

Ascension Lutheran Church

Fifth Sunday in Lent..... March 29, 2020

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

CALL TO WORSHIP

We have been in the wilderness—
Discerning and working, seeking and dreaming.

We have been in the wilderness—
Grieving and wondering, praying and hoping.

We have been in the wilderness—
Longing and running, creating and waiting.

We have been in the wilderness, but we have not been alone; for God walks with us,
every step of the way.
So let us worship the God of our darkest nights and our brightest days.

Let us worship Holy God.

HYMN

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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."

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, "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, prophecy, 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 prophecy, 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."

The Word of the Lord.

[C] Thanks be to God.

Psalm 130 (*sung in unison*)

I wait for you, O LORD; in your word is my hope. (Ps. 130:5)

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 plenteous 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.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

The holy gospel according to John, the eleventh chapter.

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.

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

SERMON

The Rev. Christina Auch

HYMN

APOSTLES CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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 into hell.**

**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 before the petitions are prayed.

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. 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. Fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. We pray especially for those we name aloud now or silently in our hearts...

Mary Allen (Karen Hubbard's friend), **Kathy** Backof (Donna Lilly's friend), **Dan** Birch (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Carolyn** Blitz (Bill Bridges' friend), **Kathy** Bradley (friend of Bill Bridges), **Jennings** Brooks (Jim Wilson's roommate), **Chris** Carman (Judy Bridges' friend), **Betty** Connor (Karen Hubbard's friend), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges Aunt), **Joan** Craig (Clarann Schiavo's friend), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams' friend), **Ann** Fitzsimmons (Steve and Jenny White's friend), **Evan** Greene (Allen Philbeck friend's son), **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **Markye** and Carl Greenwald (DeBells' friends), **The Holida Family** (friend of Lisa Philbeck), **Michael** Huntsinger (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mack** Jenkins (Dave Williams' friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Cathy** Kingsborough (friend of the Lacy/Smolzer family), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Kevin** Lilly (Vicky Galloway's 2nd cousin), **Heather** Lyerly (Rose Cook's great niece), **Cathy** Lyerly (Rose Cook's sister-in-law), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Jamison** McGill (Pastor Christina's friends' son), **Bernice** McDaniels (Dean Davis' daughter), **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Charlotte** Morin (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Tommy** Price (Edith Kelly's nephew), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Harold** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Lori** Rosamond (Pastor Christina's stepsister), **Pastor Eric** Sellers (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Zuzana** Rybnicek (The Blalock's friend), **Jan** Tucker (Ozark bank employee), **The Vonbehren Family** (Barbara Davis' cousins), **Renee** Walton, **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Eric** West (Bob and Vickie Jones' son-in-law), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Ann** Williams (Lauren Williams Sherbert's grandmother), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt), **Denise and Savannah** Yount (Sandra Waldrop's friends)

Members: **Dean** Davis, **Lin** Washburn, **Dot** Paul, **Bob** Bryant, **Jane** Sneed, **William** Coyne, **Jim** Wilson, **Steve** Eckard, **Sandy** Harman, **Bobbie** Johnson, **Patricia** DuBose and **Bobby** Jones

In Undergraduate College: Emma Auch, Brooke Buchanan, Parker Hart, Elizabeth Hoffman, Samantha Hoffman, Jacob Stone

Those Awaiting Arrival of Children: Jack Blalock and Ally Bruser (Greg and Chrystal Blalock's son and daughter-in-law); Emma and Patrick Budzinski (daughter and son-in-law of Greg and Chrystal Blalock).

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. 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. 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.

OFFERTORY

Make a one time or recurring gift using the website or the GivePlus app on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express. Or mail your regular tithe or offering to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.**

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

HYMN

DISMISSAL

Go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: All face to face, in person gatherings at Ascension are canceled through Sunday, May 10.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Online Giving is now available. Make a one time or recurring gift using the website or the GivePlus app on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

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