Fifth Sunday in Lent March 29, 2020

Lent is a season of preparation and renewal. The color purple has become a symbol of the extravagance of God. The music of the season reflects our need to prepare for God's forgiveness and renewal, which draws us into God's forgiving action toward humanity and all of creation.

Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.

Pre- Service Music

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Arise in body or spirit and face the baptismal font

Confession and Forgiveness

- Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who gathers us in the wilderness to redeem us, anoint us, and make us new.
- **G** Amen
- ▲ In these forty days, let us be honest, confess our sin, and receive God's promise of mercy.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

- **P** God at the margins,
- ☑ We have wandered far from your home; again and again, we lose our way. We turn inward, afraid of the world around us. We forget that you have saved your people before and promise to do so again. Do not remember the deeds of our past, but turn our faces toward the future, where your forgiveness is sure, your welcome is clear, and your love overflows. Amen
- P Like a hen who gathers her chicks, God embraces you in tender care. Like manna in the desert, God feeds you with surprising mercy. Like a loving parent, God runs to meet you again this day, forgiving your sins for the sake of + Christ, leading you from death into life. Amen

Greeting

- ▶ The grace and mercy of God, who in Christ bears our burdens and saves us from sin through the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- **G** And also with you.



Prayer of the Day

- A Let us pray ... Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death.
- ☑ Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."

L A reading from Ezekiel:

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

L The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.



Psalm 130

¹Out | of the depths I cry to | you, O Lord;
²O Lord, | hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my | supplication.
³If you were to keep watch | over sins, O Lord, | who could stand?
⁴Yet with you | is forgiveness, in order that you | may be feared.
⁵I wait for you, O Lord; | my soul waits; in your word | is my hope.
⁶My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning, more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

⁷O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is | steadfast love; with the Lord there is plen- | teous redemption.

⁸For the Lord shall | redeem Israel

from | all their sins. 🕅

Second Reading

Romans 8:6-11

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

L A reading from **Romans**:

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Speak, O Lord



Gospel Reading

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

P The Holy Gospel, according to **John**.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." ¹¹After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹²The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus began to

weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

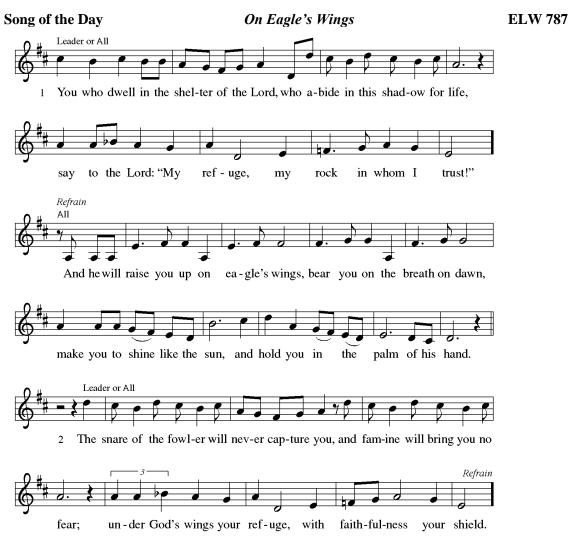
- **P** The Gospel of the Lord.
- **G** Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Time

All children [including infants] and youth who desire to come forward for the children's sermon are welcomed and encouraged to do so. Parents/caregivers are welcome to accompany their child during the children's message. There may be a time of dance and celebration that is offered.

Message

Silence for reflection



Leader or All



Prayers

A Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.
A brief silence

A brief silence.

▲ God of life, bind your faithful people into one body. Enliven the church with your Spirit and bless the work of those who work for its renewal. Accomplish your work of salvation in us and through us, for the sake of the world. Guide the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church, including *Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants, David and Roseanne our synod companion churches, Harbor of Grace Lutheran Church, Muskegon; Church of Christ, Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken.*

(sung) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.

