

OMC Worship Service – March 29 2020

Lent 5: Show Us, God, your power over death itself.

Welcome to Worship at Osler Mennonite Church; a church located on Treaty 6 territory and the traditional homeland of the Metis.

If you are listening to us on Livestream, we invite you to follow along the order of this worship service, using the church bulletin which is found on the church website. A Worship outline was also emailed from the church office this week, so if you have that, you can also use it to follow along with the Call to Worship, prayers, scriptures, songs, etc.

Announcements:

As George mentioned last week, there are resources in the church foyer, which you are welcome to pick up or have delivered, to help you through this period of physical distancing. There are videos, books, prayer guides, prayer shawls, and more available to use. If you are coming to the church building, please avoid using the office. It is closed to everyone except Loretta right now, to protect her from spread of the virus, as she is continues office administration.

Please call or text Pastors Patty and Nora with your prayer concerns. They are both available for prayer, conversation, isolation resources, candles, frozen soup or even community garden potatoes.

We need and support our loving pastors. We need each other, too. So, let's remember to check in on each other and keep praying our church family through these uncertain times.

Call to Worship

Leader: In ancient times, Yahweh asked the prophet,
“Do you believe these dead bones can live again?”

People: The prophet answered, “O God, you know!”

Leader: In the time of Jesus, he asked Martha,
“Do you believe I am the resurrection and the life?”

People: Martha answered, “Yes, Lord, I believe.”

Leader: Today God asks, “Do you trust that mourning can turn into joy?
That your weary bones will live again?”

People: We answer, “O God, show us!”

Invocation: A prayer by Carol Penner

We bind unto ourselves
the loving power of God our Creator
the enlivening power of the Spirit of Truth.
and the steadfast faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

We bind onto ourselves
the glories of the earth, this gift:
the power of heaven,
the light of the sun,
the brightness of the moon,
the splendor of fire,
the flashing of lightning,
the swiftness of wind,
the depth of the sea,
the stability of the earth.

Against the power of viruses,
against the sweep of pandemics,
against the selfishness that hoards for oneself,
against the anxiety that gnaws at our hearts,
good Lord, protect us.

Against sickness and pain,
good Lord, protect us.

For all who do the work of caring for the sick,
good Lord, preserve them.

For all who are grieving,
and cannot be comforted,
good Lord, hear our prayer.

We bind to ourselves today
God's eye to watch over us,

God's ear to hear us,

God's word to give us speech,

God's hand to guide us.

Christ with us, Christ before us,

Christ behind us, Christ within us,

Christ beneath us, Christ above us,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Christ in mouth of friend or stranger.

With the steadfastness of God, our Rock,
and the love of Christ that will not let us go,
and the Spirit of Hope, who gives us peace,
we go into this day.

HWB #1 What is this place & HWB #46 I sing the mighty power of God

What is this place

1

KOMT NU MET ZANG 98. 98. 966

1 What is this place where we are meet - ing? On - ly a house, the
 2 Words from a - far, stars that are fall - ing, sparks that are sown in
 3 And we ac - cept bread at his ta - ble, bro - ken and shared, a

earth its floor, walls and a roof shel - ter - ing peo - ple, win - dows for
 us like seed. Names for our God, dreams, signs, and won - ders sent from the
 liv - ing sign. Here in this world, dy - ing and liv - ing, we are each

light, an o - pen door. Yet it be - comes a bod - y that lives when
 past are what we need. We in this place re - mem - ber and speak a -
 oth - er's bread and wine. This is the place where we can re - ceive what

we are gath - ered here, and know our God is near.
 gain what we have heard: God's free re - deem - ing word.
 we need to in - crease: God's jus - tice and God's peace.

