



JESUS RAISES LAZARUS. Jesus raises Lazarus to life, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48269> [retrieved March 15, 2023]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

March 19, 2023

Melville United Church

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Melville United Church

March 19, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Presiding today - Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Welcome

I greet you in the name of the one resurrects and is resurrected, Jesus the Christ.

We gather in community today – March 19, 2023 virtually and in person. We will continue to offer both in-person and on-line services with printed copies being distributed to those without internet access who are unable to attend in person. We encourage people to come out to worship in the sanctuary. There is ample room to socially distance, and you are welcome to wear masks or not as is comfortable for you.

For those who are joining us online or by reading, we invite you to light a candle or tea light.

We gather on this fourth Sunday of Lent, a season when we are invited to introspection, reflection and simple living as we seek to draw closer to our God through Jesus Christ.

Announcements

- **The organ needs your help.** Our beautiful Melville pipe organ is in need of repair. We have carefully completed repairs and general maintenance. As you are aware things break. There have been issues with the Swell expression for several years now. At this time the Swell expression is beyond repair and needs to be updated and replaced with a new louvre drive motor. The cost to restore the Swell expression with a new motor will be \$3000.00. Please consider making a donation for this very worthwhile project in order for Melville to continue enjoying this wonderful organ. For the many ways to donate, please consult the Melville web site. For further information contact Ralph Rainford 519 843-3841. Thank you for helping.
- People continue to suffer as a result of the earthquakes that struck **southern Türkiye (Turkey) near the border with Syria**. People need emergency shelter, blankets, mattresses, clean water, food, and hygiene items. We join Mission & Service partners the Middle East Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and the Humanitarian Coalition to show tangible support for the people of Türkiye and Syria. You can be a part of these efforts by donating now at <https://united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/earthquake-turkiye>. Thank you for your generosity.
- **UCW Meat Pies are available for purchase after the service from Marg Frayne. Only \$4.50 each, cash or cheques made payable to Melville United Church UCW.** Let your neighbours know about the meat pies. They're too delicious to keep just for Melville folk.
- **"MID-DAY MUSIC AT MELVILLE" presented and performed by pianist BRAD HALLS**
"Mid-Day Music at Melville" returns on Wednesday, March 22 from 12 noon to about 1:00 p.m., when pianist Brad Halls will present the last of his two-week look at the music by the prolific film composer James Van Heusen. This week Brad will focus on the second half of Van Heusen's career, and songs written most often with the legendary lyricist Sammy Cahn. You will enjoy familiar standards such as "All the Way", "Love and Marriage", "Come Fly With Me", "Call Me Irresponsible" and many more. There is absolutely no admission fee for the performance, but a voluntary contribution to Melville to keep the heat and lights on and the piano tuned is always welcome.

- Wednesday, March 22 at 7:30 pm** join us at **Rockwood Stone UC** or on **Zoom** for **Advanced Care Planning – Who Will Speak for You** with guest speaker **Rosslyn Bentley**. Rosslyn will present an overview of Advance Care Planning (ACP) in Ontario and the “Speak Up” campaign as well as the many resources available on-line and in the ACP workbook.