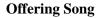
- ▲ God of life, you love the world you have made and you grieve when creation suffers. Restore polluted lands and waterways. Heal areas of the world ravaged by storms, floods, wildfires, droughts, or other natural disasters. Bring all things to new life.
- (sung) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.
- ▲ God of life, show redemption to all who watch and wait with eager expectation: those longing for wars to cease, those waiting for immigration paperwork to finalize, those seeking election, and those in dire need of humanitarian relief. Come quickly with your hope Protect the lives of those who serve in the military: *Parker Stancil (Freedlunds), Cody and Myrina Crawford (Clements), Alexis and Dylan Kelmer, Austin and Aaron Endsley, Carlos Garcia (Burdicks), Brandon and Stevi Kay Miller (McManaway), Brady Rudesill (Hansen), Joel Taggart (Varkulas), Kayla and Lance Champaco (Pohls), and Julia Ehredt (Schrieners, Halsteads)*
- (sung) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.
- ▲ God of life, fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. You weep with those who grieve. Unbind all who are held captive by anxiety, despair, or pain, including *Gary Burdick, Penny Burdick, James Colvin, Kay Corrigan, Irene Corr, Luke Domke, Allison Domke, Sue Eifler, Mike Fruth, Karl Golnek, Roger Greeley, Delmer Hansen, Larry Hansen, Mike Hoppe, Phyllis Hoppe, Lee Hoppe, Richard Meade, Michael Pruitt, Mike Shoemaker, Tim Sullivan, George Ulrich Jr., Jenni Ulrich, Rusty Wilkins, Cameron, Vicky, Nora, Lynnze, and Tristin; safe travel for Zach and Matthias from Europe; prayers for more servers at Grace.*
- (*sung*) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.
- ▲ God of all generations, we praise you and thank you for children of all ages. From those who are days old to our oldest member here at Grace of 100 years old. We ask you to help us be open to your direction as we seek a Youth and Family Committee chair. We thank you for our interim chair.
- (sung) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.
- WE ARE PREPARED TO BE ... FSL-10

▲ God of life, we give thanks for opportunities for this congregation to collaborate with our community in caring for the needs of our neighbors. Strengthen our ties with other local congregations, agencies, and services. Hear us now as we lift our individual prayers that are spoken aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

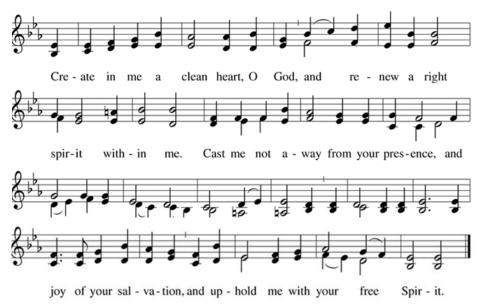
Here other intercessions may be offered.

- ▲ God of insight, you call out to those who are asleep and awaken them to new life with you. We give thanks for your saints. Join us together with them as your children in this world and the next.
- (sung) Oh, Draw Me, Lord (x3) And I'll run after You.
- According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.
- G Amen.

Offering of Gifts and Music



Create in Me a Clean Heart



Offering Prayer

- ▲ Let us pray . . . Generous God, you feed us with the harvest of the land and you provide for our every need.
- Receive our gifts of money, imagination, and labor, and transform them into a feast that welcomes all, in Jesus Christ, our host and our guest. Amen

Sharing the Peace of God

P The peace of Christ be with you.

G And also with you.

(We share the peace of Christ with one another.)

Great Thanksgiving

- **₽** The Lord be with you.
- **C** And also with you.
- Lift up your hearts.
- **G** We lift them unto you.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

- **G** It is right to give our thanks and praise
- It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.
- **G** Amen.

Table Prayer

- P Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide
- **G** together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we bless and magnify you.
- P You led your people Israel through the desert and provided them water from the rock.
- We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.
- In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection,

• we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

- P Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:
- wash away our sin, that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.
- P Through Christ all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.
- **G** Amen.

Lord's Prayer

- In confidence, let us pray in the words our Savior gave us:
- Our Father in heaven, holy be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

- ▶ All who are hungry, come and eat the bread of life. All who are thirsty, come and drink the cup of salvation.
- **G** Thanks be to God.

Communion at Grace

All who are present are invited to receive Holy Communion. This sacrament is a gift to all who come with open hands and open hearts to the presence of Jesus.

