

FROM ASH TO ACTION: EVEN THE STONES CRY OUT

PALM SUNDAY PATH ECOFAITH SUMMIT OF THE UPPER MIDWEST CONGREGATIONAL TOOLKIT

Lent 2026

Organize.

March.

Be Christ's body now.



From Ash to Action: Even the Stones Cry Out is an array of resources providing multiple points of access and engagement.

Weekly themes flow from Lament through Repentance, Remembrance of Baptism, the Word, Offering, Passing the Peace, Communion & Sending.

Resources anticipate three weekly engagements: 'Worship', 'Faith Formation', and 'Action'.

~Worship resources support an intergenerational gathering around Word and ritual.

~Faith formation resources support intergenerational gatherings of discussion, movement, and practice - and include community building 'homework'.

~Action resources support individuals, families, or congregational groups engaging in action in the community.

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## WORSHIP

~Working Preacher's text reflections inspire sermons themed on organizing and community building. These live on Working Preacher's website here. [[link coming soon](#)]

~EcoFaith Summit Organizing Team's liturgical elements building up community around justice, centering creation care.

~Children's book suggestions engage Littles in weekly themes.

~Song suggestions from Bret Hesla and Songs from the Movement allow for full-body expressions of lament, repentance, remembrance, and action.

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FAITH FORMATION

~Deacon Dr. Diane Jacobson's text reflections and guiding questions support intergenerational discussions themed on creation care organizing and community building.

~David 'Agape' Scherer's embodied organizing practices build skills for self reflection and community organizing.

~Rev. Emily Meyer's spiritual practices ground awareness in Divine presence and develop resilience.

~Song suggestions from Bret Hesla and Songs from the Movement allow for full-body expressions of lament, repentance, remembrance, and action.

~Engagement suggestions turn faith formation into action in the broader community and daily life.

~To establish healthy boundaries and employ best practices with regard to including all ages in these conversations, please find guidelines and suggestions [here](#) and/or [here](#).

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## ACTION

~ISAIAH's 'Master Toolkit' provides focused trainings and specific actions leading up to and including Palm Sunday and beyond. These live on ISAIAH's platform, [here](#). [link coming soon]

~At-home and/or community engagement prompts conclude each Faith Formation session.

~Bulletin and newsletter blurbs are included at the conclusion of each week's resources.

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SHROVE TUESDAY FAITH FORMATION

*These rubrics are built for Shrove Tuesday (Feb. 17, 2026) - prior to Ash Wednesday!
Future weeks assume faith formation gatherings follow Sunday/worship.
This week includes three discussion prompts. Choose the one or two best suited to the make-up of your group.*

THEME

LAMENT - We grieve what is broken, lost, dead, and/or unredeemable.
We lament the ways we participate in dying and unredeemable systems and narratives.
We lament the loss of lives, safety, and 'normalcy' that accompanies the death of systems and corrosive ways of being.

GATHERING SONG

[Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood](#) - Nina Simone

GROUNDING TEXT

Read Joel 1:8-2:17 [redacted]:

⁸ Lament like a young bride dressed in sackcloth
for the husband of her youth.

⁹ ...The priests mourn...

¹⁰ The fields are devastated,

the ground mourns,

for the grain is destroyed,

the wine dries up.

¹¹ Be dismayed, you farmers;

[and] wail...

for the crops of the field are ruined.

¹² The vine withers...

all the trees of the field are dried up;

surely, joy withers away

among the people.

¹³ Put on sackcloth and lament, you priests;
wail, you ministers...

¹⁴ Consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly.

Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the Living God,
and cry out.

¹⁵ Alas for the day!
For the day of the Living God is near....

¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods;
the storehouses are desolate...

¹⁸ How the animals groan!

...

¹⁹ To you, O God, I cry,
for fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have burned
all the trees of the field.

²⁰ Even the wild animals cry to you
because the watercourses are dried up,
and fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness.

^{2:1} Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the Living God is coming, it is near—

² a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains,
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

³ Fire devours in front of them,
and behind them a flame burns.
Before them the land is like the garden of Eden,

but after them a desolate wilderness,
and nothing escapes them.

⁵ As with the rumbling of chariots,
like the crackling of a flame of fire
devouring the stubble,
like a powerful army
drawn up for battle.

⁶ Before them peoples are in anguish;
all faces grow pale.

⁷ Like warriors they charge;
like soldiers they scale the wall.
Each keeps to its own course;
they do not swerve from their paths...

⁹ They leap upon the city;
they run upon the walls;
they climb up into the houses;
they enter through the windows like a thief.

¹⁰ The earth quakes before them;
the heavens tremble.

The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their shining.

¹¹ [God speaks]...
Numberless are those who obey [the] command.
Truly the day of the Living God is great,
terrible indeed—who can endure it?

¹² Yet even now, says [our God],
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the [Living God,]
[who] is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ Who knows whether [God] will not turn and relent
and leave a blessing behind...

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast...

