

**The Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 29, 2020**  
**Online Worship**

We worship this morning in the name of God the Creator,  
God our Savior and God the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

**Welcome**

Welcome to St. Luke's "almost" regular worship---same time just a different physical location. We are coming to you using the Zoom platform from 4 different locations. Jim and Betsy are at their homes in Damascus and I'm at home in Vienna. Our technology guru who is helping make this happen is Tony Niverth who is home from college and safely distancing in Olney.

This printed version is available on the church website  
[www.stlukesderwood.com](http://www.stlukesderwood.com).

We have been called and gathered by the Holy Spirit. Let us open our hearts, spiritually draw near to God and to one another, and worship the Triune God.

**Opening Song "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" ELW 242**

**Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,  
For angels herald its dawning.  
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,  
Behold! The Child of our longing.  
Come as a baby weak and poor,  
To bring all hearts together,  
He opens wide the heav'nly door  
And lives now inside us forever.**

**To us, to all in our sorrow and fear,  
Emmanuel comes a-singing,  
His humble song is quiet and near,  
Yet fills the earth with its ringing;**

**Music to heal the broken soul  
And hymns of lovingkindness,  
The thunder of his anthems roll  
To shatter all hatred and blindness.**

**In darkest night his coming shall be,  
When all the world is despairing,  
As morning light so quiet and free,  
So warm and gentle and caring.  
Then shall the mute break forth in song,  
The lame shall leap in wonder,  
The weak be raised above the strong,  
And weapons be broken asunder.**

**Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,  
Though dark the winter and cheerless,  
The rising sun shall crown you with light,  
Be strong and loving and fearless.  
Love be our song and love our prayer  
And love our endless story;  
May God fill ev'ry day we share  
And bring us at last into glory.**

**Opening Litany Psalm 130, a Psalm of Lament**

read in unison

From the depths of despair, O LORD,  
I call for your help.  
Hear my cry, O Lord.  
Pay attention to my prayer.



## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Pastor: In Psalm 130 we read, “Lord, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.”

*(time for reflection)*

Pastor: Almighty God, hear us,

**All: for if we could not come to you and confess,  
the burden of our sin would crush us.**

**We want to live as your disciples, yet we realize that we can never be perfect.**

**We fail to trust you and too often try to put ourselves in control,  
especially in times of fear and uncertainty.**

**We struggle to learn how to love and how to give generously.**

**We memorize the 10 Commandments but act as if they are merely a  
list of suggestions written only for people in an ancient time and  
place.**

**Awaken us to our sin and lead us to walk with you.**

**Forgive us God. We love you.**

**Amen.**

Pastor: Through God’s great love and mercy our sins are forgiven, and our spirits are renewed. Go in peace---you are Christ’s new creation.

**All: Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn of the Day**

**“God, When Human Bonds Are Broken”**

**ELW #603**

**God, when human bonds are broken  
And we lack the love or skill  
To restore the hope of healing,  
Give us grace and make us still.**

**Through that stillness, with your Spirit  
Come into our world of stress,  
For the sake of Christ forgiving  
All the failures we confess.**

**Give us faith to be more faithful,  
Give us hope to be more true,  
Give us love to go on learning;  
God, encourage and renew!**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Pastor: Holy Spirit,**

**All: you fill our hearts with peace and calm when we come to you  
during times that worry and confuse us. We remember that you  
God, are in control of our lives. Remind us to not be afraid.**

**Amen.**

## **The Word**

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. He led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. Then he asked me, “Son of man, can these bones become living people again?”

“O Sovereign Lord,” I replied, “you alone know the answer to that.”

Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

<sup>7</sup> So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons. Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.’”

So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, ‘We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.’ Therefore, prophesy to them and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the Lord. I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and

return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the Lord has spoken!”

### **Romans 8:6-11**

So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

### **John 11:1-45**

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord’s feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, “Lord, your dear friend is very sick.”

But when Jesus heard about it he said, “Lazarus’s sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.” So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

But his disciples objected. “Rabbi,” they said, “only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?”

Jesus replied, “There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they

have no light.” Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.”

The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.”

Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go, too—and die with Jesus.”

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

“Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

“Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” So Mary immediately went to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there. When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. “Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?” So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.”

Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.

