

March 26,
2023
Fifth Sunday in
Lent
ELW Holy
Communion
Setting Three
(P. 138)



**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.

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GATHERING

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.**

GATHERING SONG *Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing (ELW #886)*
(VV. 1, 3, 4)

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

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.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW P. 139)

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from Ezekiel.

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, "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."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 130

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;

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.**

⁵I 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.**

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love; with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall redeem Israel from all their sins.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11

A reading from Romans.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDRENS MESSAGE



GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."²⁸ When 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."²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ The 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.³² When 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."³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."³⁵ Jesus began to weep.³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.³⁹ Jesus 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."⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me.⁴² I 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."⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"⁴⁴ The 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."⁴⁵ Many 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

HYMN OF THE DAY *As Your Spirit in the Desert (ACS #923)*



1 As your Spir - it in the des - ert led the Christ to
 2 As your fire and cloud - y pil - lar Is - rael's tribes to
 3 Though wild beasts may lurk in shad - ow, and dire thirst may
 4 Through the nar - row gate now draw us, past all em - pire's
 5 God of des - ert, God of prom - ise, you have bid us



dust and stone, so in - still our hearts with cour - age now to
 Ca - naan led, may your pres - ence be our com - fort, may your
 sear and sting, you have prom - ised liv - ing wa - ters wait - ing
 pull and strife, where be - yond our fear and cling - ing stands the
 jour - ney on through the days of dust and dark - ness to the



cross where Christ has gone. Let us cross in - to the
 man - na be our bread. Let us cross in - to the
 for us at the spring. Let us cross out of the
 thresh - old of new life. Let us cross out of the
 ris - ing of the dawn. Let us cross out of the



wil - der - ness so to walk where Christ has gone.
 wil - der - ness with God's man - na as our bread.
 wil - der - ness to the wa - ters of the spring.
 wil - der - ness to the thresh - old of new life.
 wil - der - ness to the ris - ing of the dawn.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: ROSEVILLE, Michael D. Costello, b. 1979
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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

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

You have breathed into us the breath of life. Enliven your church.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You weep when we weep. Be present with those who grieve or who are troubled by illness. You hear us when we call to you. Deliver us from the depths of our despair, and free us from the worries that bind us.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your Spirit of life dwells in our assembly. Bless the music ministries of this congregation and all who lead us in hymns of praise and thanksgiving and in songs of lament and prayer.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE ~ The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING SONG *Create in Me a Clean Heart (ELW #186)*

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray... **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

MEAL (ELW P. 144)

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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**

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God (ELW #146)*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray...**Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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.

SENDING SONG *You Are the Way (ELW #758) (VV. 1, 2, 3)*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tech for Fisher today is Jared Solhiem
- 12:30-2:30 PM 1st Communion Class at BLC
- March 27th BLC Book Club
- March 29th 6:00 PM Lenten Supper at Bygland
6:30 PM Confirmation kids meet with Pastor in the Sanctuary
7:00 PM Lenten Services at Bygland
- April 2nd 9:00 AM Worship at Bygland
10:00 AM Sunday School/FLC Easter Egg Hunt
11:00 AM Worship at Fisher
- April 5th 5:00 PM 1st Communion class Bread Baking
- April 6th 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service at Fisher with 1st Communion
- April 7th 7:00 PM Good Friday Service at Bygland
- April 9th 7:00 AM Easter Worship at Bygland/ Pancake Breakfast following
10:00 AM Easter Worship at Fisher
- Bulletins are printed on Wednesdays. If you need an announcement added, please email the office before then.

GOSPEL MESSAGE
March 26, 2023
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT
Coming and Going

There is a lot of coming and going in today's gospel. Mary and Martha send a messenger to Jesus with news that Lazarus is ill. Jesus and his disciples do not go right away, but eventually they come to Martha after Lazarus has died. We learn that many had come to console the sisters. Martha proclaims Jesus "the Messiah, the Son of God, is the one coming into the world" (John 11:27). She then goes to get Mary, who comes quickly to Jesus. Mary is weeping, and so are those who come with her. When Jesus asks where Lazarus is, they invite him to come and see. They all go to the tomb. With all of this coming and going, it is not surprising that Jesus tells Lazarus to come out and that Jesus commands others to unbind him so he can go.



Lazarus emerging from the tomb is a remarkable moment, but just as remarkable are the connections of all of this story's coming and going with our daily lives. Our health comes and goes. Jobs come and go. People come into our lives and go. Kids go, and perhaps come back again. Sometimes we are the ones who come and go. The grief of loss and death comes and goes. Tears come and go. Hope can even come and go.

Amid this movement, we come together in worship. We come to gather around the font and the table and hear again the stories of Jesus coming into the world, going to the cross, and coming again in the resurrection. We come together with our griefs and joys, our struggles and celebrations, all that binds us and sets us free. We come to gather, surrounded by God's grace. Having come, we will go in peace to serve the Lord. Thanks be to God!