Text: Huub Oosterhuis, *Zomaar een dak boven wat hoofden*, 1968; tr. David Smith, ca. 1970

Music: *Nederlandsche Gedenckclanck*, 1626; harmonized by B. Huijbers, 1968

Text and Harmonization copyright ©1984 TEAM Publications. Published by OCP Publications

46 I sing the mighty power of God

ELLACOMBE CMD

1 I sing the might-y pow'r of God, that made the moun-tains rise,
 2 I sing the good-ness of the Lord, that filled the earth with food.
 3 There's not a plant or flow'r be - low, but makes thy glo - ries known,

that spread the flow - ing seas a - broad and built the loft - y skies.
 God formed the crea-tures with a word, and then pro-nounced them good.
 and clouds a - rise, and tem-pests blow, by or - der from thy throne.

I sing the wis-dom that or-dained the sun to rule the day.
 Lord, how thy won-ders are dis-played, wher - e'er I turn my eye,
 While all that bor-rows life from thee is ev-er in thy care,

The moon shines full at God's com-mand and all the stars o - bey.
 if I sur - vey the ground I tread, or gaze up - on the sky!
 there's not a place where we can flee but God is pres-ent there.

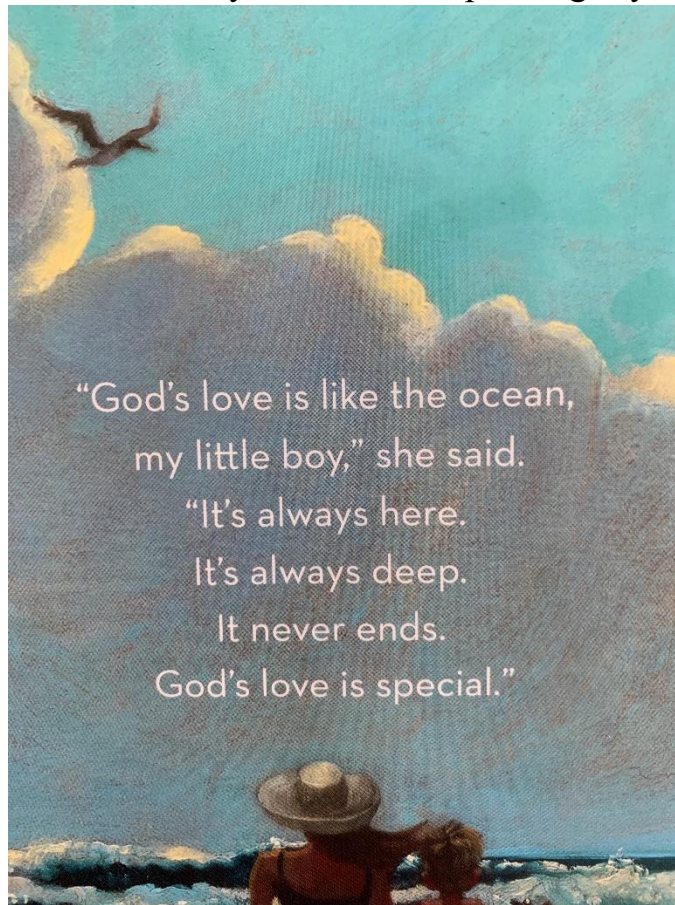
Text: Isaac Watts, *Divine Songs for Children*, 1715, alt.

Music: *Gesangbuch der Herzogl*, 1784; harmonized by William H. Monk, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, Appendix, 1868

Children's Gathering Hymn: Jesus Loves Me

Children's Time: Lynette Janzen

“The Boy and the Ocean” by Max Lucado, paintings by T. Lively Fluharty



“God’s love is like the ocean,
my little boy,” she said.
“It’s always here.
It’s always deep.
It never ends.
God’s love is special.”

Offertory

Thank you to everyone who is able to continue offerings for our ongoing church and community work. Offerings can be mailed to the church or sent by e-transfer to our treasurer.

Offering prayer (by Joanna Harader)

God of the wilderness,
We give these offerings in gratitude,
rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.
We give these offerings in faith,
trusting that you will provide for our needs.
We give these offerings in hope,
knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.
And with these offerings, we give ourselves;
May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen

* Offertory Music *

Scripture: *Psalm 130*

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, YHWH!

² God, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

To my voice, my cries for mercy!

