

March 29, 2020 Service

Welcome and Announcements:

Wednesday Lenten service at 7pm on Facebook – hope you can join me!

Don't forget your offering – we continue to need the financial support

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, the eternal voice from heaven, the anointed and beloved one, the Spirit moving over the waters. Amen

As we approach the mystery of God, let us come in confessions, trusting the love of Christ crucified and risen,

God who searches us and knows us,

**You have shown us what is good, but we have looked to other lights to find our way. We have not been just in our dealings with others. We have chosen revenge over mercy. We have promoted ourselves instead of walking humbly with you. With what shall we come before you? Forgive us our sin and show us your salvation in the face of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Beloved of God, you have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, poured out for you in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Receive the promise of baptism: You are God's child; +your sins are forgiven. Rejoice and be glad, for yours is the reign of heaven. Amen

Prayer of the Day: **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.**

### **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

37 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. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath<sup>[a]</sup> to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath<sup>[b]</sup> in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: [c] Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, [d] and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup> 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.' <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> 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."

Gospel according to John 11:1-45. **Glory to you O Lord.**

<sup>11</sup> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, [a] "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> after having heard that Lazarus [b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

<sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." <sup>11</sup> After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." <sup>13</sup> Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup> Thomas, who was called the Twin, [c] said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus [d] had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles [e] away, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. [f] Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, [g] the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup> 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." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> 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." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> 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 four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children's Message:** *Sermons4kids.com*

*Object:*

A small clear bottle with a little water in it.

In the book of Psalms, David asked God to put his tears in a bottle. (Psalm 56:8) Do you see this little bottle? I call it "My Tears Bottle." These aren't real tears, it's just water, but it reminds me of the times that I have cried real tears. Now, I don't know that God keeps our tears in a bottle like this one, but I do believe that God sees our tears and hears us when we cry.

Do you ever cry? Of course you do.

What is something that makes you cry? (Allow responses.)

I made a list of some things that make us cry.

Raise your hand if you've ever fallen down and hurt yourself so badly that you cried. (Allow responses.)

Raise your hand if you ever have been so sad that you cried. (Allow responses.)

Raise your hand if someone hurt your feelings and you cried. (Allow responses.)

Raise your hand if you've ever cried because someone else was crying. (Allow responses.)

We all cry, don't we? Did you know that Jesus cried? The shortest verse in the entire Bible says, "Jesus wept." I know of at least three things that made Jesus cry.

The Bible tells us that Jesus cried when He prayed for others. It says, "While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears." (Hebrews 5:7 NLT)

The Bible also tells us that Jesus cried when He saw people who were missing out on what God wanted for them.

Another time, the Bible tells us that Jesus cried when friends of His were hurting. Jesus had a friend named Lazarus who became very sick. His sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus and asked Him to come and heal Lazarus, but when Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already died. The Bible tells us that when Jesus saw Mary weeping because her brother had died, He cried too.

That isn't all that Jesus did; listen to what happened next.

Jesus went with Mary and Martha and some others to visit the grave where Lazarus was buried. It was a cave with a large stone across the entrance. When they arrived at the tomb, Jesus said to some of the men who were with them, "Take away the stone." Then Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus walked out of the grave. I imagine that when she saw that, Mary's tears of sadness turned to tears of joy.

We all cry, and I am glad that we have a Savior who weeps too. I am glad that He loves us so much that He hurts when we are hurting. He feels our pain. He sees our tears and He keeps our tears in a bottle.

Dear Jesus, it is comforting to know that when we cry, You cry with us. But it is even more comforting to know that You have power over death and the grave and that one day we will be in heaven with You--and then there will be no more tears. In Jesus' name, amen

### **Message:**

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Well, I don't know about you but I really miss everyone in my life – even people I don't know and just pass at stores and businesses. There is just nothing I enjoy about distancing. I am the type of person who says Hi to those I pass by – so much so that my grandson always says "do you know them". So I just wish that all of you could just talk right back to me now even as I do this service. I, as I know all of you will, will continue to hang on and do as we are advised for as long as we need. Just know that I might be calling some time just to CHAT! Oh and I've also turned in to my parents in that I cannot hardly remember what day it is. I can totally understand why and how that happens for our elderly when you spend so much of your time at home.

