



I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in Me, though he die,
yet shall he live.

+ John 11:25

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT – THE BEGINNING OF PASSIONTIDE **March 29, 2020**

¹*Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD!*

²*O Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!*

³*If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?*

⁴*But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.*

⁵*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope;*

⁶*my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.*

⁷*O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption.*

⁸*And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

+ *Psalm 130; antiphon: v7*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The lectionary readings appointed for today seem uncannily appropriate for the present pandemic where Ezekiel speaks life to the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14), where Saint Paul tells us the “Spirit is life” and that we now have true life (Romans 8:1-11), and where Christ Jesus raises dead Lazarus to life (John 11:1-45).

This Word of life that we get in the life-giving Word (see what I did there?) seems to stand before us as a bulwark against the death and fear of death that seems all around. Even though the lectionary is not divinely inspired (indeed, some Sundays feel awkward or strained), there are times when one must feel the Holy Spirit working through this man-made “schedule” to speak so poignantly to our temporal condition and worldly strife.

Especially comforting is God’s Word to us in Psalm 130, one of the seven penitential psalms. It is a psalm sung to the soul and sung by the soul, especially in times of distress (when we find ourselves in the “depths”). The antiphon (i.e. the verse sung once before the psalm and repeated after the end) gives us the theme—a Godly reminder that our hope is in the Lord and that He is a God of unfailing love and all-sufficient grace/forgiveness.

Taking the psalm in couplets (two verses at a time), God carries us from the depths to rest in Him on the heights of heaven. First, we call upon the Lord (which we ought do at all times) especially in times of need because we have been stripped of all idols, including the idol of self-reliance, and come as humble beggars, knowing that only He has the power to save us eternally. Second, we confess that we are sinful and unclean, that we need His forgiveness and know that He is the God who saves, and recognize the magnitude of such divine authority (“that You may be feared”). Third, that we rest and “be still, and know that [He] is God” (Psalm 46:10). Too often, we busy ourselves with the profane, we distract ourselves with worldly cares, and, in our anxious striving, we cannot hear God speaking or see Him acting for our salvation.

Lastly, settled now in this place of calm and rest and trust, we hold fast to the hope that is the Lord, knowing that in Christ Jesus He has redeemed us from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. Or, in the words of Saint Paul, that no “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword . . . nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35b, 38-39).

Yours in Christ Jesus, +Pastor Griebenaw

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✠ Morning Prayer ✠

Opening Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

LSB 425



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
 2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the
 3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet Sor - row and
 4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of Glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
 death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down! Did e'er such love and
 trib - ute far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



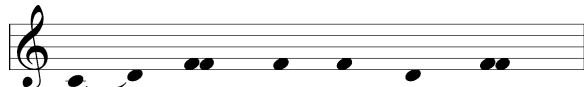
count but loss And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
 sor - row meet Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

Versicles

LSB 235



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



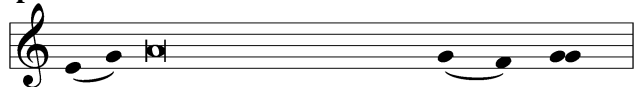
C and my mouth shall de - clare Your praise.

The Gloria Patri is omitted during Passiontide.

✠ Psalmody ✠

Antiphon

LSB 237



L The Lord has redeemed His peo - ple.



C O come, let us wor - ship Him.

Venite

LSB 236



C O come, let us sing to the Lord;



let us make a joy - ful noise to the rock of our sal - va - tion.

I Let us come in - to His pres - ence with thanks - giv - ing;
 let us make a joy - ful noise to Him with songs of praise.

II For the Lord is a great God and a great king a - bove all gods.

I In His hand are the depths of the earth;
 the heights of the moun - tains are His al - so.

II The sea is His, for He made it;
 and His hand formed the dry land.

I O come, let us wor - ship and bow down;
 let us kneel be - fore the Lord, our mak - er.

II For He is our God, and we are the peo - ple
 of His pas - ture and the sheep of His hand.

The Gloria Patri is omitted during Passiontide.

Antiphon

I The Lord has redeemed His peo - ple.

II O come, let us wor - ship Him.