³ If you kept track of our sins, YHWH,

Who could stand before you?

⁴ But with you is forgiveness,

And for this we revere you.

⁵ So I wait for you, YHWH –

My soul waits,

And in your word I place my trust.

⁶ My soul longs for you, YHWH,

More than sentinels long for the dawn,

More than sentinels long for the dawn.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in YHWH,

For with YHWH is abundant love

And the fullness of deliverance;

⁸ God will deliver Israel

From all its failings.

Sharing Joys & Concerns / Prayer of the Church

Pandemic Prayer by Carol Penner

Great God,

you are an ever-present help in times of trouble,
and that's why we're praying now.

We are troubled and we're worried things
are going to get more troubling.

This virus is spreading around the world:

so many are seriously ill

or will be seriously ill,

so many health care systems are stretched

or will be stretched.

Be with front line medical workers,

give them courage to do their work

and keep them safe.

Be with public health officials

as they make decisions for the common good,

and politicians as they roll those decisions out.

Help us to be kind to one another,

because anxiety can make us snappy.

Help our communities to be resilient

and expansive as we reach out to help
all who are isolated and afraid.
In these times of shutdowns and slowdowns,
when travel is restricted or banned,
as routines are disrupted and we spend
less time together or more time together,
help us zero in on what is essential.
Thank you that love is also contagious
and stronger than any virus.
You will be with us,
and we will be with each other
in sickness and in health.
Amen.

HWB #577 O Love that will not let me go

577 O Love that will not let me go

ST. MARGARET 88. 886

1 O Love that will not let me go, I rest my
2 O Light that fol-lows all my way, I yield my
3 O Joy that seek-est me through pain, I can - not
4 O Cross that lift - est up my head, I dare not

wea - ry soul in thee. I give thee back the life I owe, that
flick-'ring torch to thee. My heart re-stores its bor-rowed ray, that
close my heart to thee. I trace the rain-bow through the rain, and
ask to fly from thee. I lay in dust, life's glo - ry dead, and

in thine o - cean depths its flow may rich - er, full - er be.
in thy sun-shine's blaze its day may bright-er, fair - er be.
feel the prom-ise is not vain, that morn shall tear - less be.
from the ground there blos-soms red, life that shall end - less be.

Scripture: *Ezekiel 37:1-14*

¹ 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. ² 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.

³ God asked me, “Mere mortal, can these bones live?”
I answered, “Only you know that Sovereign YHWH.”

⁴ And God said, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them:
‘Dry bones, hear the word of YHWH! ⁵ Sovereign YHWH says to these bones: I am going to breath life into you. ⁶ 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.’”

⁷ 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. ⁸ As I watched, sinews appeared on them, flesh clothed them, and skin covered them. But there was no breath in them.

⁹ 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 breath on these slain, that they may live.’”

¹⁰ I prophesied as I was commanded, and breath came into them; they came alive, and stood up on their feet – a vast multitude.

¹¹ 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.’ ¹² 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. ¹³ When I open your graves and raise you up, you, my people, will know that I am YHWH. ¹⁴ Then I will put my Spirit into you and you will return to life, and I will settle you back on your own land. Then you will know that I, YHWH, have spoken and made all this happen, says Sovereign YHWH.’”

Response to the Scripture:

Leader: For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,

People: Thanks be to God!

O Breath of Life

35

SPIRIT WIND 98, 98

1 O Breath of Life, come sweep - ing through us, re -
 2 O Wind of God, come bend us, break us, till
 3 O Spir - it of Love, come breathe with - in us, re -

vive your church with life and pow'r;
 hum - bly we con - fess our need;
 new - ing thought and will and heart;

O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, re - new us, and
 then in your ten - der - ness re - make us, re -
 come, Love of Christ, a - fresh to win us, re -

fit your church to meet this hour.
 vive, re - store - for this we plead.
 vive your church in ev - ery part!

For a four-part texture, tenors can double the melody an octave lower, and altos can double the bass line an octave higher.

