

The Virtual Worship Service
Crossnore Presbyterian Church
Sunday, March 29, 2020

Preparation for Worship:

Light a candle to remind you of Christ's light

Breath Prayer

In this ancient form of prayer,
you are invited to repeat the rhythm of your breath silently within or aloud.
Breathe through the following words, inhaling and then exhaling through them.

Inhale: I will not be afraid

Exhale: for you are with me.

Prelude: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp17a7gZSIQ>

Jack Weber, Lenten Mosaics

Call to Worship:

When we feel overwhelmed with worry by the suffering and struggles around us,
you call to us, O God, saying... **Love, and let me be your Heart.**

When we feel confused and scared by things we don't understand,
you call to us, O God, saying... **Love, and let me be your Peace.**

When we feel exhausted and weary and weak and have nothing left to give,
you call to us, O God, saying... **Love, and let me be your Strength.**

When our world gets turned upside down, when we face challenges like never before,
you call to us, O God, saying... **Love one another as I have loved you.**

Hymn of Praise: *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

TO JOY

(You can sing along with Libera in America: Joyful Joyful, We Adore Thee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAkXHhs9vOc>

from a live concert recording made at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC).

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You, Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You, Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain Praising You eternally!

Always giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Father, Christ our Brother, Let Your light upon us shine;
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.

Call to Confession:

We are fearful in these moments, and so lose faith; we wonder what tomorrow will bring, and so lose our trust in God; we see and hear and share in hurtful deeds and angry words, and so lose our humanity. So, let us wait for God's mercy and grace, as we come with our prayers for forgiveness.

Unison Prayer of Confession:

We are scared, God of our lives. There, we have admitted it.

Our days are spent in isolation, even when we are with family.

We wonder if you are with us or, like Jesus, are you taking your sweet time to come into our emptiness.

**We stand behind the stones of fear and worry
that have been rolled over the opening of our hearts,
leaving us in the shadows from which we can see no life.**

**Yet, the good news is that you are indeed with us, God of our days.
Yet, the good news is that you have come, Jesus our Brother,
to weep with us and over us, to roll away those stones, to call us into life.
Yet, the good news is that you cradle us in your peace, Spirit of Gentleness:
rocking us to sleep on troubled nights; opening our eyes to the grace of each morning;
filling us with the love and hope we can share with everyone around us.
Yet, the good news is still good news,
and so may we trust, believe, hope, and live as your people.
(moment of silent confession). Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon:

Can our hope live? Put your hope in God, dear friends, for God offers us that love which never fades, that life which never ends.

We wait for God, and God does not fail us. God's hope, God's love, and God's grace are forever. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Response to God's Grace and Mercy: *There Is a Redeemer*

GREEN

***you can sing along with Keith Green:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YM_hYzcPo

**There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son;
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.
Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, hope for sinners slain.**

Refrain:

**Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done .**

**When I stand in glory, I will see his face;
There I'll serve my King forever in that holy place.
(Refrain)**

**There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son;
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.
(Refrain)**

First Lesson: Ezekiel 37:1-14 "The Valley of Dry Bones"

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on 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.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.'

I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

The Word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Anthem: It Is Well With My Soul

Nashville Studio Singers as an Epic Cellphone Choir

https://www.wsmv.com/news/a-group-of-nashville-studio-singers-perform-an-epic-cell/article_2245fbf8-6eb2-11ea-9be3-db6cec04c8f3.html

Background of Video:

NASHVILLE, TN (WSMV) -- Many people are working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak, but what if your job is as a studio background vocalist? Nashville has a deep talent pool when it comes to singers. Some have sung background for the biggest stars you've heard of, all kinds of records, even performed demo recordings for songs that went on to become a giant smash hit. So if you can't gather in groups larger than ten, if you're supposed to sanitize every surface you can if you go to work, then hundreds of studio performers who live here have no options. They're out of work. Someone had the idea to each sing "it is well with my soul" on their phones. They emailed it to a producer and he put it all together to come up with this absolutely AMAZING video/recording. Thank you to the brilliant singers who put their work into it. You can find biographies of the performers on the [Ten Two Six Music Group website](#).

