

Welcome to Aurora United Church

...uniting hearts and hands on the journey



Sunday, March 29, 2020

Fifth Sunday in Lent

*Life ends, but as we see in the image of Springtime emerging from winter,
life does come again. Renewed.*

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER

PRELUDE Menuet (*Maurice Ravel*)

WELCOME & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP *Lighting of the Christ Candle*

CALL TO WORSHIP Alison & Seth Backer

God of all our journeys,
you call your people to gather.

**We come as we are;
you meet us here.**

Though we are slow to open
ourselves to you—

**you take what we offer
and give it back again.**

These Lenten days provide
a way for us—a path to journey on—

**a way of Wilderness Wandering,
caring for God's Creation.**

Come, then, people of God,
and worship—

**and so we worship,
in the fullness of God's love.**

***HYMN** (VU 409) *Morning Has Broken*

Morning has broken like the first morning, black bird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven, like the first dew fall on the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning born of the one light Eden saw play!

Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's recreation of the new day!

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

On this fifth Sunday of Lent we open ourselves to the possibility of new life in impossible situations.

Like the prophet Ezekiel in the valley of the dry bones and Jesus facing Lazarus' tomb, we are called to find life where all others have given up hope.

(Fifth candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray...

God of hope, your Spirit is alive in places where we see only death. Help us to be open to the possibilities of new life that lie before us. Amen.

FINDING GOD TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE Ezekiel 37:1-14 (The valley of the dry bones.) NRSV Lisa Kyriakides

37The 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. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I 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.”

⁷So 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. ⁸I 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. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy 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.” ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹Then 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.’ ¹²Therefore 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. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that the Lord, have spoken and will act,” says the Lord.

GIFT OF MUSIC Amazing Grace (*John Henry Newton*) David Pilkey

GOSPEL John 11:1-45 (The raising of Lazarus.) NRSV (Video clip: The Gospel of John)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 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." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" 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. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb 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 four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. 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."

When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 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." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Come to the quiet...a time for reflection

SERMON **The Distance Between Us**

HYMN What Calls Me from the Death (Tune: VU 270)

What calls me from the death where I have rested?

Why am I now emerging from my tomb?

I sense that I am coming to be tested.

Is this my second birthing from the womb?

Now I can hear the voice of Jesus calling,
but it is not the Saviour's voice alone,
for others share their words as tears are falling.
Collectively, they roll away the stone.

The remnants of my past I now am shedding;
the bits of cloth that cling I now discard.
And in this new direction I am heading,
I know that I will find my own reward.

No matter that my tomb was of long standing,
that change seemed futile, out of reach for me.
If I accept the life that God is handing,
my blessing is a new identity. (*M.Bittner/F.K.Graham*)

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

A Statement about the gifts we bring in worship for the life of the church....

OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYER SHAWL BLESSING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN O World of God (VU 258)

O world of God, so vast and strange, profound and wonderful and fair,
beyond the utmost reach of thought but not beyond our Maker`s care!
We are not strangers on this earth whirling amid the suns of space;
we are God`s children, this our home, with those of every clime and race.

O world where human life is lived, so strangely mingling joy and pain,
so full of evil and of good, so needful that the good shall reign!
It is this world that God has loved, and goodness was its Maker`s plan,
the promise of God`s triumph is a humble birth in Bethlehem.

O world of time`s far-stretching years! There was a day when time stood still,
a central moment when there rose a cross upon a cruel hill;
in pain and death love`s power was seen, the mystery of time revealed,
the wisdom of the ways of God, the grace through which our hurt is healed.

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

We go now in the joy of God`s love,
knowing that nothing, not even death,
can separate us from that love.

And now, may the blessing of God, giver of every good and perfect gift;
the blessing of Christ, the Redeemer of the lost and broken;
the blessing of the Holy Spirit, God`s presence in our lives,
be with each one of us and all whom we love and serve. Amen.

POSTLUDE Dialogue sur les grand Jeux (*Louis-Nicolas Clerambault*)



The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast are on traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples.



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Participating in Worship today...

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar

Margaret Heney, Music Coordinator

Alison & Seth Backer

Lisa Kyriakides

David Pilkey

With thanks to... Bob Kyriakides, worship video editing

Keegan Comar, videographer...and to all who are filming at home in order
to participate in worship in some way!

