

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

May we all experience the peace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Before our worship: listen to and speak quietly with God.....

during worship, hear God speak to you...

following worship, speak to one another in love.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020 5th SUNDAY OF LENT INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

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.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING MUSIC Amazing Grace Jean Fjelsted, bell solo
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive 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.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*SONG (785) When Peace Like a River (It is Well With My Soul)

**1 When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll,
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
it is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well (it is well)
with my soul, (with my soul,)
it is well, it is well with my soul.**

- 2** Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and has shed his own blood for my soul.
It is well (it is well)
with my soul, (with my soul,)
it is well, it is well with my soul.
- 3** He lives--oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
It is well (it is well)
with my soul, (with my soul,)
it is well, it is well with my soul.
- 4** Lord, hasten the day when our faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
even so it is well with my soul.
It is well (it is well)
with my soul, (with my soul,)
it is well, it is well with my soul.

*APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God
And the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all. **And also with you**

KYRIE (p. 138)

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

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

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. **Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

***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.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

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."

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, "Prophecy 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, "Prophecy 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

1 Out | of the depths I cry to | you, O Lord;

2 O 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?

4 Yet with you | is forgiveness, in order that you | may be feared.

5 I wait for you, O Lord; | my soul waits; in your word | is my hope.

6 My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning, more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

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

8 For 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.

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.

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

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.

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.

Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

MESSAGE

When was a time you felt God breathing new life into you?

Once upon a time in a land far, far away, there was a pandemic. There was a virus that threatened the lives of everyone in the land especially the very young and the old. The wise leaders of the land told their people that for the good of all, everyone should isolate themselves. They should not gather in groups. They should practice something called “social distancing” what ever that is. This is because the disease was very contagious and they could pass

the illness to one another. If everyone got the disease many would survive but others would not.

But isolation was hard for the people of this land. They were used to being free. Free to do what they want, when they want, where they want and with whom and with as many as they want. Their land had always being pretty much free of such a contagious diseases. So they weren't used to it. Weren't use to the restrictions. It was very frustrating for them. People were anxious not only about catching the virus but being cooped up, forced to live with restrictions. They hated restrictions.

If they were told to gather in groups they probably wouldn't do it but now that they were told to keep apart they wanted nothing more than to gather and it frustrated and depressed them.

The thing that they valued more than anything was their freedom was it was being threatened. And no one knew when they would be free again. Would they ever be free again?

The people of Judea, God's chosen people were captured and exiled from the land that God had given them. They were brought to a foreign land. They were taken from their homes, their friends, many times from their families. Taken from the land that God had promised them, the land, the promise that had taken many generations to be fulfilled. Not only were they depressed about being conquered and exiled to a foreign land but they worried that God could not hear their cries away from the promised land, away from their home. They also worried, had God turned his back on them?

The way that the people felt about their life was captured by God in the vision given to Ezekiel. Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones, very dry bones a vision of hopelessness. What would be more hopeless than dry bones. That's how the people felt no hope.

Ezekiel is asked the question "*Mortal, can these bones live?*"

Actually this is not a question the people were asking. The people believed that those very dry bones could not live, the bones were dead and couldn't return to life. So they wouldn't have even asked that question.

Ezekiel answered, "*O Lord God, you know.*"

We would hope that what he meant by "*O Lord God, you know*" that only God's infinite wisdom could answer that question.

I wonder if Ezekiel doesn't want to say what he believes, which is, no, so he says "*O Lord God, you know*".

I don't think we are at that point in our situation, I mean, the people of the land weren't at that point but they understood the analogy.

It is very interesting. You know the story, all those bones all those dry bones, the parts of the body come back together. The bones come back together skin even covers the bones. But it's not enough.

If you think about it even though the bodies all came together nothing had changed. It isn't until the spirit, the spirit of God enters in, that life is brought back, hope is brought back.

That's why God gives them that message through the prophet Ezekiel. The people in darkness see a great light.

In the same way, it happened to the people of the land. Nothing changed physically. They were still under quarantine. People were still catching the virus. Yet when the spirit of God entered in, everything changed. The people of the land saw not a valley of dry land but hope. Hope like the hope of spring during a dry and Barron winter.

The people of the land believed that there was hope even though they couldn't see it, yet. Not yet.

When was a time you felt God breathing new life into you?

We live in this challenging time with COVID 19, We may only see a valley of dry bones. We may not be able to see the end of this, weeks, months, who knows. But today God brings us, you and me a message of hope. May the spirit fill you with hope in these days even before anything changes.

Remember the old spiritual "them bones gonna rise again.

May the peace of God that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

SONG (666) What Wondrous Love Is This

**1 What wondrous love is this,
 O my soul, O my soul!
 What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
 What wondrous love is this
 that caused the Lord of bliss
 to bear the dreadful curse
 for my soul, for my soul,
 to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?**

- 2** When I was sinking down,
sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down
beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.
- 3** To God and to the Lamb
I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb,
who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.
- 4** And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free,
I'll sing God's love for me,
and through eternity
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and through eternity I'll sing on.

APOSTLES CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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

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.

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.

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.**

LORD'S PRAYER

SONG (504) A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

**1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a sword and shield victorious;
he breaks the cruel oppressor's rod**

**and wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe
has sworn to work us woe!
With craft and dreadful might
he arms himself to fight.
On earth he has no equal.**

**2 No strength of ours can match his might!
We would be lost, rejected.
But now a champion comes to fight,
whom God himself elected.
You ask who this may be?
The Lord of hosts is he!
Christ Jesus, mighty Lord,
God's only Son, adored.
He holds the field victorious.**

**3 Though hordes of devils fill the land
all threat'ning to devour us,
we tremble not, unmoved we stand;
they cannot overpow'r us.
Let this world's tyrant rage;
in battle we'll engage!
His might is doomed to fail;
God's judgment must prevail!
One little word subdues him.**

**4 God's Word forever shall abide,
no thanks to foes, who fear it;
for God himself fights by our side
with weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house,
goods, honor, child, or spouse,
though life be wrenched away,
they cannot win the day.
The kingdom's ours forever!**

BENEDICTION

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

SENDING MUSIC

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