



# Order of Worship

Fifth Sunday of Lent  
March 26, 2023

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## Call to worship

We gather to worship God

**God who makes bones dance**

God who calls Lazarus from the grave.

**God who forgives us and gives us hope.**

## Call to confession

If the Lord marked our iniquities, we could not stand. But there is forgiveness with God. In trust and faith, let us offer our confessions to God.

## Prayer of confession (based on Psalm 130)

Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord. Hear our voices and let your ears be attentive to the voice of our supplications. We come into your presence confessing our sins, aware we have behaved in ways that are contrary to your desire for our living. We come into your presence aware that too often we allow lifelessness to gain the upper hand. We come into your presence aware that we put our trust in our own abilities. Forgive us, O God. Infuse us with your life-giving spirit. Breathe into us and make us come alive.

## Assurance of pardon

Hope in the Lord!

**With the Lord, there is steadfast love.**

With God, there is great power to redeem.

**Thanks be to God who redeems us from all our iniquities.**

## Prayer for illumination

Our souls wait for the Lord and in God's Word we hope. We wait for the Divine Word to envelop and guide us. We wait for the creating word to give us life and bring nourishment to our parched souls. Our souls wait for the Lord and in God's Word we hope.



## Scripture readings

## Sermon

### Affirmation of faith (from A Declaration of Faith)

Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom and its hidden presence amid the world's kingdoms. He taught his disciples to seek God's kingdom first. We believe Christ gives us and demands of us lives in pilgrimage toward God's kingdom. Like Christ we may enjoy on our journey all that sustains life and makes it pleasant and beautiful. No more than Christ are we spared the darkness, ambiguity, and threat of life in the world. We are in the world, but not of the world. Our confidence and hope for ourselves and other people do not rest in the powers and achievements of this world, but in the coming and hidden presence of God's kingdom. Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom: to serve as he has served us; to take up our cross, risking the consequences of faithful discipleship; to walk by faith, not by sight, to hope for what we have not seen.

### Call for the offering

We bring before God gifts of gratitude in response to God's gift of breath, life and wholeness.

### Prayer of dedication

Good and gracious God, may these gifts be one of the ways your life giving presence is experienced in our community. Use this money and use us to give hope to the hopeless, wholeness to the broken and fullness to the hungry. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

### Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of valley and grave, we come before you today and pray for your life-giving presence in places that seem dry and dead. There are those places we know from the news: Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, Greece, East Palestine — places where war, natural disaster and human greed has left dead bodies and broken lives behind. "Mortal, can these bones live?" You asked, O God. And for people in these places where they have had to bury ones they love even as they worry about their own living, give them breath that indeed they may live.

And then there are the places that don't make the national news, but we know oh so well because they are close to us ... [what are the dry and seemingly dead places in your community? Offer those prayers here.]

Across your created world, your people wait and hope. We wait for an end to gun violence. We wait for an end to racial injustice. We wait for an end to the hatred of White supremacy. We wait for an end to the priority of money over people. We wait for an end to all those things that rob your people of life, that rob your people of breath, that rob your people of wholeness.





And we hope ... we hope for the promise of the morning, the time when a new light will break on the horizon hinting at the glory of your presence in our midst. We hope for the promise of the resurrection, of the life that is ours even when we don't see it fully. We give thanks for ... [Offer the prayers of joy from your community here.]

As we gaze across your world, O God, we wonder where we fit in. Where would you have us be, O God? What would you have us do? You know, O God if the bones can live. Do you invite us into partnership with you as you did with the mortal in Ezekiel 37? Do you extend to us the invitation to co-create? Do you hold forth for us to see the ways we can be your presence of life, of wholeness, of healing for your creation? Is it possible that in those things for which we wait, you invite us to be a sign of hope? Give us the courage to live the reality of the resurrection. Give us the courage to witness to new life. Give us the courage to step into your created world with your words of prophecy, with the courage to believe that you call us and guide us so that bones may live and your people may breathe.

In your name, we pray in the way that Jesus taught us, "Our Father...". us to pray like this: **"Our Father ..."**.

### **Charge and benediction**

Listen for the voice of God calling to you, "Mortal, can these bones live?" And in confidence, answer "O Lord God, You know." And then hold on — because God just may use you to make it happen.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest, remain and surround you today and all days. And all of God's people say ... **Amen.**

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Liturgy written by Sharon Core and provided for free distribution.

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