grudges, so let go of your guilt.
You are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYER FOR THE LENTEN FAST

**We're hungry, Lord – for time that isn't rushed,
for family and friends,
for a moment to share, for a chance to simply be.
We're hungry, Lord – for justice and freedom,
for a bridge between the haves and have-nots,
for a chance to touch those who need help and healing.
We're hungry, Lord – for peace in our world,
for a way to end war,
for the safety of the people in Ukraine.
We're hungry, Lord – for a new path, a different direction,
for the bread of heaven and food that keeps us satisfied,
for living water that we may never thirst again.
Bless us and keep us hopeful, Lord, in our Lenten fast. Amen.**

HYMN "Just As I Am (I Come Broken)" UMH 357/Cottrell et al

PSALM READING: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

GOSPEL READING: Luke 4:1-13

REFLECTION: A Prophet like Moses and Miriam

Rev. Dr. Paul Kim, received his MDiv and ThM from Princeton Theological Seminary and PhD from Claremont School of Theology. A Presbyterian elder, he is Professor of Hebrew Bible at MTSO.

HYMN "Come Home Running" Tomlin/Reeves

A CELEBRATION OF GRADUATION

Director: Who are graduating from the Course of Study?

Coordinator: **Dan Barkholz (Michigan Conference)**
Steven Graves (Indiana Conference)
Tamara Luckhardt (Minnesota Conference)
and Trever Rook (Great Plains Conference)

are presented in absentia for graduation from the Course of Study.

Director: Let us offer them our blessing and prayers:

Coordinator: **Gracious God, we thank you for calling faithful servants to be Local Pastors in your Church. We humbly place these graduates in your care. Give them courage, patience, and vision, and bless them with caring communities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Director: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that Dan Barkholz, Steven Graves, Tami Luckhardt, and Trever Rook have graduated from the Course of Study.

GRADUATION MUSIC

“Here I Am, Lord” instrumental

UMH 593

HOLY COMMUNION

(adapted from a liturgy for Maundy Thursday, by Thom M Shuman, www.ionabooks.com)

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

May the God of desert places be with you.

All: And also with you.

Open your hearts to God.

We open them to the one whose heart was broken for us.

Creator of heaven and earth,

when you lifted up the cup of creation,

you poured it into the emptiness of chaos,

but we chose to drink from betrayal’s bitter cup and sat with sinners.

You asked prophets to remind us of your promises,

but we embraced hopelessness.

Then, you sent Jesus to save us from ourselves.

And now, we are able to join the choirs of every time and place,

forever singing your praises:

Holy, Holy, Holy are you,

God of the desert way.

We join heaven and earth and praise your holy name.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who became a servant for us.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

When his hour had come, he took off his glory and tied humanity around his heart.

In the midst of friends and enemies, he kept the promises made to you, to love us to the end.

Every time we come to this table, our brokenness is made whole.

And we remember that mystery of our faith:

In remembrance, we mourn Christ’s death; we look to the day of resurrection;

and we await his return.

Blessing and Sharing Bread & Cup

In this hour of remembrance, send your Spirit upon these gifts of bread and cup.

As you cradle the bread in your gentleness, feed us with your love that we may be your servants in a shattered world.

(break bread and eat)

As you take the cup, pour out your tears of hope, that we might share your love with others.

(lift cup and drink)

Prayer

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 called your heart,
singing your joy forever and ever,
God of mountaintops and desert places, Holy are you. **Amen.**

BLESSING FOR LENT

As you step into Lent, hear these words:
You are loved by God, just as you are.
Called from the waters of baptism,
follow Christ's footsteps,
walk into the wilderness,
and pray in the desert.
Beloved of God,
come on the journey, Lent has begun.

POSTLUDE

"Oh How He Loves You and Me"

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