Our Gospel today talks about death. Something that no one really wants to talk about much less think about. It's hard in that sometimes when we do we may find ourselves wondering where we can see God's glory in the procession that always ends the same for each of us – in death. We know from experiences we have ourselves – we know that death stinks. It hurts, it makes us sad and it can make us angry, it makes us lonely

at times and it makes us wonder WHY even? So, where is it that we can see God's glory in death?

Think about what we are hearing and the world is experiencing just in these last few weeks. Death is happening all over right now and over and over. Every time we turn our televisions on there is another number thrown at us of those that have succumbed to this virus. All of those deaths can have an effect on us – even if they aren't people we know. Death is all around us and we can't help but feel the loss and wonder where God is in these uncertain times.

Death is not easy – it's not something that we should marginalize in regards to the difficulty we have when we lose someone or how we attempt to find a new normal in our lives. The pain, the suffering, the loneliness – all of it is very real. We have an emptiness where that person once was and those feelings are real and understandable. So as we look at our text today with Mary, Martha, Lazarus and Jesus, we need to hold on to our own reality of the pain and grief of death and how it wounds us. We hold the loss of our loved ones sacred just as we should also hold this text sacred.

Our Gospel comes to us after Jesus has had a confrontation with the religious leaders of the Jews. He and the disciples have attempted to distance themselves a bit from everyone and have crossed over the Jordan River to find some safety and allow themselves a moment to collect themselves and re-group. See there was social distancing even back then!!!! While they are there however Jesus gets the news that his friend Lazarus is sick. Strangely, we don't see Jesus doing as he has done for so many before. He doesn't take off and head to be by Lazarus' side – in fact does absolutely nothing at the time. He has healed and cared for strangers all along his journey but that's not the case with Lazarus.

John is intentional in his account of this story to point out that there is a real connection – a love – between Jesus and his friend Lazarus. Mary and Martha send words to him that “he whom you LOVE is ill” and “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” – he's not just an acquaintance but someone he loves and yet he doesn't go to see him for two days. And while those days go by Lazarus dies.

By the time Jesus gets there Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days already. Martha, hearing that Jesus was on his way takes off to meet him and doesn't mince words, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died”. Basically, what took you so long???? Where were you when we needed you?

Sound like a time in your own life where you wonder where God is?? I know I have had times where I wonder about God's timing – you pray and pray and the answers just don't seem to come or they don't come fast enough. At least they don't come as fast as we think they should. So in that, we can relate to what Martha is feeling when she reaches out to Jesus for answers.

My hope, however, is that when we too question God's timing or an outcome we can't understand, that we can also be like Martha and have faith and hope. Martha admits that she has faith in the resurrection. “Even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him” and “Yes Lord, I believe you are the Messiah” she says. Yes I believe that you are the one who will save Lazarus and me and everyone else. Yes, I believe Jesus, even when I have not yet seen it and Jesus says 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”. But the reality is at this time Lazarus is still very dead. But remember it takes death to have resurrection. You can't have one without the other. They go hand in hand. There is hope that comes with death and we are

reminded of that when we too lose our loved ones – a hope that they have gone to a better place. A hope that they are living their everlasting life.

Our story continues with Martha returning home to Mary and telling Mary that she has met Jesus and that he is on his way. Mary – who just can't wait – literally gets' up quickly, it says, and takes off with all of her mourning guests following to find Jesus and have her time seeking answers. Mary follows suit with Martha and greets him with the identical frustration as her sisters, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And then it happens, Mary weeps, and all those that followed weep and JESUS weeps. Our passage says "he was greatly disturbed in spirit" – we know that feeling, that sadness when we lose someone we love. We weep just like they did and we feel just like they did. But Jesus doesn't let the story end there. He asks them "where have you laid him?"

