

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 29, 2020



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

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DAN SCHMIDT, MUSIC DIRECTOR

GATHERING

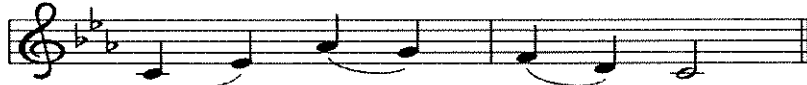
GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
C: And also with you.

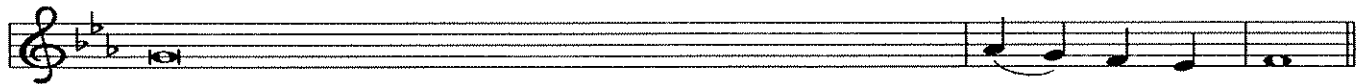
KYRIE



P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



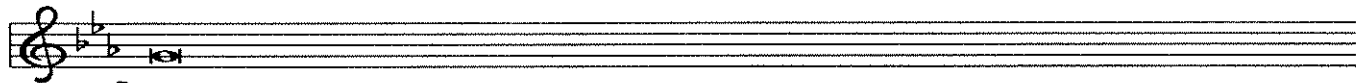
C: Lord, have mer - cy.



P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



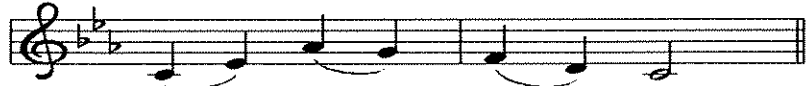
C: Lord, have mer - cy.



P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



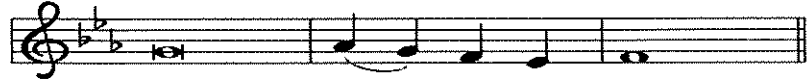
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



C: Lord, have mer - cy.



P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



C: Lord, have mer - cy.



p: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



C: A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE WORD
Get out your Bibles!



FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37:1-14

L: The Word of the Lord.
C: **Thanks be to God!**

PSALMODY

Psalm 30

SECOND READING

Romans 8:6-11

L: The Word of the Lord.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Stand as able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

The musical notation is written on four staves in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are printed below each staff.

GOSPEL READING

John 11:1-45

P: The **HOLY GOSPEL** according to St. John, the eleventh chapter.
C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: The Gospel of the Lord.
C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**
Be seated

REFLECTION

Our readings for this last Sunday before Holy Week deal with issues of life and death – or, maybe better said, life after death. This begins in our reading from Ezekiel about the valley of the dry bones. In this story, the prophet and his people have been exiled to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem and, even worse, the Temple. For the ancient Near Eastern people, such a loss typically meant that their God had been defeated by a stronger god. So, the people were not only dealing with the trauma of all that they had witnessed and endured, they found themselves in a foreign land with a severe crisis of faith. Could it be that the God they had been following and worshiping was not the one true God after all?

Professor Rolf Jacobson explains that “The people use a common idiom of their time to express their helplessness and hopelessness. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up.’” And so, Ezekiel is given a vision of a valley of dry bones. And God begins the conversation with His prophet by asking, “Mortal, can these bones live?” And Ezekiel, in utter humility answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Clearly, Ezekiel does not have the ability or the power to bring the bones back to life, but God does. Nevertheless, God does not simply do this by Himself – instead, God knits the bones back together by having His prophet speak the words of new creation. But the reknitted bones, sinews, and flesh were still not alive, for there was no breath in them. So, God had Ezekiel prophesy to the breath – or Spirit – and the breath came into them and they stood, a vast multitude, representing the people of Israel being restored after their time in exile, where they felt as though they were dead and forgotten. And yet, we see that God does not forget His people or break His promises, rather He restores their faith in Him and their hope as a people before restoring them to their land.

We see a lot of the same dynamics in our Gospel reading, in which we have the story of the raising of Lazarus. So, again, we have the restoral of life, although in this case it was not a vision or an idiom, it came after an actual death of one of Jesus’ beloved friends. There is a lot of back-ground to the story, including each of the man’s sisters confronting Jesus about not being there and saving their brother from dying. In other words, they were speaking their faith in Jesus as a healer, while also blaming Him for Lazarus’ death.

Jesus reassured Martha that her brother would rise again, and Martha confessed faith in a resurrection on the last day. And Jesus responded with one of His most powerful and comforting I Am statements, saying, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” And Martha answered Him, saying, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.” This is a full confession of faith that is often compared with Peter’s confession in the synoptic gospels.

