

CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 29 2020

The Fifth Sunday in Lent:

A Service for Worship at Home

Prelude

Take this time to silence your cell phones and other distractions, and quiet your heart and mind.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you are the resurrection and life. As we worship you this day, make yourself known to us, and show us who we are in you: bearers of good news, and messengers of resurrection. Unite us through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Adapted and reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, Copyright 2019.*

Call to Worship

adapted from Ezekiel 37:3-6 and Psalm 130

O mortal, can these bones live?

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Thus says the Lord GOD: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

Hymn

From the Depths of Woe (Psalm 130)

Confession

Romans 8:6

"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

Trusting in the Spirit of God at work, we confess our sin.

Lord, we are afraid. We cannot hold back our pressing and many worries. We know you tell us not to be anxious, but in this tumultuous time, our anxiety mounts and our faith waivers. Forgive us for how much we previously took for granted, the ability to worship in person, the opportunities to embrace one another, the freedom to come and go as we wished. Forgive us, too, for failing to

see those all around us who lacked community, longed for touch and were isolated well before this forced social distancing. Hear our heartfelt confession and turn our fears into faithful action for the sake of your beloved world.

**Prayer of Confession written by Rev. Jill Duffield. Used by permission.*

Assurance and Peace

Romans 8:10-11

“If 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!”

Know that you are forgiven, and be at peace. Throughout this week, through phone calls and cards, smiles and hand-waves across the street and across the hall, be sure to share the peace of Christ with one another.

Children’s Message

Downloadable materials for children (and the young at heart!) can be found on the church website (www.CalvinChurchRI) with the worship materials.

Scripture

Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:17-44

To Think About and Meditate On

The passage from John contains what is in some translations the shortest, and yet one of the most poignant verses in all of Scripture: “Jesus wept.” (The NRSV says, “Jesus began to weep.”) Jesus knew what the outcome was going to be, yet he still wept at the tomb of his friend. Why do you think Jesus wept?

In John’s gospel, he doesn’t use the word for “miracles.” Instead, he uses the word “signs” when talking about the astounding things Jesus did. By using the word “sign,” what do you think John is trying to get across about what Jesus did?

Where do we need God to breathe life into our “dry bones”? Where do we need Jesus to call us out of the tomb?

What are the “grave clothes” we wear? How do we still cling to them, and in what ways does Jesus call for us to be unbound from them? What might that look like in our current circumstances?

Hymn

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

Offering

Ezekiel 37:9; John 11:43

Without the breath of God, we are dry bones; without the Word of God, we are dust. With gratitude we offer our lives to the Lord of all life.

**Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, Copyright 2019.*

Consider what you have to offer in these circumstances in which we find ourselves, and reflect with thanksgiving those who have given of themselves in a myriad of ways for our communities and for the world in response to these circumstances.

We understand that these are uncertain and difficult times. *If you are able* to give your regular offering to the church, take this moment to give online through our website, or prepare a check to be mailed.

Prayers of the People

Lord, let our minds be set on the Spirit so that we might know peace. Set our minds on the Spirit so that we might be fully present to the enfleshed needs within and around us. Set our minds on the Spirit so that we might remember all that Jesus taught us. Set our minds on the Spirit so that we might be given the right words to say in this trying time on earth.

Lord, hear us when we pray for our sisters and brothers who are ill. Come quickly to bring comfort and healing and yes, Lord, resurrection.

Lord, do not delay because we know if you are here we can endure. We believe you are the Messiah, the one who brings life abundant and grants life eternal. Do not delay, but hurry and bring your glory, full of grace and truth.

Lord, we are bold to call out to you for the sake of this world. We lift up to you and ask mercy for those who do not think they can endure another moment of grief or loss or pain. We cry out for divine discernment for our leader seeking to stem the scourge of this pandemic. We pray for just priorities, founded on compassion and truth. We run to you, Lord, and fall at your feet on behalf of those too sick or too weak or too afraid to cry out for themselves.

We pray for those often forgotten. For prisoners, refugees, and those isolated in nursing or assisted living facilities.

Lord we hear you weeping with us. We know you, too, love those we love. We are grateful for your compassion and your care, for the gift of family and community, for the beauty of nature and the glimpses of Easter even deep in this season of Lent. Call us forth from the tombs in which we've too long been trapped, unbind us and set us free so that others will see and come to believe. Open our eyes to the sure sign of the coming resurrection. Strengthen us to do the works of you who sent Jesus.
We lift up to you those whom we hold in our hearts...

**Adapted from a prayer written by Rev. Jill Duffield. Used by permission.*

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 our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.

Hymn

O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing

Benediction

Arise, dry bones, and live! Come out, Lazarus, and give glory to God! Know that Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, is ever at work breathing new life into the dust.

May the love of God the Father, The grace of Jesus the Son – who is the resurrection and the life – and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you, now and forever. Amen.

John 11:17-44

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus 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."

Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹ The 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. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I 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."

⁷ So 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. ⁸ I 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. ⁹ Then 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." ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then 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.' ¹² Therefore 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. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I 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."