Still very upset and "greatly disturbed" our passage says, Jesus came to the tomb where Lazarus laid. Just like the tomb of Jesus, the tomb was covered by a stone. Jesus calls for the stone to be moved away and for a quick moment we can face the reality of the situation when Martha says "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days". Lazarus' death is real and not just a matter of breathing life back into someone who has just taken their last breath. It's been four days – and Martha, as much as she believes, must be questioning a bit when she reminds Jesus of the timeline he is working with. She must have felt a little bit of hopelessness as Lazarus' body would already be decaying but that doesn't stop Jesus.

Jesus calls out "Lazarus, come out" and to the surprise of everyone, he does. He comes out of that tomb, wrapped in the cloth that they had prepared his body in, and Jesus tells them to "unbind him, and let him go".

There is a lot to learn from this passage. First we can find the obvious connection of this story to the death and resurrection of Christ and the story of Easter. We are just weeks away from Easter and this story is a prelude to what is coming. This story gives us a chance to hope. It also gives us a look at resurrection and what that is and what that means. This story gives us a chance to know Jesus as the son of God. This story shows us that out of despair can come hope for all those who being that Jesus Christ is our Lord and our Savior.

Second, this passage reminds us that even when we don't think God is listening or that God is acting fast enough – that God is still there. Jesus wept for Lazarus and showed us that he understands. Jesus understands sorrow and grief and hopes to help us remember that out of all of those human pains and struggles that we can find new life, and hope to go on midst all of the turmoil.

We also find that Jesus doesn't raise Lazarus and just expect everyone to watch and marvel in it. He involves those that have gathered in asking them to remove the cloth that has been wrapped around Lazarus. This brings to me the idea that we aren't in this life alone. We need each other and God wants us to be there to unbind each other in service and in prayers. We are to be gathered brothers and sisters in Christ to do the work that Jesus started for us.

Finally, we can learn through this story that Jesus was raised from the dead by the same God who raised Him, who raise Lazarus and who will raise you and I from death into life. We when believe, when we make Jesus our Lord and Savior we are His. We are God's forever and ever and ever.

So with this in mind, let's all remember that our lives are not about our timing and therefore we need to trust in God's timing. After all, if he can take care of life everlasting for us, he clearly can take care of the little things in our lives. He can get us through all of these crazy and uncertain times of the COVID virus, and all the changes in how we continue to educate our children and all of the other things that we are doing differently and apart from each other. He can give us hope. He can give us meaning and he can even give us joy in the fact that we are not alone and that we are loved through it all.

Let us pray together.....

Lord, like those that gathered around the tomb, help us to find comfort and hope from this story of Jesus and Lazarus. Help us to shine brightly with that comfort and hope as we share our blessings, and enable others to experience God's love and grace through our actions as members of the family of God.

Amen

### **Apostles 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 Christian/catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Amen

### **Prayers of the People:**

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of life, bind your faithful people into one body. Enliven the church with your Spirit. Accomplish your work of salvation in us and through us, for the sake of the world. Hear us O God, **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, show redemption to all who watch and wait with eager expectation: those longing for this virus to be gone, those longing for wars to cease, those waiting and watching as the river waters rise, those in dire need of humanitarian relief. Come quickly with your hope. Hear us O God, **Your mercy is great.**

God of Life, you weep with those who grieve. Unbind all who are held captive by anxiety, despair, or illness – we especially lift up all of those within our congregation and those dear to hearts now..... Fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. Hear us O God, **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you are our resurrection. Remember all those who have died in our lives and trust that, in you, they will live again. Breathe new life into our dry bones that we, too, might live with you forever. Hear us O God, **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord. Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us....

**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

**Hymn of the Day: Rock of Ages**

Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood  
from thy wounded side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure,  
cleanse me from its guilt and power.

**Blessing**

May Christ, the wisdom and power of God, and the source of our life together, keep you united in mind and purpose, and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, The +Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you always. Amen



# Jesus Raises Lazarus