Sign up on Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/spring-wellnessseries-2-advanced-care-planning-who-will-speak-for-you-tickets-521143362827?aff=ebdssbdestsearch> If you don't have access to a computer and plan to attend in-person, you can leave a message at 519-856-4160.
- We're excited to invite you to our **annual congregational meeting on Sunday, March 26th**. There will be a short service at 11 and the meeting will take place immediately afterward in the Sanctuary. Coffee, juice, and light snacks will be provided. You can view the report online. Printed copies will be available on Sunday at the back of the Sanctuary, or you can come by the church during office hours and pick one up. <https://melvilleunited.com/2023/03/07/melville-annual-report-2022>
- Arkell United Church 600 Arkell Rd. Puslinch ON is hosting a **Movie Lunch Event: "The Passion of the Christ" Wednesday, March 29th 10:30 am to 1 pm**. Bring your own bag lunch. A hearty soup, tea & coffee will be provided. Goodwill offering appreciated towards costs. **RSVP to Peg 519-763-8883 before March 20th**.
- Arkell United Church 600 Arkell Rd. Puslinch ON is hosting a **Chili Dinner Friday, March 31st** with sittings at 5pm to 6pm and 6pm to 7pm. Tickets are \$15 each, children under 12 are free. Dinner is followed by the world-renowned Open Mic/Hootenanny. Sign up for your time in the spotlight. Contact the church for more information at 519-821-7623.
- VON invites you to join SMART (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) Gentle Exercise Program Classes** at Melville **Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 am** as there are available spots. The 10:30 class is fully booked. Call Danielle to register 519-803-0144.
- Friday or Sunday Coffee Time** – We encourage people to sign up to host either a Friday or a Sunday Coffee Time. It is not difficult! We'd be pleased to show you how. Sign-up sheets are at the Parlour Door. Please speak to Lorna Bevcar or Marg Frayne.
- Donations to Garage Sales:** If you know of anyone moving, down-sizing or de-cluttering, please keep Melville and our Garage Sales in mind.
- As more and more people find their dollar shrinking, and having to decide between rent and three meals a day, the demand for food bank assistance rises. We ask you to prayerfully consider if you are able to **support the Food Bank**, either with a donation of food, or financially. Food bank use is up 35% over the last three years. The food bank has also calculated that a basket of food and goods that cost \$39.85 in 2021 now costs \$50.83, a 27.55% increase in one year. The Food Bank is asking for your financial support at this challenging time.

Most needed items (as of March 15th):

Pasta Sauce	Mac & Cheese Side Dishes	Chunky Soup (Habitant)
Small Canned Soup	Pasta Side Dishes	Canned Vegetables
Cold Cereal	Peanut Butter	Juice
		Jam
		Canned Salmon

Well-stocked with:

Pasta	Spaghetti	Tomato Soup	Canned Chickpeas and Lentils
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- Save your Used Stamps from Incoming Mail:** Cut off your used stamps, leaving a 1/2" border around them and give them to Marlene Tosh or put them in the Stamp Box on the shelf in the Cloak Room, where the Lift is on the main floor of the church. Marlene tidies them up and takes them to the Bible Society, to buy bibles. You can do this year-round!

- **Gifts with Vision: A Giving Catalogue from The United Church of Canada**
 - Give meaningful gifts that make a difference with [Gifts with Vision \(opens in a new tab\)](#)! Each year's gift catalogue gives a glimpse of the breadth of our Mission & Service ministries and programs.
 - *Gifts with Vision* has gift ideas to suit every interest, budget, and person. It's a great way to celebrate special occasions and honour loved ones!
 - The gift catalogue is updated online regularly, and is fully refreshed every fall. It is also distributed in print with *Broadview* magazine, and mailed to each pastoral charge.
 - **To order gifts, be inspired, or learn more, visit [GiftsWithVision.ca \(opens in a new tab\)](#) today!**
- **Melville council has commissioned a Halo study in conjunction with the Trinity Centres Foundation.** This study will look to anchor Melville in Centre Wellington and determine our value to the community, as event and program space, volunteer time and effort and community well being. This will serve as a snapshot of the value Melville brings to the community in terms we can share with local governments, charitable organizations and current partners. This will serve as the foundation for further efforts to make Melville a sustainable, energetic, and integral part of Centre Wellington. Please ask a council member if you have any questions.

I invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.

Land Acknowledgement *Peter Chynoweth, Gathering: Pentecost 1 2022, p.33. Used with permission.*

We acknowledge that this land on which we gather for worship is the traditional land of the people of Petun,
Haudenosaunee, (Hoe-day-no-show-nee)
Anishinabewaki,
Mississaugas of the Credit,
Odawa and
Mississauga nations.

We acknowledge that we live on this land as people who have agreed to share the care and use of this land as a result of treaties—the Simcoe Patent-Treaty 4, 1793 and the Haldimand Treaty, 1784—that outline the rights and responsibilities associated with our place in this land. May we be people who remember this with thanksgiving and respect.

Lenten Tenebrae *Won Hur, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2023, p.66-68, alt. Used with permission.*

Three candles are lit, as well as the Christ candle.

O Jesus, you wept over your friend Lazarus.

Do you still weep for us?

Do you weep when forest fires rage, when homes are burnt, animals die, and the smoke blows?

Do you weep as floods destroy homes and livelihoods?

Do you weep for those suffering from illness and for their families?

Do you weep for those who live with a myriad of worries, anxiety and depression?