Bread is served by the Pastor. Wine is served from a common cup by the Assisting Minister.

If you need gluten free bread, please let the Pastor know when you come forward.

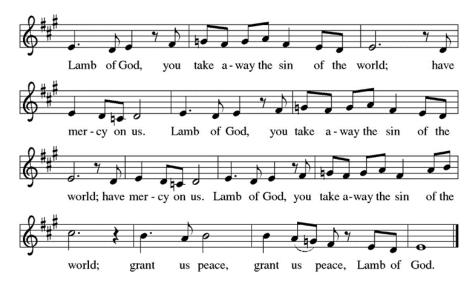
If you prefer wine from the *pouring chalice* in an individual cup, take an empty cup from the tray and have it filled by the Worship Assistant. Return the individual chalice/cup to the basket provided.

P Grape Juice is provided in the pre-filled cups in the center of the serving tray.

A Verbal Blessing may be given by the Pastor, if you do not wish to commune.

If you wish communion b rought to you in the pew, please notify the usher.

Lamb of God



Sending of Communion Minister (If needed)

A Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *homebound*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

G Amen.

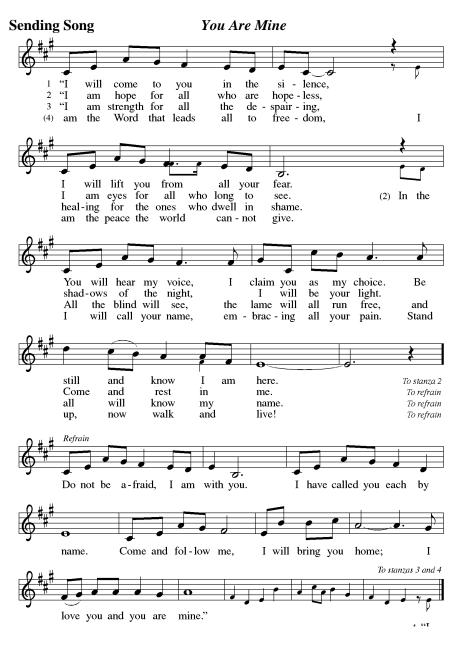
Prayer after Communion

- Tender and merciful one, at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing, turning our emptiness into joy.
- Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to be ministers of reconciliation, mending broken hearts, working for justice, and striving for peace among all people, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mission Minutes

Blessing

- God, who fills the creation with abundance, Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness, Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us, + bless you and bring you to life everlasting.
- G Amen.



ELW 581

Dismissal

A Reconciled to God through Christ, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.C Thanks be to God.

Can These Bones Live?

Before it is anything else, today's gospel is an up-close, deeply personal story of grief. Even the movements seem familiar: Jesus is on the way, then present to each sister. At last, he stands outside the tomb of his friend who has died, and whom the community mourns.

In today's first reading, we are swept up with Ezekiel and deposited into a wilderness valley full of dry, dead bones. In the valley, God asks Ezekiel, "Mortal, can these bones live?" (Ezek. 37:3). Of Lazarus in our gospel reading for today, we, like Ezekiel, might also respond: "O Lord GOD, you know." How can dry bones come to life? And how could a dead man ever possibly live again? Indeed, we might wonder if it will be enough, ever *could* be enough, that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). At the same time, we easily understand and echo Martha and Mary, who were both accusing angrily and confessing hopefully when they said, "Lord, if you had been here . . ." (John 11:21, 32).

As John tells it, Lazarus has been in the tomb four days by the time Jesus arrives. By then the whole village is awash in grief. When Jesus weeps too, they are amazed at his loving devotion: here is a strong sign of connection, a visible reminder that Jesus is truly present *among* human community, not *above* it. In the end, Jesus does what we could never imagine was even a remote possibility. He calls to the one entombed; he summons life, like the Spirit blowing over the valley in Ezekiel. God is up to something! Here, a sign of signs: God is making all things new.

New life is emerging from the tombs of our world and from the shadowed corners of our hearts. May Jesus' resurrecting power be felt deep in our own bones!