



Liturgy setting one can be found on pages 57-74 in the green Lutheran Book of Worship

All Are Welcome to commune with Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We serve the fruit of the vine under two forms: wine

and grape juice. The inner ring of the tray is grape juice. If in doubt, please ask the distributor. Gluten free hosts are available; please notify an usher before service begins.

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

Prayer Concerns: Maggie McQuillen, Sharm Sisler, and all facing issues from the corona virus: sickness or social isolation, etc. (Names will be removed from the prayer list after four weeks unless there is a change in the person's condition. Requests need to be made by an immediate family member.)

The Serenity Prayer (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time, Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that You will make all things right, If I surrender to Your will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life, And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Amen

St. Paul is offering our Campership Program again this year to Children & Youth within our community. The Campership Program is intended to bring the camp experience to children and youth who would not otherwise have access to Camp EWALU. This is done through the award of **Camperships**, a scholarship to one of the Summer Camp Programs at EWALU. It includes partial tuition of \$100 for a camp program term per summer. EWALU offers programs starting with those completing 1st grade through those completing 12th grade.

- If you register through EWALU by April 20th they offer a \$15 discount
- They also offer a Sibling Discount of \$15 for each additional camper

Please email CYFM if you have any further questions or would like to inquire about a Campership for your child.

cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction—that aspects of our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

(from the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous)

First Reading: The Book of the Jewish Prophet Ezekiel 37:1-14 NIV

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³ He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!' ⁵ This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I

will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone.⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.¹¹ Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"¹⁵

Ezekiel was speaking to the people of Israel after they had seen Jerusalem sacked (about 587 BCE), their Temple destroyed, and the nation's citizens taken into exile by the leaders of Babylon. The people were growing in despair and were beginning to doubt their survival. Ezekiel had tried to lift their spirits and remind them they are God's chosen people by making dire predictions against those nations that rejoiced at Jerusalem's fall.

But now, Ezekiel turns to words of encouragement in sermons that project new and renewed forms of life for the Hebrew community. The people with hope will be led from their experience of death in the desert to new life in the land of Israel. 'Dem dry bones will be reassembled, and the people of Israel will be freed from the bonds of the grave (separation from Jerusalem) to form a new political existence. The Jewish understanding of "resurrection" was corporate, not individual, and would be experienced in the restoration of the nation. According to Ezekiel, Yahweh God is faithful, merciful, and life-giving. The same spirit that was present at the creation of the world, *RUACH*, God's life-giving breath, would recreate faithful Israel as the Chosen People.

Psalm 130 NIV

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

² Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

⁶ I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Second Reading: Paul's Letter to the Christian Community in Rome 8:6-11 NIV

⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

This reading contains a straightforward answer from Paul to the early Jewish Christians who wanted to know why the Mosaic Law under which they had lived was not enough to achieve holiness in God's Kingdom. Paul drew on the Jewish tradition to show that while the spirit of God was constantly trying to guide the people, the flesh was really too weak to follow well. The false human spirit even under the law could not sustain righteousness with God.

In this statement, the influence of Greek dualism makes Paul's argument sound incredibly confrontational. In it, he likens "the flesh" to death, darkness, matter, and not of God's realm. In contrast, the things of "the spirit" are ethereal, pure, freeing, and Godly. It is a stronger way of saying what the Jewish people had lived under for many centuries: the human being is caught in the middle of a battle between good and evil spirits/demons/influences/temptations. These external influences form the ego and false self that manifest in selfishness, hypocrisy, and divisive behavior. Each day, a person has to decide which spirit will lord over him or her that day.

And so, according to Paul, when Christians were asked which spirit would reign, they would answer "the good Spirit." In his understanding this was the same power or force that raised Jesus. The believer comes into contact with the Spirit by living in union with Christ; a union that is pronounced and ratified in baptism. Holy Spirit does not demand that we disdain the flesh or mortal body, but rather recreates and vitalizes the carnate so that we can shed the false self and live in accord with God's will.

Gospel: John 11: 3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45 NIV

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."
⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

⁸ "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even NOW God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." ²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. ³⁵ Jesus

wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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How will you finally respond to the invitation to follow Jesus, and what will it take to convince you that the Kingdom of God is at hand?