Jesus didn’t have to be there to save Lazarus from dying, because He is fully capable of raising him from the dead. Of course, there is drama and humor in the story, as Lazarus has already been in the tomb for four days, which is a day longer than the ancient people thought the soul stayed with the body, and it was pointed out that he would already have begun to smell. But none of that mattered to Jesus – He simply called, “Lazarus, come out,” and the formerly dead man walked out of the tomb still wrapped in the burial cloths. And, just as God had Ezekiel play a part in the raising of the dead bones, Jesus had the townspeople help Lazarus by unwrapping him.

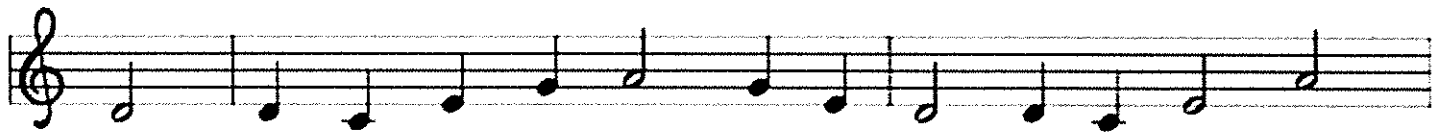
In this case, Lazarus was restored to his society, and he and the society were both made whole once again. In the Ezekiel story, the people of Israel were restored as a society – as God’s Chosen People – and were assured of a return to the land that had been promised to them.

In these days of separation and isolation, it may feel like we have been exiled to our homes and we may be wondering, “Where God in all of this?” These two stories reassure us that God has not turned His back on us, He has not left us, and He has not stopped loving us. It may be hard to feel His loving presence at times, but He is with each and every one of us every minute of every day. And we too will be brought back together and restored to our worship home – it will just happen in God’s time and not ours.

Many blessings to all of you. You are missed and you are loved. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

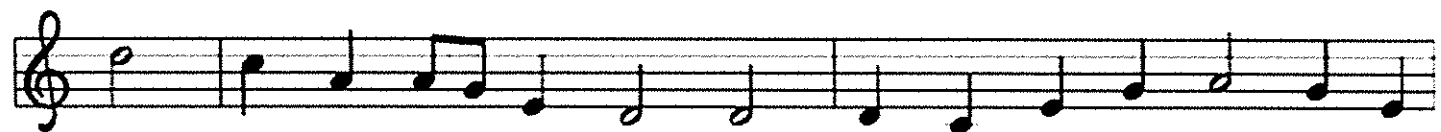
ELW#666 What Wondrous Love Is This



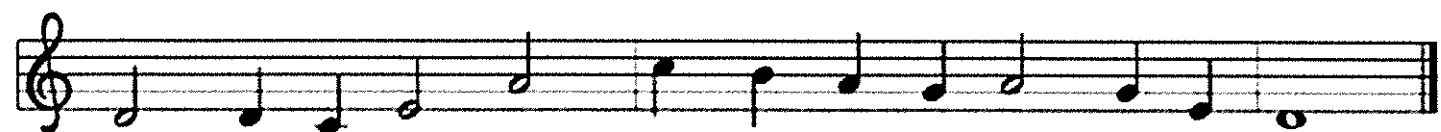
1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to
4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on. I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this
I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when I was sink - ing down
God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,
when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,



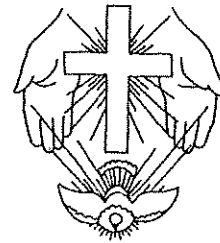
that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my
be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my
who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing



soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?
soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.
sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

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 into hell.
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.**



PRAYER CONCERNS

Vada Ann Feicht, Sandy Maier, Dar Wiggers, Max Chamberlain, Betsy Chase, Olivia Cullen, Debra, Garcia, Hope Grasso, Wanda Sanders, Jennifer Scherer, Dave Schmidt, Krystal Fall-Statler, and for all our homebound members and friends.

Mission Belize Children

Friends & Loved Ones Of Lillian Rystad

Those serving in uniform, especially Lucas Denio, Jessica Folks, Jake Riethmeier, Neal Scott, Allen Dale Smock, and Richard Straut. For our enemies and those we find hard to love, and for all who travel.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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



Our Fa-ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for-give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

SENDING

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace, in the name of the Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: Thanks be to God.

ATTENTION!

During these trying times, while we are unable to gather, our church office is open and we are busy attempting to keep us connected through video worship and electronic materials. It should be noted that offerings are still being accepted by mail or through tithe.ly with the link below.

We thank you for your support during this time and hope we are able to come together in worship and fellowship soon. Take care of yourselves.

Many Blessings.



TITHE.LY

Our direct giving link:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=558114>