The Word of our Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **The Sermon**

### **“Jesus Wept.”**

Jesus bringing his friend Lazarus back to life is a powerful testament to Jesus’ identity as the Son of God. When reading the gospel out loud, it’s difficult to do justice to the stirring words, “Lazarus, come out!”

Just before he commands Lazarus to reappear, Jesus let the gathered people overhear his prayer to God. “Father thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so they will believe you sent me.” At that time there was only two weeks before Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, and it is urgent that

people understand who Jesus is. The entire story of Lazarus' resurrection demonstrates the authority of Jesus. His authority is beyond anything people could imagine for it extends to wiping out the power of death itself.

“Lazarus, come out!” Dynamite stuff! Worthy of the climactic scene in any action adventure movie.

But this morning I want to focus on three other words in this gospel message. verse 35: “Then Jesus wept.” If you're looking for action and drama you can turn to focus on the two sisters' conversations with Jesus, filled with anger and hurt. Or you can listen to the disciples trying to argue Jesus out of his fool hardy decision to return to Judea, a place where only a few days earlier people tried to kill him. It's easy to pass right by verse 35: “Then Jesus wept.”

Jesus loves Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He apparently has fallen in love with all of humanity. As John writes earlier in his gospel, Jesus did not come into the world to judge us but to love us.

Jesus shows us what it means to be a human being. He shows us not just how to love, but how to experience a wide variety of emotions. Sometimes Christians have gotten a mistaken identity as people who are stoic, whose faith makes them impervious to events that make others anxious, or worried, or depressed.

And some Christians seem to believe this too. At a funeral they may focus on not showing any emotion except their joy in the promise of resurrection life for their loved ones. It is unfortunate when this thinking continues past the public mourning to the point where a person might be afraid to grieve, to mourn, to weep. Sometimes we are afraid to reveal our honest emotions, even to ourselves, because we think our faith should get us through anything, with a smile and a serene façade that everything is OK.

Please, hear me when I tell you I am not questioning or undermining the true feelings of celebration for our loved ones, for a life well lived and for the incredible promise of a resurrected life with Jesus.

Our emotions, especially when we are grieving, can move quickly from feeling despair to feeling peace. None of our feelings are bad, they just are. “Jesus wept..” We must acknowledge and respect our feelings.

Mourning the death of a friend or family member is a sacred time when spent with God.

How can this relate to our jumbled emotions during the coronavirus pandemic? Which emotions do we allow ourselves to have? Can we admit to ourselves, to others, to God that we are frightened, lonely, confused, even desperate? Or do those emotions get pushed down where no one can see them?

Jesus wants to be part of our struggles. He waits for us to invite him in for an honest discussion of our very real emotions. We don't have to go it alone. There are no points awarded for toughing it out and constantly putting on a brave face. Not when we have a God who wants to be our partner as we go through this.

Can we also admit that our faith is what makes it possible to live with peace during this strange, crazy time in our country? Our belief that God is in control makes us able to think in creative and compassionate ways to make this situation better for everyone.

I think Jesus is weeping today. More than ever his beloved children are in deep despair throughout the world. Jesus wept when he stood at Lazarus' grave among the mourners who were weeping themselves. There are so many who need to know the love of Jesus. We can be the ones to show them that love. We can receive that love ourselves.

Many people have pointed out the irony of social distancing, that at a time when we need to find community we are forced to retreat to our own homes. During Lent in 2019 we at St. Luke's focused our Wednesday worship times on the theme, "Alone Together." We looked at different spiritual practices that we experienced alone, yet at the same time, drew us into community. Prayer, meditation, drawing, music, devotional reading, prayer partners are just some of the practices.

When St. Luke's prays weekly for a family or an individual on designated days, our prayers not only support the person we pray for, but also draw each of us closer into God's planned community.

It strikes me that this is how we will survive, and flourish, through our confrontation with Covid-19. This is how we are going to get through the loneliness and isolation of social distancing, and the grief of death and illness, and the personal and economic damage.

Jesus wept. Jesus prayed. Then Jesus acted. May we be blessed to do the same.