Do you weep for injustice, for those who experience ongoing racism, bullying and discrimination of all sorts?

Do you weep for those who have no more tears to shed, who have no more prayers to say, who have no more dreams to dream?

Then we are willing to shed our tears with you. We shed years for the world you love.

The fourth candle is extinguished.

Response: Don't Be Afraid

MV90

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Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Let us pray.

**O Christ, who weeps for us and with us,
we know that you are in our pain and in our suffering.
We also know that you are in our deepest longings.
We long for your kin-dom to come.
We pray that our tears of sorrow will lead to tears of joy.
Then may our tears of joy turn into a celebration
as we dance our way into a revolution of your love. Amen.**

Hymn: Breathe on Me, Breath of God

VU382

- 1 Breathe on me, breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.
- 2 Breathe on me, breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with thine,
to do and to endure.
- 3 Breathe on me, breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.
- 4 Breathe on me, breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Call to Reconciliation *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013, alt.*

God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Trusting in God's overflowing grace,
let us confess our sin, our shortcomings, our brokenness, all that stands between us and God,
As we share in our Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

Prayer Seeking Forgiveness and Reconciliation (in unison) *Spill the Beans Resources Team, spill the beans: worship and learning resources for all ages, Issue 34, p. 53. Copyright 2020, alt.*

**God of life
in all its eternal forms,
we travel through the cycle of this life,
birth to death,
but how much do we really live it?**

**You have given us a universe at which we can marvel,
a place and time about which to enquire and learn.**

**You have blessed us with people who love us,
with people who care for us and
whom we care for in return.**

**You are with us in the joy and pain
of birth and death,
comforting us when we need you most.**

**We are sorry that we do not always
acknowledge your presence in the joy or the pain,
that we do not always accept your comfort.**

**We are sorry for the times when we have failed you,
when we have been at fault in some way.**

**Forgive us, Lord,
we are weak and selfish.**

**Restore us to a full life,
a life of relationship,
a life of engagement with the whole of life.**

**Lead us forward,
guide us in the way of Jesus,
give us strength and energy
to follow wherever you lead us.**

**So be it.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance *George Allan, Gathering: Lent/Easter 2023, p.36. Used with permission.*

**No matter who we are,
no matter what we have done,
God, understanding and forgiving,
reaches out to enfold us in loving arms and make us whole.**

**We are a forgiven people.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Children's Ministry:

Yum, Yum! Look what I have...macaroni! I love macaroni, don't you? Would you like a taste of my macaroni? (Offer the children some of your dry, uncooked macaroni.) This doesn't look quite like the macaroni that my mom used to make. I wonder if it tastes good. (Eat one piece of macaroni.) Hmm...it seems to be missing something -- what do you think it needs? Well, for one thing, this macaroni hasn't been cooked. The first thing we need to do is to put it in some water and boil it on top of the stove until it becomes soft and tender. Next we need to drain the water off and add some other things to make it taste good. We need to add a little milk and some cheese and stir it all together. Then we'll put it in the oven and bake it for about 20 minutes. That will really make this dry, tasteless macaroni really come to life.

This dry macaroni reminds me of a story in the Bible. It is the story of the prophet Ezekiel. God took Ezekiel and showed him a valley that was filled with dry bones. They were scattered all around and there was no life in them. God spoke to Ezekiel and asked him, "Can these bones live again?" Well, Ezekiel didn't know what to say. "O LORD," he said, "only you know the answer to that." Then God spoke to Ezekiel and said, "Speak to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: Look! I am going to put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you and you will come to life.'"

So Ezekiel spoke the message just as God told him. As he spoke, there was a rattling noise across the valley and the bones came together and formed complete skeletons. Then muscles and flesh formed over the bones and skin covered their bodies. Finally, the winds came and filled the bodies with breath and they came alive!

Look at this macaroni again -- it is dry and hard and not very good at all. It looks like nothing can help it - nothing good can come of it. But we know better, don't we? We know that if we boil it for ten minutes and add some milk and cheese, we will have something very good indeed.

That's the way it is when we face something that is very hard in our lives. Sometimes it is hard to think that anything good can happen -- that everything is like it was in the valley of dry bones. But just as we know that this macaroni can become very good, we know that the hard things in our life can become a lot better. Just as God brought life to the valley of dry bones with the breath of his Holy Spirit, God can make bad things better in our lives too. And he will - when we trust him for it. That is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about.