Sermon: Lazarus Unbound written by Patrick Preheim, adapted by Patty Friesen

Blessed be our God who raises the dead! My name is Lazarus. Dying was not the best experience of my life, but neither was it the worst. My name, Lazarus, means “God helps” (see Raymond Browns Anchor Bible Commentary, p 422). Sometimes God has helped me in the moment of my distress, and sometimes I have had to wait. I learned a bit about God’s timing when I died.

At the time of my first death I was living in the village of Bethany with my sisters Mary and Martha—the M&M sisters. They don’t run a meat shop and they aren’t chocolate covered candies. Meticulous Martha is a little bossy, always cleaning and Mooning Mary is a little dreamy, always hanging around listening to our friend Jesus but they made pretty good nurses when I got sick. Mary & Martha alternated time at my bed-side. I was in a delirium, but could still track parts of conversations. I remember them debating if and when they should send a message to Jesus telling him how bad it was getting.

Jesus was a gifted teacher, preacher, and healer. He had cured many sick people. He even had raised the dead like Jairus, the synagogue leader’s daughter and the widow of Nain’s son. Jesus was my best friend and I remember feeling relief at the thought of Jesus coming to cure what was ailing me. But you know something? He didn’t come. We thought he loved us. I need to share with you what was going on inside of me those last hours as I was waiting for Jesus.

I remember feeling abandoned. I assumed my friendship with Jesus would mean that he would prioritize my needs and come quickly. You see, Jesus had helped many who were not his friends. He had healed a Centurion’s slave (Lk7.2ff)—a Roman for goodness sake! He had cured the daughter of the synagogue leader--who opposed him most?! He had ministered to a Samaritan woman (Jn 4.7ff)—a Samaritan for crying out loud! None of these people were his friends. I thought that surely my connection to Jesus would protect me from suffering and surely protect me from an untimely death. But I was wrong. I remember thinking, “what is the point of being friends with Jesus if the friendship does not help me when I need it most?” I truly felt abandoned.

When it became clear that Jesus would not miraculously heal me I began to grieve dying. I had been to enough funerals in Bethany that I knew I would one day die, but death always seemed so far away. I was most sorry as I thought about the relationships that were not right. I had regrets. I regretted my grievances with some members of our local synagogue. I regretted that I hadn’t told the M&M sisters how much I appreciated them. My illness came on so quickly that I just didn’t have energy for anything but being sick, and I regretted not doing these things while I still could. I recognized that I could have used my time better. Not by spending more time at work or spending more time on holidays, but by making sure that I had done the hard work necessary to die well.

I must also confess that in those hours I grieved my dwindling faith in God and my friend Jesus. What was the meaning of my life and death? I questioned the meaning of the senseless

suffering of all those who were sick. I wondered how a good God could permit occupation of the Holy Land by the likes of the Roman army. I was struggling to remember the lessons of our faith.

Many of our Jewish stories show that God works salvation over long periods of time. Pharaoh treated the children of Israel as slaves for generations before Moses appeared. It took 40 years of wandering before our people entered the Promised Land. It took 60 years of exile before God brought our people back from Babylon. But I didn't have 40 or 60 years to wait for God's salvation; I needed help now. I came to understand in a whole new way that God's time is not always our time. I began to understand it, and disapprove of it. And then I died, a half bitter man, who had lived a reasonably good life, with some hard questions for the Maker.

Dying is not as bad as people think. I entered a wonderful state in which I had vivid dreams, all of which were comforting. I was also in an out of body state so that I could see the people I loved: I saw Mary, Martha, and Jesus. I heard them talk. I heard Mary and Martha greet Jesus. I heard the salt in Martha's words, "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died." I heard Mary's parallel heartbreaking greeting of Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, our brother would not have died." Then Jesus lost it. I wasn't sure if Jesus was weeping on account of not having come on time, out of grief for not having said goodbye to me or, out of anger that evil/death still exist in our world.