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is the seventh miracle Jesus performs in John's gospel. Since seven is the number of perfection in Hebrew numerology, this act can be seen as the greatest of Jesus' wondrous signs, and the immediate cause of his death. As you listen to this story, keep in mind that Jesus' actions are motivated by a tremendous love for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and complete trust in his Father. It is reflective of the loving relationship Abba ("Dad") had with his Son who also was about to lose his mortal life. In this Bethany scene on the hilltop across from mighty Jerusalem, we glimpse the fullness of Jesus' humanity when he wept, and the incredible power of God working through him at the tomb. Like a good first-born son, we see Jesus engaged in the work of his Father. Jesus speaks {"Lazarus, come out!"} and it immediately happens, which is reminiscent of the power in God's words as the world was created.

It is significant that when Lazarus finally comes out of the tomb in response to Jesus' summoning that there is work for the community to do. Jesus tells those nearby, "Unbind him, and let him go free!" God's power gives life, but John wants his community to know that freedom can be sustained by their cooperation. They too, like God in their own history, are called to free others from what binds them or holds them in the dark.

There is also an important exchange between Jesus and Martha concerning resurrection. When Martha tells Jesus that she believes her brother will rise again on the last day, she is referring to Ezekiel's understanding of a corporate reestablishment of the faithful people under a freed Israel. But Jesus changes the concept of resurrection. No longer does that

promise refer only to the Jews. Jesus makes resurrection possible for anyone who believes in him because the power that he manifests is God's power and there are no limits or national boundaries or set of rules that can contain it. All who believe will live forever in the Spirit of God as part of the New Israel. This life eternal is not a resuscitated mortal body but rather a body transformed and glorious. It is a person existing in the loving embrace of God.

There could be no better message for John's gospel community. In their minds, they were transforming the lifeless Israel by bringing former enemies into communion: Samaritans, Jews, and Gentiles who believed in Jesus as God's Messiah. Their belief was fostered by Jesus' use of the phrase "I Am" to show his participation in the great name, Yahweh, which means, *I AM Who Am*. For John's followers, Jesus is God incarnate, and Holy Spirit (breath) gives life to the community of believers. Belief in Jesus is complete when it helps people to accept physical death because of a sure and certain confidence in life beyond this present state. Those who believe in Jesus never die.

#### **Taking it home:**

Jesus summoned the community to unbind Lazarus and let him go free. Is there someone whom the Lord is asking you to unbind and free? {Let go of a grudge, tutor, get counseling, tell a child "I love you," point out someone's good qualities, be less judgmental, give a back rub or foot massage....}

Pray seven times today: "Come, Holy Spirit."

Describe a time you saw someone brought back to life.

When you struggle to face sin and do the right thing, do you look to God in prayer or to others for support? Or do you prefer to try to "do it myself?"

How is your faith stronger today than when you first believed? Or are you still waiting to be able to say, "I believe!" Do one thing in the coming weeks to create space for greater belief.

Who loves you most in this world, and how do you know?

Put the Paschal Mystery into your own words.

**Mindfulness** (set aside five minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images and feelings emerge in your imagination?) "So get ready for a great adventure, the one you were really born for. If we never get to our little bit of heaven, our life does not make much sense, and we have created our own "hell." So get ready for some new freedom, some dangerous permission, some hope from nowhere, some unexpected happiness, some stumbling stones, some radical grace, and some new and pressing responsibility for yourself and for our suffering world." — **Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life***

Maybe for those of us whose income has not been affected so far, a nudge to donate to our favorite helping agencies like the food bank, Forks & Friends, senior dining, school Angel Fund for supporting the school lunches for students who may be behind in payments, or continuing to set aside our noisy offering money for Sleep in Heavenly Peace... thank you, Virginia Danielson

**Jones County Food Bank:** To donate money, checks should be written to Jones County Community Food Bank and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. Checks written to HACAP cannot be donated to the food bank! Julie Finn at HACAP is the only one working at this time. To visit the pantry or drop off food, you call 462-4343 to make an appointment.

Wayne Zion has a page with Jones County Food Banks. <https://waynezion.org/>

**From Ken Humpal,** American Legion Anamosa commandant: As you know the Apostolic Assembly Church of Anamosa provides us with food for our monthly meals and our fundraisers.

They also operate a food bank out of their church. They have asked me to pass on the following information; **THEY WILL BE HANDING OUT FOOD TO EVERYONE AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES AT THEIR CHURCH PARKING LOT. NO QUESTIONS ASKED**

Every 2nd and 4th Saturday 10AM--12PM (as long as needed) All you have to do is drive in and tell them how many in your household and they give what is allotted for that number and they will put it in your vehicle.