

Stewardship 2026 Join the Journey

*"Trust in God from the bottom of your heart;
don't try to figure out everything on your own.
Listen for God's voice in everything you do,
everywhere you go." Proverbs 3:4-6*



WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026

8:00 AM Traditional Worship

Pastor: Paula Geister-Jones **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman

Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz

Lector: Marti Conant

Acolyte: Ben Foltz

Ushers: Sue Walls, Sandra Maerz, Sue Weum & Sharon Manson

Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

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.

CALL TO WORSHIP: "I Am the Bread of Life" Toolan/Biery

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

C: Amen.

Stand

HYMN: "Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" #886 ELW vs. 1-4

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: page 147 ELW (*front of the hymnal*)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: page 148 ELW (*front of hymnal*)

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: **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.**

Sit

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹⁻² God grabbed me. God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun. ³ He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Master God, only you know that." ⁴ He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones: 'Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!'" ⁵⁻⁶ God, the Master, told the dry bones, "Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life. I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am God!" ⁷⁻⁸ I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them. ⁹ He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, son of man. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army. ¹¹ Then God said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Listen to what they're saying: 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone, there's nothing left of us.'" ¹²⁻¹⁴ "Therefore, prophecy. Tell them, 'God, the Master, says: I'll dig up your graves and bring you out alive—O my people! Then I'll take you straight to the land of Israel. When I dig up graves and bring you out as my people, you'll realize that I am God. I'll breathe my life into you and you'll live. Then I'll lead

you straight back to your land and you'll realize that I am God. I've said it and I'll do it. God's Decree."

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "Return to the Lord?" page 151 ELW

The Gospel is announced...

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the 11th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Sit

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

Narrator:¹⁻³ A man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. This was the same Mary who massaged the Lord's feet with aromatic oils and then wiped them with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick. So the sisters sent word to Jesus,

Sisters (All): "Master, the one you love so very much is sick."

Narrator:⁴ When Jesus got the message, he said, "This sickness is not fatal. It will become an occasion to show God's glory by glorifying God's Son."⁵⁻

⁷ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, but oddly, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed on where he was for two more days. After the two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."⁸ They said,

Disciples (All): "Rabbi, you can't do that. The Jews are out to kill you, and you're going back?"

Narrator:⁹⁻¹⁰ Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in daylight doesn't stumble because there's plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, he might very well stumble because he can't see where he's going." He said these things, and then announced, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him up."

Disciples (All):¹²⁻¹³ **The disciples said, "Master, if he's gone to sleep, he'll get a good rest and wake up feeling fine."**

Narrator: Jesus was talking about death, while his disciples thought he was talking about taking a nap.¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Then Jesus became explicit: "Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let's go to him."¹⁶ That's when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions,

Disciple Thomas (All): "Come along. We might as well die with him."

Narrator:¹⁷⁻²⁰ When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four

days dead. Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother. Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house. ²¹⁻²² Martha said,

Martha (All): “Master, if you’d been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you.”

Narrator: ²³ Jesus said, “Your brother will be raised up.” ²⁴ Martha replied,

Martha (All): “I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time.”

Narrator:²⁵⁻²⁶ “You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?”

Martha (All): ²⁷ “Yes, Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world.”

Narrator: ²⁸ After saying this, she went to her sister Mary and whispered in her ear,

Martha (All): “The Teacher is here and is asking for you.”

Narrator: ²⁹⁻³² The moment she heard that, she jumped up and ran out to him. Jesus had not yet entered the town but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When her sympathizing Jewish friends saw Mary run off, they followed her, thinking she was on her way to the tomb to weep there. Mary came to where Jesus was waiting and fell at his feet, saying,

Mary (All): “Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Narrator: ³³⁻³⁴ When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him. He said, “Where did you put him?”

Jews (All) ^{34- 35} “Master, come and see,” they said.

Narrator: Now Jesus wept. ³⁶ The Jews said,

Jews (All): “Look how deeply he loved him.”³⁷ Others among them said, “Well, if he loved him so much, why didn’t he do something to keep him from dying? After all, he opened the eyes of a blind man.”

Narrator: ³⁸⁻³⁹ Then Jesus, the anger again welling up within him, arrived at the tomb. It was a simple cave in the hillside with a slab of stone laid against it. Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” The sister of the dead man, Martha, said,

Martha (All): “Master, by this time there’s a stench. He’s been dead four days!”

Narrator: ⁴⁰ Jesus looked her in the eye. “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed,

you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹⁻⁴² Then, to the others, “Go ahead, take away the stone. “They removed the stone. Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed, “Father, I’m grateful that you have listened to me. I know you always do listen, but on account of this crowd standing here I’ve spoken so that they might believe that you sent me.”⁴³⁻⁴⁴ Then he shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And he came out, a cadaver, wrapped from head to toe, and with a kerchief over his face. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him loose.”⁴⁵⁻⁴⁸ That was a turning point for many of the Jews who were with Mary. They saw what Jesus did, and believed in him. But some went back to the Pharisees and told on Jesus. The high priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish ruling body.

High Priest and Pharisees (All): “What do we do now?” they asked. “This man keeps on doing things, creating God-signs. If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Stand

HYMN: “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” #773 ELW

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

P: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence

P: We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERTORY: “Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart” Schmid

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: O God, maker of heaven and earth,

C: your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through your Word, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stand

BLESSING

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, † bless you now and always.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING HYMN: “Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death” #452 ELW vs 1;4;5

POSTLUDE: “O God, Who Gives Us Life”