

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

March 29 and April 1, 2023



"Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.'" ~Ezekiel 37:4 (NRSV)



Ezekiel in the Valley of the Dry Bones (1956)
by Benno Elkan 1877-1960

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“HOLY SPIRIT”

AAAH 319

GREETING

PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

In every fragment of time, O God, You work Your acts of grace.

In every grain of earth, O Christ, You bring Your grace to life.

In every breath of every living thing, **O Spirit, You whisper Your grace to our souls.**

Open our eyes, open our ears, and open our hearts...

Open the senses of all people to Your ever-present grace;

That those who are disillusioned may hope again,

That those who are frightened may trust again,

That those who despair may rejoice again,

That those who grieve and are lost may love again.

And that all creation may be filled again with wonder at Your gracious glory.

Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

“O HOLY SPIRIT, ROOT OF LIFE”

NCH 57

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Sat. Only [All are invited to turn toward the Baptismal Font.]

When we seek God’s mercy, we draw close to the mystery of faith: love that cannot be undone by our sin. Trusting that God is grace, let us offer to God the truth of our lives, first in silent prayer.

*SILENT PRAYER

Holy Lord,

God of life, hear our prayer:

Forgive us when we follow those paths that do not lead to life,

That lead instead to violence, or hate, or fear,

Paths that lead to dread and death.

Forgive us when we forget that you offer us life,

Life that is abundant and eternal,

Life that began at the creation of all things.

Forgive us, turn us to the right path,

and let your love and grace flow over us and the world.

We pray in Jesus’ name and for his sake. Amen.

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Amen.**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

STUDENT MINISTER

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a non-contact way that's comfortable to you and your neighbor.

Marianne Williamson said, "Inner peace doesn't come from getting what we want, but from remembering who we are." Let us remember today. Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Let us share this peace with one another.

Service of the Word

POEM[SAT. ONLY]

"RENEWAL OF STRENGTH" FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Living God, help us so to hear your Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe; and believing, we may follow your way in all faithfulness, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

NRSV

SERMON

REV. DEBORAH APPLER - MAR. 29

REV. BOB GARVEY - APR. 1

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

God, our world desperately needs your compassion and grace:

We are at war and need to learn peace and understanding, We are greedy and selfish and need to learn to serve and to share the abundance of your world, We are impatient and careless and need to learn to use this world's resources wisely and sustainably.

We are callous and judgemental and need to learn to care for and to befriend one another. And we are among those who are sick, grieving, lonely, broken and wounded.

Hear our prayers, Lord, and answer. Teach us to live as those who give and receive compassion, even as you have been compassionate toward us.

Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

This is the open and inclusive table of God where everyone is invited to receive God's love for themselves, and to share God's love with one another.

Let us approach this table of friendship and blessing, grateful for Christ's promise to live within, and among all those who love others as themselves.

We want to receive God's love. We want to share God's love.

We are all invited to freely receive, and to generously share, God's love today. So as we prepare to take this bread and this cup, let us try to remain mindful of these words,

"Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first,' doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end."

We are ready to be filled with God's love. We are ready to be quenched by God's love.

Today we remember that, in the midst of trial and tribulation, Jesus reassured his friends that, even though their pain would one day pass away, his spirit and friendship would remain with them forever.

Taking the bread and breaking it he said to them, “Take and eat. This bread is a symbol of my sacrifice and the lengths I will go to demonstrate my love for you. Each time you share it, remember me.”

Lifting the cup, Jesus again looked tenderly upon his friends. Sensing their anxiety and fear, he tried to comfort them with a message of hope and a sign of love. He told them, “Take and drink. This cup is a symbol of a renewed relationship with you; a relationship, not based in fear but forgiveness. Whenever you share it, remember me.”

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Open our minds and hearts to the mystery of Christ’s love, within these ordinary things, and within our ordinary lives. May they impart God’s love to us, so that we may share God’s love with others.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRESIDER

We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty eco-friendly cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. All bread is gluten free.

Or you may take one of the sealed celebration cups with the wafer on top and juice beneath; hold them out to the minister for a blessing. A minister will pour grape juice into your cup. Eat, drink, and dispose of the cup in the waste baskets at the side aisles as you return to your seat.

COMMUNION SONG

“BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD”

NCH 292

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

PRESIDER

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ, and nourished us at your table with this holy food and drink. Thank you for quieting our minds and strengthening our hearts today. **Inspire us now to do your work in the world as open, inclusive, peaceful and loving people of faith. Amen.**

***CLOSING SONG**

“EVERY TIME I FEEL THE SPIRIT”

NCH 282

***BENEDICTION**

SENDING & POSTLUDE

*Through fresh divine breathes,
You are renewed and prepared to live again.*

Cover Art: Elkan, Benno, 1877-1960. Ezekiel in the Valley of the Dry Bones, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55841>

Call to Worship: "Opening." Sacredise: <https://sacredise.com/opening/>

Confession and Words of Assurance: *Written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'.
<https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com>. Used with permission.*

Passing the Peace: Adapted from Williamson, Marianne. *KeepInspiring.Me*. <https://www.keepinspiring.me/peace-quotes/>

Prayer for Illumination: https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Liturgist_Resources-1.pdf

Prayers of the Community: Adapted from "A Liturgy of Compassion." Sacredise.

<https://sacredise.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-Liturgy-Of-Compassion.pdf>

Poem: Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins. "Renewal of Strength." Poets.org. <https://poets.org/poem/renewal-strength>

Communion Liturgy: Adapted from "Service of Holy Communion." Southminster United Church.

<http://southminsterunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Responsive-Communion-Liturgy-LOVE-2016.pdf>

***The worship planning team creates all other parts of the liturgy except where noted.**

LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM

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THE WORSHIP TEAM SEEKS:

To serve the universal church of our Creator.

To minister to the unique and diverse needs of the seminary community.

To foster an expansive culture of worship that values difference and challenges the normative.