Prayer/Blessing

Loving God, sometimes we face hard things and life seems hopeless. Help us to remember the lesson of the dry bones. If you can make dry bones live again, you can make something good out of the hard things in our life. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Song: Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem Dry Bones by James W. Johnson and J. Rosamund Johnson

Intro 1

Dem bones Dem bones Dem dry bones
Dem bones Dem bones Dem dry bones
Dem bones Dem bones Dem dry bones,
Hear the word of the Lord.

Verse 1

Toe bone connected to the foot bone
Foot bone connected to the heel bone

Heel bone connected to the ankle bone
Ankle bone connected to the leg bone
Leg bone connected to the knee bone
Knee bone connected to the thigh bone
Thigh bone connected to the hip bone
Hip bone connected to the back bone
Back bone connected to the shoulder bone
Shoulder bone connected to the neck bone
Neck bone connected to the head bone
Hear the word of the Lord.

Chorus

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Intro 2

Dem bones Dem bones Dem dry bones
Dem bones Dem bones Dem dry bones
Dem bones Dem Bones Dem dry bones,
Hear the word of the Lord.

Verse 2

Head bone disconnected from the neck bone
Neck bone disconnected from the shoulder bone
Shoulder bone disconnected from the back bone
Back bone disconnected from the hip bone
Hip bone disconnected from the thigh bone
Thigh bone disconnected from the knee bone
Knee bone disconnected from the leg bone
Leg bone disconnected from the ankle bone
Ankle bone disconnected from the heel bone
Heel bone disconnected from the foot bone
Foot bone disconnected from the toe bone
Hear the word of the Lord.

Chorus

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.
Hear the word of the Lord.

Prayer of Illumination *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**[®]
Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1. Copyright 2013.*

O Lord, we wait for you,
and in your Word we trust.
By the power of your Spirit,
set our hearts and minds
on the source of life and peace:
Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*)

The valley of dry bones

The hand of YHWH was upon me,
and it carried me away by the Spirit of YHWH
and set me down in a valley—a valley full of bones.
God made me walk up and down among them.
And I saw that there was a vast number of bones lying there in the valley,
and they were very dry.
God asked me, “Mere mortal can these bones live?”
I answered, “Only you know that, Sovereign YHWH.”
And God said, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them”
‘Dry bones, hear the word of YHWH!
Sovereign YHWH says to these bones:
I am going to breathe life into you.
I will fasten sinews on you, clothe you with flesh,
cover you with skin, and give you breath.
And you will live; and you will know that I am Sovereign YHWH.’”

So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied,
suddenly there was a noise, a rattling,
and all the bones came together, bone to matching bone.
As I watched, sinews appeared on them, flesh clothed them, and skin covered them.
But there was no breath in them.

Then God said to me, “Prophesy to the wind; prophesy, mere mortal, and say to it:
‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH:
Approach from the four winds, Breath,
and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’”

I prophesied as I was commanded, and breath came into them;
they came alive, and stood up on their feet—a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, “Mere mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel.
The people keep saying, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, and we are doomed.’
Prophesy, therefore, and say to them,
‘Thus says Sovereign YHWH: I am going to open your graves
and raise you up from the dead, my people.
I will return you to the land of Israel.
When I open your graves and raise you up, you, my people,
will know that I am YHWH.
Then I will put my Spirit into you and you will return to life,
and I will settle you back on you own land.
Then you will know that I, YHWH, have spoken
and made all this happen, says Sovereign YHWH.’”

Ministry of Music Psalm 23 – Brother James’ Air – *descant and accompaniment by Gordon Jacob*
offered by the Melville United Choir accompanied by Colleen Weber

Scripture: John 11:1-45 (*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*)

The raising of Lazarus

There was a certain man named Lazarus, who was sick. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were from the village of Bethany. The sisters sent this message to Jesus: “Rabbi, the one you love is sick.”

When Jesus heard this, he said, “This sickness will not end in death; it is happening for God’s glory, so that God’s Only Begotten may be glorified because of it.”

Jesus loved these three very much. “Yet even after hearing that Lazarus was sick, he remained where he was staying for two more days. Finally he said to the disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary stayed at home with the mourners.

