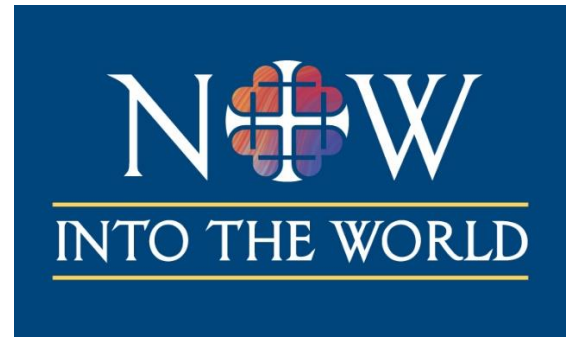


## Stones on the Journey

*"Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things have been accomplished?"*



### **Reflection by Julie Simonton –**

A stone sits on my desk. It has for many, many years now. Regardless the desk, the church, the city, the state – this stone accompanies me ... and I it – because it's very life recalls me to of one of the most pivotal thin moments God and I have ever spent together. The moment was profoundly intimate and launched God and me both, I think, into a world of new relationships and new callings. A world of asking each other lots of questions.

The thing about this stone is how common it was that day I picked it up on a hike in the Sinai. Like all the others around it. The other thing about this stone is how extraordinary it is now. Children as well as adults walk in, see it, and immediately move forward to hold it in their hands. Questions come. Stories follow. Wonderings bubble about the stone's life. They and I are drawn deeper into the mystery of God and into the questions of God's world.

Today's Gospel heeds warnings about journeying amongst crumbled stones. The words of impending war, natural disasters, faithless leaders, and coming destruction in this reading draw the Disciples and their energies into a focus on fear. Just as many of us are now from our all-too-similar daily news cycle.

Jesus' message, though, is one of profound intimacy and hope. He teaches us here to pivot away from our daily fears and instead look up and toward the Kingdom that is coming. Indeed, when we look up from the news of destruction around us – like me seeing the stone in the Sinai –we see what seems to be common but is actually extraordinary. One need only look this week, for instance, to the tables and tables of food set up in Chico, California to feed Camp Fire victims.

God calls us to use the gifts God gives us to the do the work God calls us to do. What are the gifts God offers you and how may they be returned? Are they stones in your path – a restless longing to serve, questions about financial offerings, a desire to move deeper in relationship to God – that you can pick up, embrace, and move deeper into the wondering mysteries of God's world?

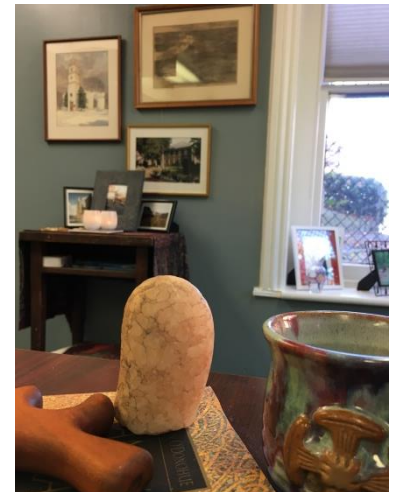
Move toward the stones that seem to have crumbled at your feet along your journey. Pick them up, hold them, ask questions, and wonder at the prolific common and extraordinary mysteries of God that abound. God is asking you a question, too.

*Julie Simonton is diocesan director of congregational development and stewardship.*

*She especially delights in church parking lot conversations when the Holy Spirit begins to bubble and folks authentically engage with where Jesus is calling us to use the gifts God gives us to do the work God call us to do.*

**November 18<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Proper 28 | Mark 13: 1-8



### Reflection Questions

- What has been a pivotal, 'thin' moment between you and God?
- What questions did you ask God?
- What questions did God ask you?
- What common thing has transformed to be extraordinary in your life?
- What are the gifts God offers you and how may they be returned?

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