

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC



March 26th, 2023
5th Sunday of Lent

- Gathering -

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

With dust of the earth and stars in our bones,
we gather in the presence of the One who formed us in their image.

We name the brokenness of your world,
and acknowledge the fragmentations of our souls.

Throughout these 40 days, O God, call us back to you,
that we might find the forgiveness we so desperately seek.

As Jesus followed the Spirit into the Wilderness,
we too trust your Divine Presence to lead us where we must go.

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who journeys with us these forty days,
and sustains us with the gift of grace.
Amen.

Let us acknowledge before God and one another
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
we confess to you our faults and failings.
Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;
we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;
we spoil rather than steward your creation;
we cause hurt though you call us to heal;
we choose fear over compassion.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,
as we seek to follow in your way of life.
Amen.

Hear the good news:
God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,
so that all may receive life.
This promise is for you!
God embraces you with divine mercy,
✠ forgives you in Christ's name,
and revives you in the Spirit's power.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

This is a Day of New Beginnings
UMH 383 – verses 1-3

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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.

Let us pray.
God of life, stir up your people in this world. In every death and ending we face, remind us that this is not the end of our story. Raise these dry bones to new life in you, that we may be a sign of your everlasting life, given to us through your son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

- Word -

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of YHWH was upon me, and it carried me away by the Spirit of YHWH and set me down in a valley – a valley full of bones. God made me walk up and down among them. And I saw that there was a vast number of bones lying there in the valley, and they were very dry. God asked me, “Mere mortal, can these bones live?”

I answered, “Only you know that, Sovereign YHWH.”

And God said, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: ‘Dry bones, hear the word of YHWH! Sovereign YHWH says to these bones: I am going to breathe life into you. I will fasten sinews on you, clothe you with flesh, cover you with skin, and give you breath. And you will live, and you will know that I am Sovereign YHWH.’”

So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and all the bones came together, bone to matching bone. As I watched, sinews appeared on them, flesh clothed them, and skin covered them. But there was no breath in them.

Then God said to me, “Prophesy to the wind; prophesy, mere mortal, and say to it: ‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH: Approach from the four winds, Breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’”

I prophesied as I was commanded, and breath came into them; they came alive, and stood up on their feet – a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, “Mere mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel. The people keep saying, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, and we are doomed.’ Prophesy, therefore, and say to them, ‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH: I am going to open your graves and raise you from the dead, my people. I will return you to the land of Israel. When I open your graves and raise you up, you, my people, will know that I am YHWH. Then I will put my Spirit into you and you will return to life, and I will settle you back on your own land. Then you will know that I, YHWH, have spoken and made all this happen, says Sovereign YHWH.’”

Word of God, Word of Life

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, YHWH!
God, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to my voice, my cries for mercy!
If you kept track of our sins, YHWH,
who could stand before you?
But with you is forgiveness,
and for this we revere you.

So I wait for you, YHWH –
my soul waits,
and in your word I place my trust.
My soul longs for you, YHWH,
more than sentinels long for the dawn,
more than sentinels long for the dawn.
Israel, put your hope in YHWH,
for with YHWH is abundant love
and the fullness of deliverance;
God will deliver Israel
from all its failings.

Gospel: John 11:1-45

The Holy Gospel according to John the 11th chapter.

There was a certain man named Lazarus, who was sick. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were from the village of Bethany. Mary was the one who had anointed the feet of Jesus with perfume and dried his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.

The sisters sent this message to Jesus: “Rabbi, the one you love is sick.”
When Jesus heard this, he said, “This sickness will not end in death; it is happening for God’s glory, so that God’s Only Begotten may be glorified because of it.”
Jesus loved these three very much. Yet even after hearing that Lazarus was sick, he remained where he was staying for two more days. Finally he said to the disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”
They protested, “Rabbi, it was only recently that they tried to stone you – and you want to go back there again?”

Jesus replied,

“Aren’t there twelve hours of daylight?
Those who walk by day don’t stumble,
because they see the world bathed in light;
those who go walking by night will stumble
because there is no light in them.”

After Jesus said this, he said to the disciples, “Our beloved Lazarus has fallen asleep. I am going to Judea to wake him.”

The disciples objected, “But Rabbi, if he’s only asleep, he’ll be fine.”

Jesus had been speaking about Lazarus’ death, but they thought he was talking about actual sleep. So he said very plainly, “Lazarus is dead! For your sakes, I am glad that I wasn’t there, that you might come to believe. In any event, let us go to him.”

Then Thomas, “the Twin,” said to the rest, “Let’s go with Jesus, so that we can die with him.”

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Since Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, many people had come out to console Martha and Mary about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary stayed at home with the mourners.

When she got to Jesus, Martha said, “If you had been here, my brother never would have died! Yet even now, I am sure that God will give you whatever you ask.”

“Your brother will rise again!” Jesus assured her. Martha replied, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her,

“I am the Resurrection,
and I am the Life:
those who believe in me
will live, even if they die;
and those who are alive and believe in me
will never die.

“Do you believe this?”

“Yes!” Martha replied. “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, God’s Only Begotten, the One who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this, Martha went back and called her sister Mary: “The Teacher is here, asking for you,” she whispered.

As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went to him. Jesus hadn't gotten to the village yet. He was at the place where Martha had met him. Those who were there consoling her saw her get up quickly and followed Mary, thinking she was going to the tomb to mourn. When Mary got to Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "If you had been here, Lazarus never would have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the other mourners as well, he was troubled in spirit, moved by the deepest emotions.

"Where have you laid him?" Jesus asked.

"Come and see," they said. And Jesus wept.

The people in the crowd began to remark, "See how much he loved him!" Others said, "He made the blind person see; why couldn't he have done something to prevent Lazarus' death?"

Jesus was again deeply moved. They approached the tomb, which was a cave with a stone in front of it. "Take away the stone," Jesus directed.

Martha said, "Rabbi, it has been four days now. By this time there will be a stench."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I assure you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took the stone away.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Abba, thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd, that they might believe that you sent me!"

Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

And Lazarus came out of the tomb, still bound hand and foot with linen strips, his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus told the crowd, "Untie him and let him go free."

Many of those who had come to console Martha and Mary, and saw what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Christ, the Life of All the Living

ELW 339 – verses 1-3

Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles Creed

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common 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 to the dead.
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.**

Joys & Concerns

If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.

Prayers of the People

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

A brief silence.

(sung by all)

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace.*

Your spirit brings life to creation. Enliven the natural world and restore ecosystems in need of healing. Uplift prophetic voices that turn us to the needs of the soil beneath our feet and the air all around.

Merciful God,

Receive our prayer.

You have breathed into us the breath of life. Enliven your church. Deepen our partnerships with our companion churches around the globe, and bless the work of missionaries who accompany them.

Merciful God,

Receive our prayer.

You redeem the world and its peoples. Free us from systems of oppression. Unbind nations and societies from the sins of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and the fears of difference that separate us from one another. Raise up leaders at all levels of government who work to promote the dignity of every human life.

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.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

(sung by all)

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace.*

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.

Amen.

Offering

At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry.

Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031.

Online Donations can be made through the link below:

[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of good gifts,
receive these and all our offerings
as we present them in faithful service
for the sake of your gospel.
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this world
as you pour out your very presence
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen

Disciples' Prayer

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**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.**

- Sending -

Sending Song:

Lord of the Dance
UMH 261 – verses 1-3

Benediction & Dismissal

God, the giver of love,
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth
bless you in this Lenten journey.
Amen.

Go in peace. The Spirit of God is alive in you!
Thanks be to God!



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Church Office Hours
Closed on Fridays
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Hymn of the Day:

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