When she got to Jesus, Martha said, “If you had been here, my brother would never have died! Yet even now, I am sure that God will give you whatever you ask.”

“Your brother will rise again!” Jesus assured her. Martha replied, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her,

“I am the Resurrection,
and I am Life:
those who believe in me
will live, even if they die;
and those who are alive and believe in me
will never die.

“Do you believe this?”

“Yes!” Martha replied. “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, God’s Only Begotten, the One who is coming into the world.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the other mourners as well, he was troubled in spirit, moved by the deepest emotions.

“Where have you laid him?” Jesus asked.

“Come and see,” they said. And Jesus wept.

The people in the crowd began to remark, “See how much he loved him!” Others said, “He made the blind person see; why couldn’t he have done something to prevent Lazarus’ death?”

Jesus was again deeply moved. They approached the tomb, which was a cave with a stone in front of it. “Take away the stone,” Jesus directed.

March said “Rabbi, it has been four days now. By this time there will be a stench.”

Jesus replied, “Didn’t I assure you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took the stone away.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Abba, thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd, that they might believe that you sent me!”

Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”

And Lazarus came out of the tomb, still bound hand and foot with linen strips, his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus told the crowd, “Untie him and let him go free.”

Many of those who had come to console Martha and Mary, and saw what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

Prayer *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1.** Copyright 2013.*

Lord God, Great I Am,
you are resurrection and life.
As we worship you this day
show us who we are:
bearers of good news,
messengers of resurrection;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May the words I speak and the reflection that we all share
find a response that is worthy of you,
most Just, most Loving, and most Compassionate God. Amen.

David Sparks, Summerland, B.C.

Reflection: The Choice of Life

It is dark, very dark. And absolutely still. And quiet as death. ... But there is an awareness that has emerged from the dark and stillness and quiet. ... What is that awareness? ... Set that aside for the moment. There’s no need to pursue it. ... Dark and still and quiet. ... But that awareness continues to assert itself. Now there is a sensation of feeling. There is a sense of being surrounded, contained. ... There is no need to do anything. Enveloped. So good to remain utterly still, so easy. ... But in the stillness, the awareness starts to intrude. It will not be ignored. Still and silent, at peace. Now the awareness seems to have a smell, the breath of movement, shape, a sound, an insistence. “Lazarus.” Lazarus? Why Lazarus? Oh yes, Lazarus, that does register, but Lazarus was a lifetime ago. Now there is just stillness and darkness. ... “Lazarus, come out.” Come out? Come out? Leave this enveloping lethargy? Why? Why do that?

But that voice...that voice is known...that voice is rich and deep, full of loving and caring, and thick with tears. There are other sounds too, sounds of restive bodies, of breath indrawn unsteadily, shakily, like it too is laced with tears and weeping. That sound is familiar, the smells seeping into this darkness are familiar... But to come out? That means moving, violating the calm, this

comfortable void. But those voices, those smells are compelling, and the darkness is not complete, there is a sense of light filtering in.

That voice resonates with love and insistence, it is time to get up. Weighing, pondering, realizing, yes, it is time to get up. And, infused with the breath of life, drawing it in, the deep breath of life and then moving, with those funeral bands that wrap and hold tight, confine movement, block vision. Stepping out into the light, sounds – gasps really – and the voice saying, “Unbind him and let him go.”

....

Resurrection, rebirth for Lazarus is a choice. He could choose to remain in the comfortable release and limbo of death. No one wrestles him out of his resting place or even enters the tomb. He could just turn his head away from the sound and the light and slide back into death. But he does not. He responds to the love and genuine grief for his burial that he senses in Jesus and in his sisters. He responds to the breath of the Spirit that is willed by God, and makes a choice to step back into life.

But he is bound, hand and foot and face, and he must extract himself from the clothes of death. In this task he is not alone. Others are waiting, are ready to pull off his bindings, ready to assist him to fully embrace this new life, with eyes that see, and hands and feet ready to act.

And he will be challenged in this new life, first hosting Jesus at his home for the meal when Mary will anoint Jesus’ feet with sweet-smelling ointment. Then he will have to deal with the fame of being the one raised from the dead. He will become the object of people’s curiosity, and his resurrection will be the reason many come to follow Jesus. Although we don’t hear of Lazarus beyond this time, we know that the Pharisees are not happy – either with the fame that follows him, or with he himself, a continuing reminder of Jesus’ power. The Pharisees will seek to do away with this man Lazarus, whose very existence points people to the message and way of Jesus, and draws people’s attention from the traditions of the Temple and Jewish leadership.

