

Sunday Worship Service– March 22, 2026
Fifth Sunday in Lent
ELWB (red book) – Holy Communion – Setting 8 (p.184-192)

Welcome by the Pastor

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement

Introduction*

In today's Bible readings we hear about the valley of the dry bones in Ezekiel and the death of Lazarus in John. The themes of these readings focus on experiences of loss and death, and the hope of new life in God. Sometimes we feel dried up, devoid of breath, aching from the loss of loved ones, but death and loss do not have the final word. We worship a God who brings new life and new visions. We place our hope in a God who has power even over death.

Lenten Candle Liturgy¹

We gather for worship in this space called the "sanctuary." I invite you to close your eyes (if you are comfortable doing so) and consider the word, "sanctuary." A sanctuary is a place set aside for sacred things. It is a place of refuge and protection. This room is a sanctuary. Our homes are a sanctuary. The season of Lent is a kind of sanctuary, extended in time. And one of the things Lent teaches is that we, too, are a sanctuary. There is inside us a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

As we extinguish these lights, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of war and oppression in the world.

Let us pray:

Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. Amen.

Prayer of Confession*

God of life, we come to you consumed by our worry and our pain. When we blame you for not being there in our need, forgive us. When we turn away from you in moments of loss,

¹ Written by Andrew Schwartz

guide us back to your faithful arms.
 For we long to put our faith in your promised healing.
 We yearn to truly believe that you are the resurrection and the life.
 Teach us once more, Merciful One, that you weep when we weep,
 and rejoice as we find our way home. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

In God's love, there is hope. In Christ's forgiveness, there is peace.
 In the Spirit's power, we are renewed and brought forth into life!
 You are forgiven in the name of the + Father, the Son,
 and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#712 Gathering Hymn "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service"

1. Lord, whose love in humble service bore the weight of human need,
 who upon the cross, forsaken, worked your mercy's perfect deed;
 we, your servants, bring the worship not of voice alone, but heart,
 consecrating to your purpose ev'ry gift which you impart.
2. Still your children wander homeless, still the hungry cry for bread;
 still the captives long for freedom; still in grief we mourn our dead.
 As you, Lord, in deep compassion healed the sick and freed the soul,
 by your Spirit send your power to our world to make it whole.
3. As we worship, grant us vision, till your love's revealing light
 in its height and depth and greatness dawns upon our quickened sight,
 making known the needs and burdens your compassion bids us bear,
 stirring us to ardent service, your abundant life to share.
4. Called by worship to your service, forth in your dear name we go,
 to the child, the youth, the aged, love in living deeds to show;
 hope and health, goodwill and comfort,
 counsel, aid, and peace we give,
 that your servants, Lord, in freedom may your mercy know and live.

p. 184 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.**

#152 Kyrie

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
 Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy, have mercy.

Prayer of the Day*

God of all consolation and compassion, Jesus comforted the grieving sisters, Martha and Mary; your breath alone brings life to dry bones and weary souls. Pour out your Spirit upon us, that we may face despair and death with the hope of resurrection and faith in the One who called Lazarus forth from the grave. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

In the Old Testament reading from Ezekiel, we hear that 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, beginning with the 37th chapter:

God's power overcame me, and while I was in God's spirit, that led me out and set me down in the middle of a certain valley. It was full of bones.

God led me through them all around, and I saw that there were a great many of them on the valley floor, and they were very dry.

God asked me, "Human one, can these bones live again?"

I said, "God, only you know."

God said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, Dry bones, hear God's word! God proclaims to these bones: I am about to put breath in you, and you will live again. I will put sinews on you, place flesh on you, and cover you with skin. When I put breath in you, and you come to life, you will know that I am God."

I prophesied just as I was commanded. There was a great noise as I was prophesying, then a great quaking, and the bones came together, bone by bone. When I looked, suddenly there were sinews on them.

The flesh appeared, and then they were covered over with skin.

But there was still no breath in them.

God said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, human one!

Say to the breath, God proclaims: Come from the four winds, breath!

Breathe into these dead bodies and let them live."

I prophesied just as God commanded me. When the breath entered them, they came to life and stood on their feet, an extraordinarily large company. God said to me, “Human one, these bones are the entire house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely finished.’ So now, prophesy and say to them, God proclaims: I’m opening your graves! I will raise you up from your graves, my people, and I will bring you to Israel’s fertile land. You will know that I am God, when I open your graves and raise you up from your graves, my people. I will put my breath in you, and you will live. I will plant you on your fertile land, and you will know that I am God. I’ve spoken, and I will do it. This is what God says.”

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 130

I cry out to you from the depths, O God — my God, listen to my voice!

Let your ears pay close attention to my request for mercy!

If you kept track of sins, God— who would stand a chance?

But forgiveness is with you—that’s why you are honored.

I hope, Lord. My whole being hopes, and I wait for God’s promise.

My whole being waits for my Lord—

more than the night watch waits for morning;

yes, more than the night watch waits for morning!

Israel, wait for God! Because faithful love and redemption is with our God!