Sit

Office Hymn: My Song Is Love Unknown



1 My song is love un - known, My Sav - ior's love to
 2 He came from His blest throne Sal - va - tion to be -
 3 Some - times they strew His way And His sweet prais - es
 4 Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and



me, Love to the love - less shown That they might love - ly
 stow; But men made strange, and none The longed - for Christ would
 sing; Re - sound - ing all the day Ho - san - nas to their
 spite? He made the lame to run, He gave the blind their



be. Oh, who am I That for my sake
 know. But, oh, my friend, My friend in - deed,
 King. Then "Cru - ci - fy!" Is all their breath,
 sight. Sweet in - ju - ries! Yet they at these



My Lord should take Frail flesh and die?
 Who at my need His life did spend!
 And for His death They thirst and cry.
 Them - selves dis - please And 'gainst Him rise.

- 5 They rise and needs will have
 My dear Lord made away;
 A murderer they save,
 The Prince of Life they slay.
 Yet cheerful He
 To suff'ring goes
 That He His foes
 From thence might free.
- 6 In life no house, no home
 My Lord on earth might have;
 In death no friendly tomb
 But what a stranger gave.
 What may I say?
 Heav'n was His home
 But mine the tomb
 Wherein He lay.
- 7 Here might I stay and sing,
 No story so divine!
 Never was love, dear King,
 Never was grief like Thine.
 This is my friend,
 In whose sweet praise
 I all my days
 Could gladly spend!

✠ Readings ✠

Old Testament

Ezekiel 37:1–14

¹The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ²And He led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, You know.” ⁴Then He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will lay sinews upon 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 was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸And I looked, and behold, 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; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

¹¹Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.’ ¹²Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O My people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O My people. ¹⁴And I will put My Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 8:1–11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, he whom You love is ill.” ⁴But when Jesus heard it He said, “**This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**”

⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when He heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was. ⁷Then after this He said to the disciples, “**Let us go to Judea again.**” ⁸The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?” ⁹Jesus answered, “**Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**” ¹¹After saying these things, He said to them, “**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.**” ¹²The disciples said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” ¹³Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, “**Lazarus has died, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.**” ¹⁶So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You.” ²³Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will rise again.**” ²⁴Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?**” ²⁷She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

²⁸When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to Him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met Him. ³¹When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴And He said, “**Where have you laid him?**” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how He loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “**Take away the stone.**” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “**Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?**” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴²I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that You sent Me.**” ⁴³When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “**Lazarus, come out.**” ⁴⁴The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “**Unbind him, and let him go.**”

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what He did, believed in Him.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

✠ Canticle ✠

Stand

LSB 238

Benedictus

□ Bless - ed be the Lord, the God of Is - ra - el;
He has come to His peo - ple and re - deemed them.
He has raised up for us a might - y Sav - ior,
born of the house of His ser - vant Da - vid.
Through His ho - ly proph - ets He prom - ised of old
that He would save us from our en - e - mies, from the hands of all who
hate us. He prom - ised to show mer - cy to our fa - thers
and to re - mem - ber His ho - ly cov - e - nant.
This was the oath He swore to our fa - ther A - bra - ham:
to set us free from the hands of our en - e - mies,
free to wor - ship Him with - out fear, ho - ly and
righ - teous in His sight all the days of our life.

[L] You, my child, shall be called the proph - et of the Most High,
 for you will go be - fore the Lord to pre - pare His way,
 to give His peo-ple knowl-edge of sal-va - tion by the for-give-ness
 of their sins. In the ten-der com-pas-sion of our God,
 the dawn from on high shall break up - on us
 to shine on those who dwell in dark-ness and the shad-ow of death
 and to guide our feet in - to the way of peace.

The Gloria Patri is omitted during Passiontide.

Apostles' Creed

- [P] God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
- [C] **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
 The third day He rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

✠ Prayer ✠

Kneel or remain Standing

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.
Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect of the Church

P Almighty and eternal God, worthy to be held in reverence by all people everywhere, we give You humble and sincere thanks for the innumerable blessings that You have bestowed on us without any merit or worthiness on our part.

We praise You especially for preserving for us Your saving Word and the holy Sacraments. Grant and preserve to Your holy Church throughout the world purity of doctrine, and provide faithful pastors to preach Your Word with power. Help all who hear the Word rightly to understand and truly to believe it. Send laborers into Your harvest, and open the door of faith to those who do not know You. In mercy, bring to repentance the enemies of Your Church, and grant them amendment of life. Protect and defend Your Church in all tribulation and danger. Strengthen us and all fellow Christians to set our hope fully on the grace revealed in Christ, and help us to fight the good fight of faith that in the end we may receive the salvation of our souls.

