

March 29, 2020 ~ Fifth Sunday in Lent

MORNING WORSHIP

*Let us observe silence as the ringing of the bells moves us
from a spirit of getting here to a spirit of being here.*

GATHERED BY GOD IN WONDER

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

MINUTE FOR MISSION

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

REMEMBERING OUR BAPTISMS

GATHERING SONG: No. 291 - "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" (refrain only)

Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free.

Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

CALL TO WORSHIP:

We have been in the wilderness—

Discerning and working, seeking and dreaming.

We have been in the wilderness—

Grieving and wondering, praying and hoping.

We have been in the wilderness—

Longing and running, creating and waiting.

We have been in the wilderness, but we have not been alone; for God walks with us, every step of the way.

So let us worship the God of our darkest nights and our brightest days.

Let us worship Holy God.

*OPENING SONG OF PRAISE: No. 288 - "Spirit of the Living God"

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.

ADMITTING THE BROKENNESS OF LIFE

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Gracious God,

You invite us to plant a garden of love and harmony, but we grow weeds of prejudice and hatred. You invite us to sow joy and gratitude, but we scatter seeds of greed and envy. You call us to tend the soil of fear and denial, but instead we close our eyes and let the Earth suffer. Forgive us. You invited us to plant a garden, and we lost ourselves in the wilderness. Clear our hearts.

Breathe life into these weary bones and grant us a fresh start.

Gratefully we pray...

Time for silent confession...

AMEN.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS:

*SONG OF RESPONSE: No. 166 - "Lord, Who Throughout these Forty Days" (v.3)

And through these days of penitence, and through this Passiontide,

Yes, evermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD IN OUR MIDST

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Ezekiel 37:1-14 | John 11:1

SERMON: "Can These Bones Live?"

*HYMN OF RESPONSE: No. 785 - "In Deepest Night"

In deepest night, in darkest days,
when harps are hung, no songs we raise,
when silence must suffice as praise,
yet sounding in us quietly
there is the song of God.

When friend was lost, when love deceived,
dear Jesus wept, God was bereaved;
so with us in our grief God grieves,
and round about us mournfully
there are the tears of God.

When through the waters winds our path,
around us pain, around us death,
deep calls to deep, a saving breath,
and found beside us faithfully
there is the love of God.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *A Brief Statement of Faith*, p. 37 - sections 1 and 2

In life and in death we belong to God.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE AND SERVICE

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS

*DOXOLOGY: - No. 645 - "Sing the Praise to God (v.3)

The Lord is never far away, but, through all grief distressing,
an ever-present help and stay, our peace and joy and blessing,
as with a mother's tender hand God gently leads her chosen band:
to God all praise and glory!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

A PRAYER FOR MERCY

Leader: Lord we gather today facing uncertainty, anxiety and fear as the world struggles with the unknowns of Covid-19. We confess that we are troubled by rapidly changing events and we worry about how the ripple effect of this crisis may impact our own day to day lives and the lives of those we love.

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

Leader: We pray now for those who are ill with this virus, and for the families and loved ones of those who have died. Bring healing to those who are sick, protection to those who are elderly, and comfort to those who mourn. Bless those who are in quarantine and those who are awaiting test results. Be near to those who are lonely, grant patience to those who wait. We remember in particular the people of China, South Korea, Iran and Italy.

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

Leader: We pray now for doctors, nurses, lab technicians, paramedics and first responders, pharmacists, those working to develop vaccines and all those in health care who risk their own lives to care for others. Grant protection to them and to their families. May they know an extra measure of your grace.

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

Leader: We pray now for leaders of our government and for government officials around the world at local, regional and national levels. Give them wisdom to act for the wellbeing of all people. Grant them the courage to make difficult decisions. Empower them to be truthful and to lead with compassion.

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

Leader: We pray now for our own campus, and for schools and universities around the world. Bless the administrators who are faced with the difficult work of keeping students, faculty and staff safe, while also continuing the sacred task of education. Bless them with the wisdom they need to make the decisions that they must. Grant us all the grace to adapt to our changing world.

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

Leader: We pray now for the poor who are suffering the most from this illness and from its economic fallout. We pray for those with no access to health care or health insurance, for those with no paid sick leave, for children who will not eat when schools are closed and for those in industries whose jobs are being most severely threatened.

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

Leader: We pray for all those people and places that were already facing intense suffering before the Covid-19 crisis began. We pray for the people of Syria, for those children and families at our borders, for the many around the world who struggle with intense poverty and disease. And we remember the challenges and brokenness of our beloved Mother Earth. May we not forget these people or these realities while we focus on this new challenge.

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

Leader: Finally, we pray Lord for the unnamed concerns of our hearts (silence). In your mercy Lord: **Hear our prayers.** We ask that as we offer these concerns to you we not be overcome by fear. We ask that every time we wash our hands we receive your call to open our hands, and to open our hearts to those in need. Help us to care for one another. And may we remember your promise which the Psalmist proclaims: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear." (Psalm 46:1-2)

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

ALL: AMEN.

*FINAL HYMN: No. 795 - "Healer of Our Every Ill"

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.

In the pain and joy beholding
how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love.

Give us strength to love each other,
every sister, every brother;
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.

You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.

*BENEDICTION

*SUNG BENEDICTION: NO. 783 - "When We Are Tested (v.2)

SLANE

When in the desert we cry for relief, pleading for paths marked by certain
belief,

Lift us to love you beyond sign and test, trusting your presence, our only true
rest.

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**A Note About Our Liturgical Space:**

The banners in the sanctuary are drawings by Lisle Gwynn Garrity, one of the Pastrists (Pastor/Artist) at A Sanctified Art. Behind the pulpit, "Valley of Dry Bones" was inspired by Ezekiel 37:1-14. Closer to the piano, "Be Still" was inspired by Psalm 46. These are bookends of the Wilderness journey we have traveled through Lent - a valley of death and dry bones, to a place of life and rest.

The jars on the table were designed by Lisle Gwynn Garrity and Hannah Garrity, also of A Sanctified Art.

Sand accumulates slowly over time, wearing away from rock and stone, crystallizing tiny organisms and minerals into hard matter. In the deep crust of the

earth, grains of sand compress into stone. Sand reminds us that the wilderness has history, for as long as there has been creation, there has been wilderness.

In the winter, many trees let go of their leaves. Some trees need to be pruned in order to bear fruit. Trees remind us that we have to let go in order to start anew. And every spring, trees show us what it looks like to become new.

The stones represent prayers for those going through the wilderness of uncertainty, grief, sickness, or hardship.

Moss has no roots and requires no soil. Instead, it grows on the face of stone. Moss is known for its hardiness—it can sustain drought, too much rain, and cold temperatures. Some mosses can grow again after being frozen for over a thousand years. Moss reminds us that the wilderness is a place of new life, of resilient life.

Prayers of the People: Refrain taken from hymn #795 (*Glory to God*), *Healer of Our Every Ill* by Marty Haugen. Text and Music © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission

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