Second Lesson: John 11:1-41

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. *The Word of the Lord; thanks be to God.*

Message: (Sermon at the end of document)

Hymn of Meditation: *I Will Come to You in the Silence*

YOU ARE MINE

You can sing along with the David Haas video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgm9IkTNQmc>

I will come to you in the silence
I will lift you from all your fear
You will hear My voice
I claim you as My choice
Be still, and know I am near

I am hope for all who are hopeless
I am eyes for all who long to see
In the shadows of the night,
I will be your light
Come and rest in me.

Refrain:

Do not be afraid, I am with you
I have called you each by name
Come and follow Me
I will bring you home
I love you and you are mine

I am strength for all the despairing
Healing for the ones who dwell in shame
All the blind will see, the lame will all run free
And all will know My name.

(Refrain)

I am the Word that leads all to freedom;
I am the peace the world cannot give.
I will call your name, embracing all your pain.
Stand up, now and walk and live!
(Refrain sung twice)

Affirmation of Faith (based on Psalm 130):

We believe in God:

who hears our cries when we find ourselves
sheltering from the fears around us,
who hears our voices from the hollows
of our worries and longing,
who pays close attention to our words,
who does not dismiss them as being of no consequence.

We believe in Jesus:

who does not carry around a notebook
to write down every foolish mistake we make
or all those hurtful words we offer to others,
but who gathers them up like so much dust
and scatters them to the wind,
inviting us to join in the dance of forgiveness and grace.

We believe in the Spirit:

who teaches us the patience we need to wait;
so that in the waiting,

**we would learn to hope
that we are not alone in days
of worry, of uncertainty, of loss;
so that in the hoping
we might discover the gift of watching
for the signs of grace in the songs from balconies,
for the wonder of life in neighbors reaching out to us,
for the serenity that comes in the quiet of night.**

**And, in the watching,
may we see you coming to us:**

**God, overflowing with steadfast love;
Jesus, with armfuls of grace like bouquets of flowers;
Spirit, whose peace is the power which sustains us in these days.**

Amen.

(adapted; written by Rev. Thomas Shuman, Presbyterian Pastor and Author)

Prayers of the People:

Take a moment to give thanks to God for all the blessings showered upon you this week.

Take a moment to pray for all the people on the prayer list,
to pray for your loved ones,
to pray for your community,
to pray for our country,
to pray for our world.

Take a moment to pray...

For those who are sick, those who are dying, those families grieving over the death of a loved one;
For those who are putting their lives at risk working in hospitals, doctor's offices, clinics, nursing homes, hospice care, police, firefighters, EMC staff, essential workers, grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants that are still preparing food to pick-up and deliver, for non-profit agencies trying to provide those in need with groceries, medicine, rent, electricity, and safety; and those who have to go to work because they cannot afford to stay at home.

Take a moment to pray...

For our local, state, and national leaders that they may have the compassion and wisdom to make choices that are critical for the common good and effective in this time of urgency.

Take a moment to pray...

For the families who must care for and school their children and/or for other family members who have come to live with them during this pandemic;

For those who have lost their jobs and don't know how they will make it financially;

For those who are alone and hope that someone will check on them;

For those who want to respond but struggle to find ways that are truly helpful and safe.

We bring all our prayers to you, O God,

who knows what is in the depths of our hearts and souls

even when we cannot put our longing, our cries, our worries into words.

Remind us once again to look for you in the acts of kindness and generosity all around us,

in the scientists racing to find a vaccine,

in the every day life of those who are saving lives and holding the hands of those who are dying.

We lift up our prayers and our lives to you, Ever Present Light and Love.

We pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 debts as we forgive our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings:

We are called by God to share our gifts at this time in the life of our community, our country, our world struggling to overcome the pandemic. Some of us can share gifts of prayer, calls, cards, and groceries. Others have the ability to share their financial resources for those in need. If you are able to continue to contribute financially to Crossnore Presbyterian Church through your offerings and tithes, your gift, large or small, helps us to keep going forward into God's future right here, right now, as we worship together virtually, study, fellowship over the phone, email, pray, and serve Christ by caring for those in need.

Unison Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:

For all left by the side of society, for all whose strength has vanished, for all whose bones are brittle with despair, may our gifts bring hope and healing, peace and plenty, in your name and in your love. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *Go My Children, with My Blessing*

AR HYDY NOS

You can sing along with Koine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXCejUpUhZY>

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you; here my tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you And give you peace.

