

FIFTH SUNDAY_{IN} LENT



March 29, 2020

St. John's Lutheran Church
Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 29, 2020

Welcome as we join together in spirit to worship our Lord and pray for our world. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins, To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

Kyrie

A In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For this holy house, and for all who offer here and at home their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C **Amen**

Prayer of the Day

(Prayers and lessons can be found on the Celebrate insert)

Lessons and Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and abounding in steadfast love.

Holy Gospel

P The Holy Gospel according to John the ninth chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

(after the reading)

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

Message ~ Rev. Ela J. Robertson

Have all of you had the opportunity to read or listen to the Bible readings for today? I hope so. If not take some time now and in the spirit of the practice of Lectio Divina or 'Dwelling in the Word' ask yourself two questions: *What stands out as speaking to me today?* and *What stands out as speaking to the world today?*

Go ahead. I really want you to have your own thoughts before I offer mine.

The core of the Bible readings for Lent help us to understand the nature of the Spirit and the nature of the mortal being. They ask, "What is Life and what is Death." and they point us toward the celebration of the Easter mystery that Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ is alive.

The readings for today explore even more pointedly, "What is Death in Life?" Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry bones is a graphic illustration of this. The prophet is speaking to the Israelites in exile, driven away from their land to Babylon which he likens as a grave. They are isolated from everything they knew as their life and way of worship. So the prophet provides this vision, a vision of hope and revitalization. He wants to let them know that he understands they might feel that their life has been sucked dry from them. They no longer have any sense of purpose or even of individual or communal identity. They lack spirit and hope. They may as well just be a pile of bones in the desert with no vision of ever coming together as a people again.

God tells the prophet to speak to his people and tell them first to 'Listen to the Word of God' and second that 'Ruach, breath, the Spirit will enter you and you shall live.' Then the individual identity of each set of bones is properly restored to itself, with flesh, tendons and breath of the Spirit. Through this vision that God gives Ezekiel, he illustrates to the people that it is the Word and the Spirit that bring life to a life that feels like death - *that just seems dead*.

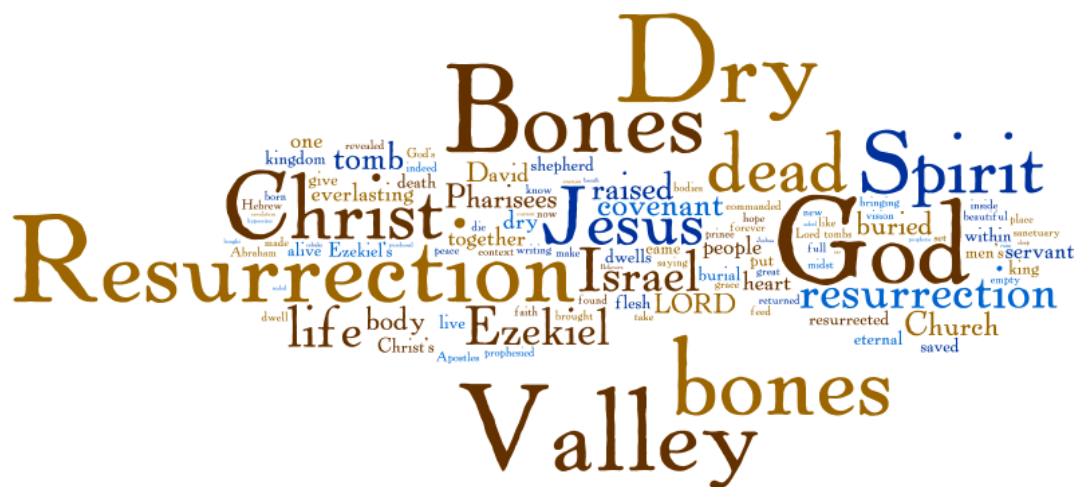
We can believe that God could literally restore a valley of bones and we can know that through that powerful image, through the power of envisioning, God's people are given hope and vitality. God recreates the individual by the proper alignment of everything that makes us whole: Body- bone, flesh, tendon; Mind - the ability to hear and discern the Word; and Spirit.

