



**seeking:**

*Can these  
bones live?*

*With Christ as the Cornerstone, we will build a church of living stones,  
where every member is a minister and is equipped to express God's love  
by word and deed to all people.*

*Based on 1 Peter 2:5, 6*

# The Worship of God

March 26, 2023

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

## Gathering Music

### Prelude

“Robin”  
Cynthia Griesedieck

By Scott Oyer

### Welcome

Anna Beth Cross

### † Call to Worship

One: Have you ever felt washed up, brittle, worn-down to the bone?

**All: Have you ever felt grief lay heavy on your back?**

One: Have you ever felt like hope was out of reach?

**All: Have you ever wondered, can these bones live?**

One: If you have, then you are in the right place, for this is God’s house.  
Hope lives here.

**All: So, come. Rest your weary bones.**

One: Let us worship Holy God.

### † Opening Hymn 389

“Spirit of the Living God”

Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.

Soul of heaven, heart of God, wash over me.

Soul of heaven, heart of God, wash over me.

Cleanse me, teach me, hold me, reach me.

Sul of heaven, heart of God, wash over me.

*(cont’d on next page)*

† Please rise in body or spirit.

Holy presence, love divine, cast out my fear.  
Holy presence, love divine, cast out my fear.  
Shield me, free me, call me, lead me.  
Holy presence, love divine, cast out my fear.

*During the last stanza of our Opening Hymn,  
all children are invited to come forward for today's children's sermon.*

## Children's Sermon

April Alston

### † Centering Song

### "Seeking"

Words and music  
by Christian McIvor ©2023

What are we seek-ing?\_ Where do we hear God speak-ing? May our  
ques-tions lead to deep-er und-er-stand-ing through a  
faith and love that nev-er stop ex-pand-ing.

## Call to Confession

April Alston

### Prayer of Confession

Jesus of Nazareth,  
I confess: I forget that you know this feeling.  
I forget that you, too, have wept.  
I forget that you, too, have lost.  
I forget that you, too, have gathered at the tomb,  
have grieved for a friend, have felt the sting of humanity.  
Forgive me for all the times I place blame on you.  
Forgive me for all the times I create distance, imagining that you could never feel what I  
feel. Forgive me for allowing the valley of dry bones to be a sea of space between us.  
Pour yourself into the cracks in my heart. Bring these bones back to life. Bring me closer to  
you. With gratitude I pray, amen.

## Words of Forgiveness

One: So hear and believe this good news:

**All: We are saved by grace through faith. We belong to God. We are not alone.**

## Offertory Anthem

“Be Not Afraid”  
GBC Choir

By Taylor Davis

Verse 1:

Be not afraid, for I have redeemed you.  
Be not afraid, I've called you by name.  
My love for you is everlasting,  
My love for you shall have no end.

Refrain:

When you pass through the waters,  
I will surround you.  
When you pass through the floods,  
They will not sweep o'er.  
When you walk through the fire,  
You will not be consumed.  
You are my child, you are my child,  
You are so precious to me.

(Repeat Verse 1, Refrain)

Verse 2:

You are my child, and I'll love you always.  
Just hold my hand, and I'll lead you home.  
When you feel lost, always remember:  
I am right here, just call out my name.

(Refrain)

## † Doxology

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

O WALY WALY;

Words by Neil Weatherhogg,  
Music: Scottish Folk Melody

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

## † Prayer of Dedication

Blair Andrew

## Scripture Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Steve Little

**Sermon**

*Can these bones live?*

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

**Silent Reflection**

**Invitation**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

✠ **Musical Response**

*“There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit”*

Words and Music by  
Doris Akers

**There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,  
and I know that it’s the Spirit of the Lord;  
there are sweet expressions on each face,  
and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.**

Refrain:

**Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,  
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;  
and for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise;  
without a doubt we’ll know that we have been revived  
when we shall leave this place.**

**There are blessings you cannot receive  
till you know him in his fullness and believe;  
you’re the one to profit when you say,  
“I am going to walk with Jesus all the way.”**

**(Refrain)**

**Celebrating Community**

April Alston

**Benediction**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

**Postlude**

*“Fantasy on ‘When Morning Gilds the Skies’”*  
Pam Weis

Arr. Dan R. Edwards

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**Cover Art:**

**“Rubble”** by Carmelle Beaugelin; Inspired by Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Conté crayon, charcoal, acrylic, paprika paste, cinnamon

It has been over a decade since my family in Haiti experienced the most traumatic earthquake in the nation’s history. If you were to Google, “Haiti” and “earthquake,” images of collapsed concrete and rubble would emerge. The most disturbing images are those of survivors, covered in white and gray ash and rubble, reaching out for rescuers to salvage them from collapsed buildings. Endless images are found on the internet of arms stretched out, identity-less faces of horror covered in soot, and faces frozen into expressions of despair by the spectating photographer’s lens.

When I think of Ezekiel and the story of the dry bones, I think of those images. I’ve often heard sermons where pastors position God’s people as the prophet to call the world into life, but what about God’s people who are, as the bones, facing the despair of death? Their suffering is theologized away by those who consider themselves the righteous “Ezekiels” of the world, whose privilege weighs heavy on the bones of the suffering, like the concrete rubble in Haiti.

Rubble speaks to the realities of being made alive and yet not being allowed to live—a nameless multitude of God’s people resurrected yet still bearing the scent of burial spices on their bodies.

Who are we in this story? Are we the bones seeking life? Do we perceive ourselves as spectators of suffering? Or will we choose to be participants in healing as active agents of God’s resurrecting power out of the rubble?

—Carmelle Beaugelin

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