Text: © 1983 Concordia Publishing House Tune: Public domain

A Prayer to prepare us for this coming week:

O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you,
diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with each of you, be with all of us,
Be with our community, our country, and our world. Amen.

Postlude: *The Prayer* sung by Libera in America
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oTwbrMkdIlg>

composed by Carole Bayer Sager / David Foster

Sermon – Sunday May 29-2020 – Rev. Kathy Campbell

As we learn to continue to adapt our lives in this time of COVID-19, each new day brings more information about the further spread of the virus across the USA and the world. As of this morning, 124,000 have been infected and 229,000 people have died, and that is just in our country.

What Living Word does God have for us this day? The prophet Ezekiel says that word is *life*. We wonder if we will ever be able to get back to normal, whatever that is? We wonder whether the economy, our jobs, our families, our schools are going to be able to return to the way things were. We wonder whether we will be able to let go of our worries, our sense of helplessness, and truly live as God's children, full of love and life and hope.

Our fears rattle us and we struggle to believe that we can all be knitted together. Can we feel God's hope wrap around us giving us strength? Can the Spirit come to us and breathe life, new life, into us? Have we have lost hope in this time of sheltering at home?

The prophet saw those bleached bones of his ancestors who died on that forced march into exile. Ezekiel's vision from God reminded him that God is always about bringing new life, new hope, new grace. God is with us now, every single moment, every single day, to help us create community when it seems that we are separated and alone and disconnected.

Is there a Living Word for us this day besides new life? The psalmist says that word is *patience*. Psalm 130:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

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

But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning,

more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

and with him is great power to redeem.

It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

We may find ourselves in the pit of despair, loneliness, fear and doubt but the psalmist tells us to cry out! Share those things that make you afraid and that fill you with doubt. The psalm reminds us that God not only listens to us and, God hears us. God hears us when we are ordered to stay in our homes, away from our routine, away from family and friends, away from the lives we were used to, comfortable with. We are called to wait and patience is a hard-learned virtue. I know!

If we wait patiently, we might just see hope. We might see hope in the folks who sit out on their porches and play their musical instruments for their neighbors. We might see hope in the email we get from someone that fills us with a moment of joy, laughter, compassion. We might see hope in those who offer the calm assurance that we will get through this together.

And as we open ourselves to God's hope for us and for our country and for our world that is real and tangible and life-giving, it comes to us in so many surprising ways. Look at the trees that are budding; notice the flowers pushing their way up out of the ground; listen to the birds returning and singing a new song; watch the kittens tiptoeing through the grass and the puppies run around in circles filled with joy. Look for all the ways that wonder and joy and love continue to be revealed to us in every day ordinary miracles of life.

And in our looking and listening, we will discover once again that God is with us. God is still working. God is still caring. God is still loving. God is still bringing us hope and grace with each new morning!

What Living Word does God have for us this day besides new life and patience? The Apostle Paul says that word is *the Spirit's breath*:

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. Romans

Paul, who was a Jew, a Pharisee, and a religious scholar, would have been quite familiar with Ezekiel's prophecy. He knew the connection between the Breath, the Spirit, which blew upon those dried out bones, filling them with new life, and the Spirit which blew upon the waters at creation. Even more importantly, Paul knew that Breath, that Spirit, in Jesus that called Lazarus from that dark tomb of death to new life.

Does death have the last word? Paul says to those in Rome facing terrible days of persecution, of fear, of uncertainty, absolutely not. Paul says to those in our world, facing these days of self-quarantine, of daily updates that seem to get worse and worse, of wondering what will happen next, absolutely not! For that same power, that same energy, that same Spirit that breathed new life into Lazarus in that dark, dank tomb is the same Spirit that breathes new life in us every moment.

Is there a Living Word for us this day? Jesus says there is and that word is *eternal life*. Jesus knows that death will not be given the ultimate power over us. Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus, as dear a friend to him, he sends death away with the full force of life and tells all who will listen: "I am the resurrection and the life!" Jesus reminds us today that we, too, are loved and precious and eternal life is present as we live now and when we die. Whether we live or die, we are in Christ.

Hold fast to the Good News, the Living Word, that God shares with us this day. Reflect on and live into these living words this week: new life, patience, the Spirit's breath, and eternal life in Christ. Amen.