Lazarus chooses not to stay with the easy option of remaining in the tomb, but embarks on the path of new life, that offers wholeness and integrity, a depth of caring and community and relationships that replace the binding cloths of the grave, that envelope Lazarus in a living, loving embrace, that are the hallmarks of Jesus’ reign, Jesus’ way of life.

Now, I invite us to pause and centre ourselves again. I invite us to enter once more into the dark and the stillness and the quiet. We are enveloped, surrounded, secured in place. The stillness is peaceful, the quiet a relief. But awareness begins to filter in – awareness of light, the first intimations of sound, of presence. That which wraps us round holds, but also lends a sense of refuge, a place of rest. We are sheltered, shielded – a comfortable feeling, but something niggles at us. Awareness increases – there is more light – sunlight; ... sound penetrates – birds, breeze.

The bindings resolve themselves into sheets wound around through a nighttime of tossing and turning and restlessness. How easy it would be to just remain here, in the relative calm and stillness. How easy to ignore that awareness of something more. The day looms with all its pressing insistence: to-do lists, tasks as yet undone that tug at our mind, the unresolved argument of last night, the self-doubt that plagues us as we consider the responsibilities that rest on our all-

too-frail shoulders. It can seem beyond our capacity this morning, to face all of that, to take the actions that are demanded of us. It would be so easy to roll over, close our eyes, will the day away.

But we know that life cannot be lived like this. We can't just exist in confines of our beds. If we are to live lives of meaning and purpose, to honour the blessing of another day of life, we must get up, prepare ourselves for the day and step out to meet it.

In the same way, Jesus invites us to not just live through our days wrapped in the bindings of our own distractions and busy-ness, to not just move zombie-like through life. Jesus despairs of that type of shallow existence, of living death, as much as he despairs of the interment of Lazarus. Jesus invites us to draw deeply on the breath of life that he, through the Spirit, instills in each of us. The choice is ours.

That way of living, drawing deeply of the true breath of life, is not always easy, but we do not have to do it alone. Jesus is with us, calling us to the path of life, guiding us when we lose our way, helping us up when we falter. And Jesus ensures that others walk with us, helping us to extricate ourselves from the bindings of a living death; helping us to set aside the expectations, the fears, the sense of being bound by duty and obligation, the judgments that we impose on ourselves and each other, the anxieties of the true measure of our capacities. Those others help us to see beyond the bindings to the promise of a life lived in Christ.

In so doing, those others, who help to unbind us, with encouragement and strength, companionship and love, become creative agents in God's realm. And we ourselves, as we live a life unrestricted from such binding, are free to living with dignity and worth, free – as we are enlivened and emboldened by that breath of Spirit – to draw deep draughts of life, to dream and imagine beyond the limits of our human-bound existence, to live an unbound, a resurrected, life.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.
Amen.

Hymn: What Calls Me from the Death

MV93

OneLicense #A-740237

1. 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?
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Joys and Concerns

- Happy Birthday
 - Cody Rawn celebrated 35 years on Thursday March 16th
 - Havey Andrews celebrates 92 years young on Sunday March 26th
- We offer our deepest condolences to
 - The family of **Thelma French** who passed away Monday, March 13th 2023. A small celebration of life will follow in the early summer.
Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Preparation for Prayer

Let us practice the art of Praying with our Eyes Wide Open, that in seeing the world and those within it we are called to tend we may be *opening the eyes of our hearts to all in need around us* (Lamont Koerner '81 MDiv God Pause for Thursday, September 16, 2021 from Luther Seminary):

Prayers of the People Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word®** *Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1*. Copyright 2013, alt.

Out of the depths we cry to you, O God.
YHWH, hear our voices
and be attentive to our prayers.

We pray for those whose hope is lost,
who feel dried up and cut off from you.
By your grace, open their graves;
bring them back to the land of the living.

We pray for those who are oppressed,
held captive by the power of death.
Release them from their chains;
unbind them and let them go!

We pray for those who weep,
lost and lifeless in fear and regret.
Grant them the peace of your presence;
show them what your love can do.