¹⁷ [Within the sanctuary]
 let the priests, the ministers of the [Living God], weep.
Let them say, “Spare your people, O God,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
 ‘Where is their God?’ ”

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[ALTERNATIVE: Here is Joel 1-2 in an Ash Wednesday [Litany for the Imposition of Ashes](#).]

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DISCUSSION

Chose one or two of the following discussion prompts.

DISCUSSION OPTION ONE:

TEXT REFLECTION

~by Deacon Dr. Diane Jacobson

Invite readers to ‘popcorn’ read with a new reader for each paragraph.

Follow each paragraph with a discussion of the prompt question.

Note responses to the asterisked prompt questions.¹

Lament is prayer. Our lament speaks to God particularly about evil, unfulfilled promises, personal and communal pain, and the world being seriously broken. I am writing this reflection on the day after Renee Nicole Good was killed by an ICE agent in Minneapolis. Lament is the truest response, the truest form of prayer. The prophet Joel understood this: Joel's lament is our lament; our lament is not new. In v.1:8 Joel calls for us to lament, 'like a young bride who has lost her betrothed'. Joel's strikingly poignant lament urges us to consider what it is we are now lamenting.

What calls forth our present laments?

**What is being lost? What are we losing?*

¹ Asterisked discussion prompts / spiritual practice prompts come from [Rev. Cameron Trimble](#) in [We Are All So Angry](#) (Piloting Faith, September 16, 2025).

What are our individual laments?

What are our communal laments?

Joel describes a locust plague – real or symbolic. Created beings are both the agents of destruction, but also, most assuredly, they become the victims of destruction. The fields, the grain, the vine, and the trees are as withered as the joy of the people (1:10-12). The animals - herds of cattle and wild animals, both perish and themselves voice lament (1:18, 20). Joel shows us parts of the created world as victims, lamenters, and truth tellers.

Where do we hear these voices today?

At the center of Joel's imagery of lament we find fire. In Joel, fire is the instrument of destruction. Listen to vv. 19-20:

¹⁹ To you, O God, I cry, for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have burned all the trees of the field.

²⁰ Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up,
and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Joel describes fire in front and behind, changing a land “like a garden of Eden” into “a desolate wilderness” (2:3). Destructive fire becomes the image of lament. I call to mind so many destructive fires the world has experienced. I think particularly of the California fires of 2025 which destroyed so much.

What fires - literal/specific and/or metaphorical/symbolic - are ‘changing the garden of Eden into a desolate wilderness’?

**What do we fear as landscapes are being destroyed and unalterably changed?*

And I am reminded by Jacob Soboroff in his book, [*Firestorm: The Great Los Angeles Fires and America's New Age of Disaster*](#) (HarperCollins), that we humans, through our contributions toward climate change, might well have contributed to causing the extremity of the fires. Thus, our lament becomes tied to confession.

Hearing the voices of creation and identifying our contributions to climate change, what do you confess?

Joel refuses to leave us there. In 2:12-14 he says this:

¹² Yet even now, says the [Living God], return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the [Living God, who] is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment.

¹⁴ Who knows whether [God] will not turn and relent
and leave a blessing behind...,
a grain offering and a drink offering for the [Holy One] your God?

*Where are our own laments ending?
Is our despair met by promised hope?
What do we long for?

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#### **DISCUSSION OPTION TWO: MEDITATION & REFLECTION**

*In [We Are All So Angry](#) (Piloting Faith, September 16, 2025), [Rev. Cameron Trimble](#) names the incredible amount and level of anger suffusing American society today and graciously invites us to explore the loss and grief that lie at anger's roots. 'We are angry because we are all losing things.' Yet, 'we are not grieving the same things. And so we do not grieve together.'*

*After reading Trimble's meditation, discuss her Reflection Questions:*

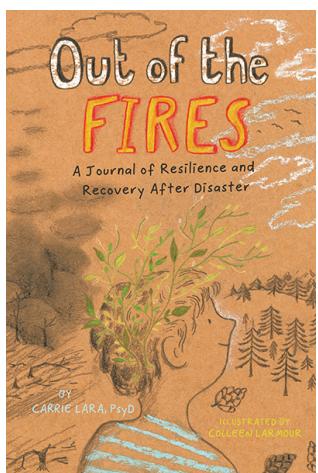
- \*Where do you feel anger most intensely in your life right now - and what loss might be living underneath it?
- \*What griefs have you carried alone that you wish could be held in community?
- \*How might your anger be asking for deeper witnessing, not judgement?

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DISCUSSION OPTION THREE: CHILDREN'S BOOK

Read:

[Out of the Fires: A Journal of Resilience and Recovery after Disaster](#) - Carrie Lara; Magination Press, 2023



Follow one or two of the book's journaling prompts at mixed-age tables/discussion groups.

Ask 'wondering' questions.

Listen attentively to/for stories:

- ~listen for anger in need of community
- ~lament in need of vocalization
- ~anxiety in need of a way to take action.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & EMBODIED ACTIVITY

Gather around a lit outdoor firepit or burn barrel with last year's Christmas tree boughs or palm branches, or other branches.