**Amen.**

**Hymn**

**“Healer of Our Every Ill”**

**ELW #162**

**Refrain: Healer of our every ill,  
Light of each tomorrow,  
Give us peace beyond our fear,  
And hope beyond our sorrow.**

**You who know our fears and sadness,  
Grace us with your peace and gladness;  
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.  
(Refrain)**

**In the pain and joy beholding  
How your grace is still unfolding,  
Give us all your vision, God of love.  
(Refrain)**

**Give us strength to love each other,  
Ev’ry sister, ev’ry brother;  
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.  
(Refrain)**

**You who know each thought and feeling,  
Teach us all your way of healing;  
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.  
(Refrain)**

## **Prayers of the People**

Pastor: We are led by the Holy Spirit to pray for the church that brings the light of Christ into the world, and for all who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Great and mighty God,

Too often act like Mary and Martha when trouble and great sorrow come to us. We search for someone or something to blame. We are driven to question why it seems you are not helping. Jesus, don't keep yourself hidden, come to us. Help us remember your words, "I am the resurrection and the light."

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Great Physician,

The world needs your wisdom as it struggles to contain a virus that is overwhelming our capacity for containment and healing. Children and grandparents, work friends and retired folks, no matter our status, our home country or our riches---this coronavirus reminds us we are all one. Make us generous as we search for ways to help. For those who are sick and dying, let them know your peace and love.

Loving God,

Give strength and compassion to medical personnel who diagnose and treat those who become sick; give wisdom and insight to those in charge of planning how best to deal with this new problem; calm those who are filled with worry and dread.

We pray for people who face economic hardships during this crisis. We pray for family members separated by being quarantined.

Bless your church and this congregation. Make us examples of your call to serve our neighbors. Show us what to do in these uncertain times.

Keep us faithful to you, and to our brothers and sisters, in our time of separation.

**Those in need of physical, mental or emotional healing:** June Smithson, Kevin Grace, Susan McGuire, Jim Buras, Renato Magturo, Susan Dougherty, Anne O'Connell, Barry & Bonnie Long, Rose & Bill Wimer, Emma Metzger, Carl Long, Barbara Lewis, Laura Murias, Marian Mathur, Ronnie Long, Amanda Boyd, Pat Edwards, Tim Sanner, Tim Steltenpohl

**Other Needs:** Kevin Grace

**Those who mourn:** The family of Sherry Mills, stepdaughter of Erika Davis; Beth & Gregg Molek, Tony & Narrie Magturo; and the family and friends of Bill Kettering, Anne Speicher, Tony Hill and Bud Johnson

*(Please add your own prayers)*

For all these things we pray, and for all the things you know we need, we trust to your mercy and grace. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

### **Continuing the Gospel reading John 11:45**

Next Sunday we celebrate Palm Sunday. We remember Jesus riding so publicly into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. He takes part in this demonstration of resistance to the Roman occupation and to the ways of the world that offer only death and destruction.

Our gospel continues today with what we can consider the set-up for Palm Sunday.

“Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. “What are we going to do?” they asked each other. “This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.”

<sup>49</sup> Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about! You don’t realize that it’s better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.”

He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus’ death. As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began. They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, “What do you think? He won’t come for Passover, will he?” Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.”

Pastor: The Word of our Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

I urge you to think of Jesus this week as he prepares to defy the authorities and ride triumphantly into Jerusalem.

### **Benediction**

May the Lord bless us and keep us,  
May the Lord calm our fears and guide our thoughts,  
May the Lord give us faith, hope and peace  
And may we share the peace of God with our neighbors.  
Amen.

### **Closing Song**

### **“Shout to the North”**

**Men of faith rise up and sing  
Of the great and glorious King.  
You are strong when you feel weak,  
In your brokenness, complete.**

**Chorus: Shout to the north and the south;  
Sing to the east and the west  
Jesus is Savior to all,  
Lord of heaven and earth.**

**Rise up, women of the truth,  
Stand and sing to broken hearts  
Who can know the healing pow’r  
Of our glorious King of love.  
(Chorus)**

**We’ve been through fire,  
We’ve been through rain;  
We’ve been refined by the pow’r of His name.  
We’ve fallen deeper in love with You.  
You’ve burned the truth on our lips.  
(Chorus)**

**Rise up, church with broken wings,  
Fill this place with songs again  
Of our God who reigns on high.  
By His grace again we'll fly.  
(Chorus)**

**Lord of heaven and earth,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
Lord of heaven and earth.**

**Words and Music by Martin Smith, @ 1995 Curious? Music,  
CCLI#155875**

**AMEN**