



### Opening Prayer

*Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### Gathering Question

Group members take turns answering the gathering question, designed to help folks get to know each other better in classic ice-breaker fashion. Each one shares briefly before the group takes up the primary conversation for this particular time together.

*Describe a recent or memorable time when you deliberately were patient. What about a time when patience was extended to you?*

### Communal Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:12–13

*So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.*

### Sharing and Conversation

Sharing among the group unfolds organically, prompted by conversation starters for each session and guided by generous listening so that all members of the group have opportunity to participate.

*Is there a test you are facing during this Lenten season of reflection and repentance?*

*How are you opening to the faithful God who provides a way out for you?*

### Closing Prayer

Each gathering concludes with a time of prayer. Leadership roles are shared on a volunteer basis among group participants.

Adapted from Steven Charleston's *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage* (Minneapolis: Broadleaf Books, 2021).

**One:** *The days are surely coming when what burdens you will be lifted from your shoulders, when your pain will be gone, when your sorrow will be no more.*

**All:** *As surely as the dawn, as a promise kept, as a hope fulfilled. Nothing will stop it.*

**One:** *Nothing will hold it back—not our past, not our current circumstances.*

**All:** *A gentle but insistent healing, a redemption, a fresh start, a renewal of the heart. It will change everything.*

**One:** *This is no prophecy, but a pattern, for mercy and forgiveness always return to find us, love always seeks us out among the crowd, and the Spirit will never relent until all her children are safe once more.*

**All:** *And so we say with all our hearts and minds, "Amen. Come, Holy Spirit."*