

Sebastopol United Methodist Church
Sunday, March 29, 2020 – Fifth Sunday in Lent
Order of Worship

Seasonal Theme:

We head toward the passion and cross of Christ.

Theme for the day:

New life in Christ. God gives us life out of death.

Call to worship:

When I cry out to you from the depths, Lord – My Lord, listen to my voice! When our lives become a valley of dry bones, God clothes us with flesh and hearts that beat with love. When our souls seem withered away, God breathes new life into us once more that we might live. Behold a miracle. The graves are opened. Death has lost its sting. Come and worship the one who never forsakes us!

Prayer of Illumination:

As we worship you today, show us who we are: bearers of good news and messengers of resurrection. Lord, we wait for you, and in your Word we trust. By the power of your holy spirit, set our hearts and minds on the source of life and peace, in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Readings from Scripture: **Ezekiel 37:1-14** **John 11:17-40**

[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 2]

Message: **A HOME VISITATION IS A BLESSING!**

Pastoral Prayer

Without the breath of life, we are nothing; and without the word of God, we are dust. Let us offer our lives and offering to God (which you may send by mail, if you wish).

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:

Holy God, giver of life, we thank you for raising us up and connecting us during this unprecedented time as one people -- your people -- interwoven with your love. We dedicate our offering and ourselves in deep gratitude, for your call on our lives and for blessing us that we may be a blessing to others.

In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Blessing and Benediction

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Scripture Readings – March 29, 2020

first reading -- **EZEKIEL 37:1-14**

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to

the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

second reading -- JOHN 11:17-40

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, '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?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary

came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?'

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Thank you for worshipping with us today.