Let each person choose a branch.

Recall the asterisked prompts, above:

**What is being lost? What are we losing?*

**What do we fear as landscapes are being destroyed and unalterably changed?*

**What do we long for?*²

Invite each person to create a one or two word response to each:

I/we are losing_____.

I am afraid of (or because)_____.

I long for_____.

Holding their bough, share these three sentences aloud; then place boughs in the fire.

Reflect:

How does it feel to speak our lament, identify our fear, and share our longing out loud?

What action does our lament inspire?

Use these ashes for Ash Wednesday's imposition of ashes.

CLOSING SONG

[Optimistic](#) - Sounds of Blackness

² Asterisked discussion prompts / spiritual practice prompts come from [Rev. Cameron Trimble](#) in [We Are All So Angry](#) (Piloting Faith, September 16, 2025).

ASH WEDNESDAY ACTION

Each week we'll provide supplemental material for at-home faith formation: children's or teen books, short adult reads, meditations or spiritual practices and a local action inspired by the weekly theme.

ISAIAH'S CALL TO ACTION

[link coming soon]

AT-HOME SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Follow Rev. Cameron Trimble's Spiritual Practice: Trace the Grief Beneath the Flame - [When Grief Wears the Mask of Rage](#) (September 16, 2025)

COMMUNITY LISTENING PRACTICE

Listen for your own and other people's anger and grief - often expressed as complaints, grievances, frustrations, pet peeves, etc.

When possible, ask wondering questions.

Simply listen to understand and develop awareness of the link between anger and lament/grief.

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### INVITATION

*Each week we'll offer a bulletin/newsletter blurb to invite folx into faith formation gatherings*

Amidst chaos and fear, we join congregations across Minnesota on a Lenten path of community organizing and future-for-the-planet fire-building. This Shrove Tuesday (Feb. 17) we lament and practice deep listening as we explore the connections between loss, anger, and lament [and burn last year's (*palms/Christmas boughs*) to use as this year's Ash Wednesday ashes]. Discussions and activities will be inclusive of all ages. *[include date, time, & location]*

## ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

### THEME

LAMENT - We grieve what is broken, lost, dead, and/or unredeemable.  
We lament the ways we participate in dying and unredeemable systems and narratives.  
We lament the loss of lives, safety, and 'normalcy' that accompanies the death of systems and corrosive ways of being.

### PREACHING REFLECTIONS

Working Preacher's introduction and overview to their series, themes, and texts can be found [here](#).

### LITURGICAL ELEMENTS

#### When Grief Wears the Mask of Rage

Holy One,  
You who hear the cries behind our clenched fists,  
who see the tears we refuse to let fall—  
meet us in our fury.  
Not to scold it. Not to silence it. But to soften it.  
To show us the mourning waiting beneath.

We are a people hurting in different ways,  
but hurting all the same.

We do not know how to find each other across the trenches of our grief.  
Help us remember that we were never meant to mourn alone.  
That compassion does not require agreement.  
That healing can begin with a single shared breath.

Make us brave enough to grieve together.

And in doing so, may we find our way back to love.

Amen.

- Rev. Cameron Trimble, Piloting Faith, September 16, 2025

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A Prayer for Grief

God of all,
You see the pain we carry—
For our lives, for our nation, for our world.

We mourn the losses that feel too great to bear,
The silence that feels too heavy to hold.
Meet us in our grief, O Lord.
Hold us in Your love,
And remind us that we do not grieve alone.
Help us to honor what has been lost,
While trusting in the possibility of what can still be.
Strengthen our resolve to work for justice and peace,
Even in the face of despair.
May our grief deepen our compassion
And guide us toward healing and wholeness.
Amen.

- Rev. Cameron Trimble, Piloting Faith, January 17, 2025

EMBODIED PRACTICE

[A Litany for the Imposition of Ashes - Joel 1 & 2](#) - Rev. Emily Meyer, January 15, 2026

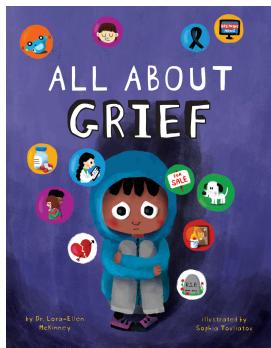
MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

[God Save This Breaking Land](#) - Bret Hesla

*see 'alternative lyrics' to empower more human agency

[Somewhere to Begin](#) - Sara Thomsen

CHILDREN'S BOOK



[All About Grief](#) by [Lora-Ellen McKinney \(Author\)](#)

Dr. Lora-Ellen McKinney, a psychologist who has worked with children experiencing grief, answers the big questions that surround feelings of loss. This engaging handbook looks at grief from many different angles, examining how it influences our emotions and relationships, our brains and bodies, and our behavior. Preteen readers will get to know when and why we are most likely to grieve, what purpose grief serves, and strategies for healing and finding hope moving forward.

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