God is the one who will redeem Israel from all its sin.

p.189 **Gospel Acclamation for Lent**

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45

In the gospel reading from John, 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.

The holy gospel according to John, the 11th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

(This was the Mary who anointed Jesus with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.)

So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying,

“Jesus, the one whom you love is ill.”

When he heard this, Jesus said, “This illness isn’t fatal.

It’s for the glory of God so that God’s Son can be glorified through it.”

Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was.

After two days, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s return to Judea again.”

The disciples replied, “Rabbi, the Jewish opposition wants to stone you, but you want to go back?”

Jesus answered, “Aren’t there twelve hours in the day? Whoever walks in the day doesn’t stumble because they see the light of the world. But whoever walks in the night does stumble because the light isn’t in them.”

Jesus continued,

“Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I am going in order to wake him up.”

The disciples said, “Jesus, if he’s sleeping, he will get well.”

They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was in a deep sleep, but Jesus had spoken about Lazarus’ death.

Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died. For your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there so that you can believe. Let’s go to him.”

Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other disciples,

“Let us go too so that we may die with Jesus.”

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem.

Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother’s death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you.”

Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha replied, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die.

Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

She replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, God’s Son, the one who is coming into the world.”

After she said this, she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary,
 “The teacher is here and he’s calling for you.”

When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus.

He hadn’t entered the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were comforting Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and leave, they followed her. They assumed she was going to mourn at the tomb.

When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.”

When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled.

He asked, “Where have you laid him?”

They replied, “Lord, come and see.”

Jesus began to cry. The Jews said, “See how much he loved him!”

But some of them said, “He healed the eyes of the man born blind.

Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb.

It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance.

Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, “Lord, the smell will be awful!

He’s been dead four days.”

Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see God’s glory?”

So they removed the stone.

Jesus looked up and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.

I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me.”

Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

The dead man came out,

his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

Therefore, many of the Jews who came with Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

#334 Hymn of the Day “*Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery* (v.1-3, Lent 5)

1. Tree of Life and awesome myst’ry, in your death we are reborn;

though you die in all of hist'ry, still you rise with ev'ry morn,
still you rise with ev'ry morn.

2. We remember truth once spoken, love passed on through act and word;
ev'ry person lost and broken wears the body of our Lord,
wears the body of our Lord.
3. Christ, you lead and we shall follow, stumbling though our steps may be;
one with you in joy and sorrow, we the river, you the sea,
we the river, you the sea.
- L5. God of all our fear and sorrow, God who lives beyond our death,
hold us close through each tomorrow, love as near as ev'ry breath,
love as near as ev'ry breath.

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 Intercession²

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for
the world and its needs. Prayer petitions will end with "Hear us, O God" and
the congregation responds by praying "**Your mercy is great.**"

We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name.
Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope,
and love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

² <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/DayTexts/2026-3-22/0>

We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives.

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

We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick.

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

We pray for this congregation. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.
Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

Offertory Prayer*

*Generous God, with these gifts, bring forth new life and renewed hope.
Work in us and through us, that our lives and our gifts may become signs
of life and hope for all to see. Amen.*

p.190 **Great Thanksgiving**

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.

It is a right, good and joyful thing, always and everywhere,
to give thanks to you.

You invite us to return to you with all our hearts and live with joy.

Renew our enthusiasm in faith and life and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to all of us, your beloved children.

An so with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join your unending hymn:³

**p.190 Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory, full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Eucharistic Prayer D – The Season of Lent⁴

Holy God, our living water and gracious guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we give you thanks.
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 his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
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, Jesus took the cup,
Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the covenant in my blood,
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food
and on all gathered for this meal of love and forgiveness.
Strengthen us that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

³ Adapted by Rev Lynn Robertson from *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, p.22A-22D

⁴ Adapted by Rev Lynn Robertson from *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, p.68

Through Christ all glory and honour is yours, gracious God,
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. Amen.

p.191 **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

Communion Distribution

p.191 ***Lamb of God***

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.**

#773 Communion Hymn "*Precious Lord, Take My Hand*"

- 1. Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**
- 2. When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone,
hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**
- 3. When darkness appears and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone,
at the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten journey: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our giving, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, in Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Announcements

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you
 May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 May the Lord look upon you with favour
 and + give you peace. Amen.

#338 Sending Hymn *"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"*

1. **Beneath the cross of Jesus I long to take my stand;
 the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,
 a home within a wilderness, a rest upon the way,
 from the burning of the noontide heat and burdens of the day.**

2. **Upon the cross of Jesus, my eye at times can see
 the very dying form of one who suffered there for me.
 And from my contrite heart, with tears, two wonders I confess:
 the wonder of his glorious love and my unworthiness.**

3. **I take, O cross, your shadow for my abiding place;
 I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face;
 content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
 my sinful self my only shame, my glory all, the cross.**

Sending

Go in peace, to love and serve God through word and deed.
Thanks be to God!

Sources:

Bible passages (except where otherwise indicated) from Common English Bible (CEB) and adapted for inclusive language.

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