American Express has an ad jingle for their credit card "*Don't live life without it.*" Ezekiel and John's by-line might be: "*Word and Spirit, You can't live life without it.*" John begins his gospel - *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the word was with God.* For John, Jesus Christ is the Word and by the power of the spirit is the source of life. Who is the Spirit then? Travis suggests, "for Paul the reception of God's grace is identical to the reception of God's Holy Spirit". Hebrews 8:11 "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you." The Spirit is the source of life in living and life in death, the source of revitalization and renewal of our life on this earth and the promise through Christ of life eternal.

A couple of weeks ago as we looked for words that stood out for us in the reading, someone asked what does the word ‘flesh’ mean?

In the Ezekiel reading, the word translated ‘flesh’ is a blessing. From a collection of dry bones an individual human being is recreated, given flesh, given form, given identity, yet without the breath of the Spirit does not live. Travis reminds us that for Paul, “Jesus died that his followers might become who they truly are, who God created (and can recreate them) to be.”

Thanks be to God. Amen
Pastor Ela



The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of
heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under
Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was
buried. He descended into Hell. On the third day
he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is
seated at the right hand of the Father. He will
come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic
Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession ~ *Celebrate insert*

The Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed 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.**

Offertory

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Prayer

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through
the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy
you would strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and
fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with
mercy and grace. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give
you peace.

C Amen.

Pastor: Reverend Ela J. Robertson Phone 740-338-7123
Church Office: 935-2032 **Email us at** stjohnco@embarqmail.com
Website: www.stjohnsbelleville.org
St. John's Christian Day Care: 935-2959

While our church building remains closed to meetings and worship the church office will be open 8:00am till 1:00pm on Monday, March 30 and again on Thursday, April 2. Phone and email messages are also being checked throughout the week.

The April newsletter will be mailed/emailed to members by next Friday. The pastor is including the latest update on when we may be able to open our doors again, along with other pertinent information.

YTD Income \$ 47,434.80 Expense \$ 38,220.05
Net Income \$9,214.75
Parking Lot Donations ~ \$3,560.00

Daycare
YTD Income ~ \$ 63,693.20 YTD Expense ~ \$ 60,239.14
Net Income \$ 3,454.06



Celebrate

Fifth Sunday in Lent

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In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

Prayer of the Day

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."

The 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."

Psalm

Psalm 130; refrain, Ps. 130:5



I wait for you, O LORD; in your word is my hope.

Out ¹ of the depths

I cry to ¹ you, O LORD;

²**O LORD, ¹ hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my ¹ supplication.

³If you were to keep watch ¹ over sins,

O LORD, ¹ who could stand?

⁴**Yet with you ¹ is forgiveness,**

in order that you ¹ may be feared. **R**

⁵I wait for you, O LORD; ¹ my soul waits;

in your word ¹ is my hope.

⁶**My soul waits for the Lord**

more than those who keep watch ¹ for the morning,

more than those who keep watch ¹ for the morning.

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is ¹ steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plen- ¹ teous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall ¹ redeem Israel**

from ¹ all their sins. **R**

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.

To 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.

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.

Now 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.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

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.

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 (*like Hans Nielsen Hauge, whom we commemorate today*). Accomplish your work of salvation in us and through us, for the sake of the world. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

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 (*especially*). Bring all things to new life. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of life, you weep with those who grieve. Unbind all who are held captive by anxiety, despair, or pain (*especially*). Fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, we give thanks for opportunities for this congregation to collaborate with our community in caring for the needs of our neighbors. (*Particular ministry partnerships may be named.*) Strengthen our ties with other local congregations, agencies, and services. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of life, you are our resurrection. We remember all those who have died and trust that, in you, they will live again (*especially*). Breathe new life into our dry bones, that we, too, might live with you forever. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 143. **Tuesday** (commemoration of John Donne, poet, died 1631) 2 Kings 4:18-37. **Wednesday** Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41. **Thursday** Psalm 31:9-16. **Friday** Philippians 1:21-30. **Saturday** (commemoration of Benedict the African, confessor, died 1589) Mark 10:32-34. **Passion/Palm Sunday** Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14—27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54.

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