Bestow Your grace on all nations of the earth. Bless especially our country, its inhabitants, and all who are in authority. Let Your glory dwell in our land that mercy and truth, righteousness and peace may abound in all places. We commend to You the care of our schools so that our children may grow in useful knowledge and Christian virtue and thus bring forth wholesome fruits of life.

Graciously defend us from all calamity by fire and water, from war and pestilence, from scarcity and famine, and from every other evil. Protect and prosper all who labor in their rightful callings, and let all useful arts flourish among us. Be the God and Father of the lonely and the forsaken, the helper of the sick and needy, the comforter of the distressed and those who sorrow.

Accept, we implore You, our bodies and souls, our hearts and minds, our talents and powers, together with the offerings we bring before You as our humble service.

As we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, help us by true faith and a godly life to prepare for the world to come, doing the work You have given us to do while it is day, before the night comes when no one can work. And when our last hour comes, support us by Your power, and receive us into Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect for Grace

P O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

L Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

C **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.

LSB 241

Benedicamus

LSB 241



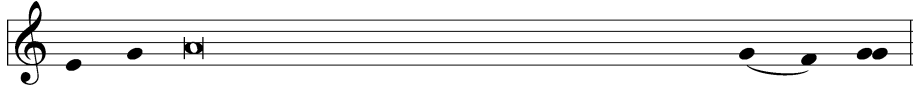
L Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 242



P The al - mighty and merciful Lord, the Father,
the † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and pre - serve you.



C A - men.

Closing Hymn: O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

LSB 418



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days You
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and You won; Your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet You prayed And
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, And



prayed and kept the fast; In - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; Lend us Your nerve, Your
fixed Your mind a - bove; So teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, That when the fi - nal



for our sin, And free us from our past.
skill and trust In God's e - ter - nal Word.
ny our - selves, Since we have known God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, We join in heav - en's praise.

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Acknowledgments

Morning Prayer from Lutheran Service Book

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SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR

Brothers and sisters,

I wanted to include a little note about *Passiontide* and why the crosses have been veiled and the *Gloria Patri* has been silenced.

The Fifth Sunday in Lent begins the final leg of our symbolic journey toward Golgotha—toward the cross—where we behold the death of God and await His resurrection. A common question is “Why do we drape and cover the crosses as we get closer to Good Friday, as our attention upon the last hours and the sufferings of Our Lord increases?”

We do this because we don’t deserve to look upon the cross. We are not worthy of the Sacrifice. The cross is our greatest and most cherished symbol. So it is partially taken away from us for a short time, that we might better appreciate it when it returns.

The crosses are not taken away completely. They are not removed. They are covered. We can see outlines of the crosses, but their beauty and details are fuzzy. This symbolizes the reality that our grief prevents us from seeing clearly until the Good Friday liturgy and, of course, Easter.

The idea of removing the *Gloria Patri* is much the same. The Triune Name given at the Ascension is the fullest revelation of God’s Name given to men. To take away the *Gloria Patri* for two weeks is a bit jarring. Its short-term removal serves to draw attention to it.

All of this is that we would learn to mortify the flesh and to depend more and more upon the grace of God in Christ. For never, even in our most somber of ceremonies, is the Church in doubt about the end. Jesus died but is not dead. Jesus lives. Easter is coming. Our Hallelujahs, *Gloria Patri*, crosses, fatty foods, and the like shall all return, but, even better than that, we shall have them forever in heaven when our own resurrections occur.

Passiontide extends through Holy Week and the *Triduum* (“three holy days”—meaning Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). At the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday Service the Altar will be stripped, the Sanctuary decorations, such as the candelabra, will be removed. Even the main crucifix will be carried out, only to be carried back in during the reproaches on Good Friday. All that will be left in the Sanctuary are the immovable pieces of furniture, laid bare. On Good Friday and the Easter Vigil (where it is still practiced), while all is bare, the normal responses and introductions are removed from the readings.

The intensity builds from now until Easter Sunday when we finally arrive at the empty tomb but not at an empty Altar.

Also, as we continue to worship in this “virtual space,” I pray that today’s streaming service was edifying for you and brought the light of Christ to shine brightly in your homes. I invite your feedback through Facebook comments, by email, by phone, and so on. Please let me know if you could hear me, if the music was loud enough (or too loud), and so on.

Lastly, while our physical gatherings are suspended, please remember that the work of Christ’s church continues. Please consider mailing your tithes and offerings to the church’s post office box:

Grace Evangelical-Lutheran Church
PO Box 1530
El Centro, CA 92244-1530.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw