



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

7283 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 4C2

Phone / fax: 604-433-1515

Website: www.graceburnaby.com

Email: office@graceburnaby.com

pastor@graceburnaby.com

Follow us on Twitter! @GraceLutBurnaby



Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 26, 2023

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three

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. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓ñəṃ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together, coming out of the depths to cry out and sing praises to our Lord, who hears us and is attentive to our supplications. Our Lord, who holds not our sins against us, but forgives us with a Word of grace and hope. So we wait for the Lord who is full of steadfast love and plenteous redemption and saves us from our sins, and we are here to worship and faithfully follow our God in service, community, and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: Just As I Am, without One Plea (#592)

GREETING

The healing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrecting love of God, and the life-giving fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE (p. 138)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord our God, you are the resurrection and life, and we worship you this day. Show us who we are as bearers of your good news in the world, messengers of resurrection to all, and heralds of your love for each and every one of us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

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, "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, 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

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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)

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, 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.”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

O Lord, we wait for you, and in your Word we trust. By the power of your Spirit, set our hearts and minds on the source of life and peace: Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

So I've been pretty inactive on social media for a while now, which has been pretty weird for me and my friends, as there was a time that I couldn't stop posting and adding funny pictures and all that stuff. In fact, people I know still talk about how at one point, I was editing my birthday everyday on Facebook so that everyday it would say that it was my birthday. I carried that on for like a month and near the end people were still wishing me a happy birthday. And I'd like to think that it was because of me that Facebook changed the rules around editing your birthday, I think they limited it to once or twice a year or something like that. Anyway, I don't do social media anymore not because I have something against it, not at all. I have no problems with the fact that people continue to use it for various reasons, I just stopped using it aside from an occasional buy or sell from their buy and sells.

I find that for me, it's just too emotionally draining.

Again, nothing against those who continue to use it, in fact it's the main way my spouse gains new clients and stuff. Just for me social media provides a window into our society that takes a lot out of me. It reminds me of how people can be so set in their ways and understandings of the world. It reveals to me time and again just how we as a society in general are so impatient, selfish, and as I mentioned last week, arrogant.

Many of the posts that I see now seem to be about people promoting “equality” by quietly promoting their own superiority. I see others who speak up against oppression while they oppress those who not just disagree but just seek clarity on what they're talking about. I see a bunch of posts that claim to be following God when really it seems like they're acting like they're God in God's place. Because it sounds to me like they're acting like they have all the answers, they know what's best, and they can run this planet better than even God can.

Don't get me wrong, I do think the world has a whole slew of problems and many, if not all, demographics have faced some sort of oppression throughout history. But I hardly think that's a reason or an excuse to continue the problems and oppression by further dividing people by our own pompous attitudes and condescending comments. I get it though, the people who post these things might be feeling angry, or are in pain, and maybe they feel oppressed and powerless. So the answer to that is to passively aggressively lash out on the platform that is readily available to them, in hopes that it would ease their pain and maybe even put a stop to the situation that they're going through. This might be under the guise of acting out of faith, but I actually see it as complaining about not getting what they think they deserve, and then in turn blaming whoever they wish to label as the oppressors in that situation.

And in light of this, I see Martha and Mary's comments to Jesus about how their brother Lazarus wouldn't have died had he been there not statements of trust and faith, but more like complaints that they didn't get the treatment that they thought they deserved. And off the bat, maybe we would think the same thing as well, Mary and Martha didn't deserve their brother dying when they were so close to Jesus. They didn't deserve the pain that really could have been so easily avoided in their eyes. They most certainly didn't deserve Jesus hanging back for like 2 days just waiting for it to happen. I mean, this family that I like to call MMaL (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus), is probably the most famous associates of Jesus aside from his actual 12 disciples, which might I add, we can only name like 4 of. So for them to reach this level of fame, you'd think they'd have some perks. They did have faith, no question about that, and we'd think that their faith should have automatically gotten Jesus to do what they thought was best for them. And that was keeping their brother alive, which of course didn't happen.

So the way I see it, them saying "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" is like them saying, "where on earth were you Jesus? We did everything right and yet you treat us like this?" I can even see a little "how can a good God let bad things happen to good people" questioning rising up a bit in there. They were in pain, yes of course, their beloved brother has died. They were hurt because death hurts. And so maybe they were lashing out at Jesus for not preventing this tragedy from happening in the first place.

And again, don't we do that in our times of trouble? We look back at what has happened and we come up with reasons as to why it shouldn't have and blame others for allowing it to have. We dig up the past, some of which has ironically been immortalized by social media, and we try to cancel those we don't like. We see deplorable things that have transpired that we can't agree with and we try to retroactively erase them by pulling down statues, ruining mementos, and accusing foul play and claiming unfair oppression.

It's like everyone is a victim. Everyone needs to *feel* like a victim. And then everyone victimizes others in order to ease their pain. They're the ones who cheated and acted unfairly. They're the ones who oppressed and exploited the weak. They're the ones who didn't know better and made us feel bad so they deserve the abuse we're going to give them now.

And Jesus is the one who wasn't there for us in our time of need.

But the thing is, things do happen. Tragedies and oppression take place. Death always rolls its head around and tears us apart. And it hurts. It breaks us. It causes us to fall on our knees and shakes our fists in the air and cry out "why?!?" Why did this happen? Why did God abandon me?

But you know what? God doesn't promise us that bad things won't happen. God doesn't tell us that if we're good, only good things will come to us and we'll never feel pain again. God doesn't say that death will never come.

But God does say that the sting of death has been taken away.

See, bad things will happen. We will feel pain, brokenness, betrayal, and just general annoyance at the world. We will lose loved ones and we ourselves will die. All of that will happen, our faith doesn't prevent it. But what our faith does do is help us through this pain. It

reminds us that there is comfort and healing in the Spirit and community. It tells us that we aren't alone, but Jesus is there alongside us, mourning with us but also rejoicing in the new life that comes out of and in spite of the brokenness and dry bones of despair.

Yes, we might not like feeling pain and oppression. Sure, we would like to erase the ineradicable past and cover it up with strong words and edgy memes of social media. And of course, we don't have our loved ones miraculously come back to life. But there continues to be healing found in all that we go through. There is a compassion that lifts us up when we are down, showing us that our value and worth isn't defined by the tragedies that befall us. There is life even in the face of death because we are all connected to this eternal story of God's love, grace, and forgiveness.

So while hurt and pain continue to happen, we can rise above them and be examples of peace and healing. While evil and brokenness continue to exist, we can resist them not by joining forces with them but rather showing them how love and forgiveness can conquer all. While we continue to face death on so many fronts, we can confidently see the life found in spite of it, showing us God's providence and mercy and bringing us together as the body of Christ, living eternally in the story of humankind. A story that reveals to all God's abundant blessing even when it isn't exactly as we deserve.

At this end of the season of Lent, as we draw nearer to the cross of oppression and death, may we look forward to the life on the other side of the tomb and be lifted up by the arms of love and grace. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Drawn to the Light (#593)

CREED (p. 105)

With all those brought into new life by God's grace, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's 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

Called into the life that truly is life, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you hear our voice and are attentive to our supplications out of your grace. Be with us throughout our ministry in the world, that all might see the goodness of your ways and truth and love, resurrecting us all into your community. Especially we pray for our neighbouring faith and worshipping congregations; our partner Anglican Church of Canada, their bishops, pastors, and members; and for our own bishops of the ELCIC: Kathy, Larry, Sid, Jason, Michael, and Susan, all the assistants of the bishops, and all congregations and faith groups. In particular we pray for Living Faith Lutheran Church in Sechelt and their interim pastor Richard Hergesheimer; and for Lord of Life Mission in Sandspit and their interim pastor Jim Whaley. Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you watch not over our sins, but you provide for us a redemption through the love you show us in creation: through the trees and skies, the lands and waters, the hills and valleys, and you bring us into union with you with all of its beauty and splendour. Strengthen our stewardship of this planet, that its wondrous glory serve as our home and reminder of your love for the generations to come. Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, with you there is forgiveness, and you teach us the ways of your grace and mercy. Be with all world leaders and politicians as we all learn to work together toward true peace, and may the nations be open to putting down the need for power and strive for equality and a brighter tomorrow. We pray for the areas of the world that face wars, violence, and turmoil, that their citizens find safety and security. And we also pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, our souls wait for you as you are our healing and our hope. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love continue to shine in and through us all and be reflected onto all people. Especially we pray for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Bryan and Chona; Sukhwant; Winn; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Walter; Larry; Piet; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, with you there is steadfast love and plenteous redemption from all our sin, and you welcome us to live with you and all the saints in your kingdom forever. May the lives of faith of those that we've loved and lost always reside in our hearts that we might continue their work of sharing your legacy of community and good news for all the world. Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the saving grace shown to us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

PEACE (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (p. 144)

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.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ;
who calls us out of our despair and lifts us up into your light, love, and life,
joining us with all the choirs of angels,
the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, almighty, and merciful God, you call us by name and seat us with you at your table of goodness and grace, and you welcome us to be your children forever. And to help us to see the fullness of your love, you sent to us your Son Jesus to live among us as one of us, showing us the ways of your righteousness and redemption and bringing us together as a community of forgiven sinners, made to be saints by your own doing.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, Jesus took the common cup that they shared, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup in the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup then we remember Jesus move from death into life, welcoming us all along for the journey of grace and peace, moving us to proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

All honour and glory belong to you, O Lord, for your gracious welcome and merciful forgiveness, bringing us all together as a community, a church, and as the body of Christ, serving you and neighbour for the sake of the world, through Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

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

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see, the new life and community given to us by God.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (#596)

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (#618)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, you have fed us with your Word and nourished us with your truth, revealing to us your love through this bread and cup of life. Strengthen us in our service to you and others, that all might see the new life found in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God the giver of life bless you and keep you,
God the sustainer of life shine on you and be gracious onto you,
God the resurrection and the life look upon you with favour and give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: My Life Flows On in Endless Song (#763)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live the life that truly is life and give glory to God.

Thanks be to God.