

A Service of Worship
March 26, 2023
Fifth Sunday in Lent

We Gather at God's Call

Introit

Lift High the Cross

Greeting

Pouring of the Water

Prelude

Massanutten Ringers

Words for Reflection

the answer is yes

*It's the question we ask at the end of our rope,
when the storm is raging,
when the monsters under the bed have
introduced themselves.*

*When everything around us seems to be on fire.
It's the question we ask when hope slips through like
sand in a bottle,
when the mockingbirds stop singing,
when the news reporter leads with another mass shooting.
It's the question we ask when the depression moves in,
making herself at home, making a mess of it all.*

*It's the question we ask
when we're not sure if Easter will come.*

Will it be Lent forever?

Will the sun ever rise?

Will this hope lead to something?

Can these bones ever live?

*Call to Worship

Kathy Frakes, Worship Leader

Have you ever felt washed up, brittle, worn-down to the bone?

Have you ever felt grief lay heavy on your back?

Have you ever felt like hope was out of reach?

Have you ever wondered, can these bones live?

If you have, then you are in the right place, for this is God's house.

Hope lives here.

**So, come. Rest your weary bones.
Let us worship Holy God.**

*Hymn

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

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*Breathe on me, Breath of God;
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.*

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Jesus of Nazareth, I confess:

I forget that you know this feeling.

I forget that you, too, have wept.

I forget that you, too, have lost.

I forget that you, too, have gathered at the tomb,

have grieved for a friend, have felt the sting of humanity.

Forgive me for all the times I place blame on you.

**Forgive me for all the times I create distance,
imagining that you could never feel what I feel.**

**Forgive me for allowing the valley of dry bones
to be a sea of space between us.**

Pour yourself into the cracks in my heart.

Bring these bones back to life.

Bring me closer to you.

With gratitude I pray, amen.

*Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends, you could spend your whole life ignoring God, pushing God away,
or trying to solve the world's problems all on your own,
and God would still love you all the same.

Even in our shortcomings, we are God's beloved.

So hear and believe this good news:

We are saved by grace through faith.

We belong to God.

We are not alone.

*Response of Praise

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

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*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
God's mercies never come to an end.
They are new every morning, new every morning;
great is your faithfulness, O Lord,
great is your faithfulness.*

We Gather around God's Word

Time with the Children

Pastor Ann Pettit

Scripture

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Sermon

Seeking: Can These Bones Live?

Pastor Keith Phillips

We Respond to God's Word

*Affirmation of Faith (*responsively*)

We believe that God loves us—

God loves us enough to weep when we are gone.

We believe that God does not give up on us—

breathing new life into tired bones.

We believe that God returns to us—

always seeking us when we are lost.

We believe that God holds hope for us—

so we hold onto hope as well.

We believe, help our unbelief.

In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Anthem

Jerusalem

-Perry

*O day of peace that dimly shines
Through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
Guide us to justice, truth, and love,
Delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
Our hearts from envy find release,
Till by God's grace our warring world
Shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.*

*Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb
Nor shall the fierce devour the small;
As beasts and cattle calmly graze,
A little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
And creatures find their true accord;
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
For all the earth shall know the Lord.*

Concerns of the Congregation

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

We Are Sent to the World

*Hymn

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

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*Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.*

Refrain:

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

*Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.*

*Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice. (Refrain)*

*Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. (Refrain)*

*Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. (Refrain)*

*Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come. (Refrain)*

*Benediction

*Benediction Response

Spirit of the Living God

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*Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Melt me; mold me;
fill me; use me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.*

Poem and liturgy written by Rev. Sarah A. Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org