We pray for those who are dying,
the light of life fading in their eyes.
Help them to believe in you
so that they may live and never die.

We thank you, O God,
for having heard our prayers.
Enable us to trust in you,
and thus to see your glory;
through Jesus Christ,
the resurrection and the life. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Minute for Mission: Your Belief and Support Make All the Difference

Credit: Arwa Nofal

We all need someone who believes in us. Someone who supports our dreams. Here's one story of how your belief and support make all the difference.

In 2017, Arwa was a Palestinian refugee who had just arrived in Montreal. She had made a harrowing journey, travelling from Saudi Arabia through New York City with three children in tow. "It wasn't easy for me. I was a single mom in a new country with new people. I was struggling for housing and looking for a job. It wasn't easy at all," she says.

Arwa sought help at Montreal City Mission, an outreach ministry your Mission & Service gifts support. There, her whole family found a place to belong. Arwa's children made friends, and she benefited from training programs and events.

It wasn't long before Arwa gathered a group of women together to form a catering cooperative called Women Weaving Their Dreams, which specializes in homemade Middle Eastern meals. The group was going strong and the women were becoming more financially secure when COVID-19 struck.

No stranger to hardship, Arwa was determined to help others through the pandemic. She initiated a sewing circle to make masks. In a relatively short period of time, the women of this sewing group made over 2,000 cloth masks for unhoused people and people with low incomes in their community. "I was so happy to help people," says Arwa, whose extraordinary leadership skills landed her a full-time job at Montreal City Mission.

"I consider myself a lucky person that I got to know this organization. It has become not only my full-time job, not only my provider. It has become my home. I hope to see more and more women getting the same chance to have this better life for their families," she says. "I wanted a country that could hold me and hug me my whole life long. I found it in Canada."

Your [Mission & Service](#) gifts support people's dreams for a better life—amazing people who make their communities and our country stronger.

Offering Invitation *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1.** Copyright 2013.*

Without the breath of God,
we are dry bones,
and without the Word of God,
we are dust.
With gratitude,
let us offer our lives
to the God of all life.

Offering Hymn: When We Are Living VU581 OneLicense #A-740237

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God, we belong to God.

Offering Prayer (in unison) *Spill the Beans Resources Team, **spill the beans: worship and learning resources for all ages, Issue 34, p. 53.** Copyright 2020.*

**Holy One,
giver of all good gifts,
you have given us an abundance
of life and love in our lives,
we are rich beyond compare in so many ways.**

**Receive these gifts we bring today,
may they be a sign of all that we offer,
and may they be used to bring your kingdom
to earth,
today and always.
Lead us to the well
and help us to drink deeply.
Amen.**

Hymn: We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection VU586 OneLicense #A-740237

- 1 We shall go out with hope of resurrection;
we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;
we shall go out and tell our stories boldly;
tales of a love that will not let us go.
We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;
we'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed;
we'll weave a cloth of all the world united
within the vision of new life in Christ.
- 2 We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken;
we'll find the words for those whose lips are sealed;
we'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,
expressive love alive in every heart.
We'll share our joy with those who still are weeping,
raise hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief,
we'll leap and dance the resurrection story,
including all in circles of our love.

Commissioning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**® **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013.*

Arise, dry bones, and live!
Come out, Lazarus,
and give glory to God!

Change the Light

Watch. I am going to change the light and I invite you to change your light.
I'm not going to put it out, just change it.
See how it is only in one place?
Change Light and I invite you to change your light at home
Can you see it? Now it is moving everywhere, to everyone, with everyone.
Now everywhere you go today, the light will go with you.

Blessing *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**® **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013.*

May Jesus Christ,
who is the resurrection and the life,
bless and keep you in this life
and the life to come.

Household Prayer: Morning *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**® **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013, alt.*

O God, I know that you are the Holy YHWH,
for you gave me my life,
and caused me to rise this day.
Put your Spirit within me,
and let my words and actions
help others to know
that you are my Holy YHWH and my God. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening *Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from **Feasting on the Word**® **Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1**. Copyright 2013, alt.*

My soul waits for you, O God,
more than those who watch for morning,
more than those who watch for morning.
Help me to sleep this night in peace,
trusting that you will awaken me;
through Jesus Christ my Saviour. Amen.