Weeping, M & M, Jesus, and the community then walked to my tomb. I heard some of the community ridiculing Jesus openly. Jesus seemed un-phased by this, like it was all part of the contest with the forces of death. Jesus asked that the stone of my tomb be rolled away. Meticulous Martha said, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days!" I couldn't smell anything! Then Jesus said a prayer and I heard him shout my name, "Lazarus, come out!" Immediately I found myself awakened. It was a bit hard sit up with all the bandages. It was a bit hard to stand up after being sedentary so many days. But I felt a new strength and I managed to make my way out into the light.

It took me several days to recover from my illness and entombment, but I did recover and began to smell better. And now I live life differently. For example, I view every day as a day of grace. You simply do not know if tomorrow you will choke on an olive or a fig, or if your will be hit by an out of control oxen cart. Every day is a day of grace since my first death. I don't have time for regrets or grudges anymore. Life is too short to be angry at other people. So, I let my anger go to God and confess my errors when I am at fault. I live my life trying to be at peace with others and God.

I have also learned that God's timing is not my timing, and that is fine. Sometimes it takes 40 years, 60 years, or a generation for God to work a miracle. Sometimes it takes 4 days. I have come to trust God's ability to bring flesh to bones, to bring vegetation out of desert, to bring the dead from the tomb. God will take care of things in God's time. God doesn't even need me to believe that a miracle is possible. Does Ezekiel believe the bones can breathe? Did I believe I would be raised from the dead? Did the early Hebrews believe the Egyptians would let them go? Beyond what I believe or do, lies the reality of God, and I have learned that I can never,

never underestimate the Lord God. God will create and do things I could never believe or imagine. And in my darkest moments of misery and unbelief I am comforted by the experience of God who transcends mortality.

Finally, I have learned that I need not be afraid of death. There is a certain amount of confidence that comes from having already died once. I don't worry that I'll get hurt. And when I see a soldier or tax collector acting violently against one of the people I go over and try to intervene in some way--with words and putting myself in path of the whip. What is the worst they can do, kill me? Ha! I have already died once, and it isn't that bad! Death has lost its sting and that gives me a lot of freedom to make a positive difference in this world. Since my first death I have felt such freedom. I know God loves me and nothing can separate me from that love. God will not leave us alone and has the power and desire to raise us up. This is good news. And sometimes this is news we only understand after we have died once. That is my story. May the grace and peace of One who Resurrects us be with you. Amen.

Virtual Ritual of Response (Patty)

For our Ritual of Response - I'd like us to hold a seed if we have seeds or we can hold a candle or hold a picture of loved ones or pet a cat or dog thoughtfully. As we hold something precious, let us hear these words of Jesus from John 11:25: I am the resurrection and the life. Those who trust in me will live, even though they die. Let us give thanks to God for Jesus and think about the areas in our life that need resurrection power and hold this prayer for awhile. (Silence). We can plant our seed in some soil or put our photograph or candle on our altar tables at home. We can't put our cats or dogs on the altar but we are thankful for their comforting presence with us these days!

Sung Benediction: HWB #323 Beyond a dying sun

323 Beyond a dying sun

ENGL 14 10. 14 10 with refrain

D G Em⁷ A

1 Be - yond a dy - ing sun I saw a vi - sion on the sea
 2 For God at last shall wipe a - way the tears from ev - 'ry eye.
 3 Though ha - tred ra - ges on the wind and wars de - file the land,

D Bm E A

of gold - en sails full bil - lowed on the wind. (on the wind.)
 The sting of death shall pierce the heart no more. (heart no more.)
 I see those gold - en sails still com - ing strong, (com - ing strong,)

D G Em⁷ A

And e - cho - ing a - bove the waves a voice called af - ter me,
 When griev - ing turns to laugh - ter all the pain from us shall fly,
 for through the eyes of faith still shines the vi - sion of the Lamb,

D Em⁷ A⁷ D

"God's dwell - ing place is with you till the end." (till the end.)
 and form - er ways lie bleached up - on the shore. (on the shore.)
 and o'er a wea - ry earth there rings this song. (rings this song.)

Text: Steve Engle, 1970; revised 1984

Music: Steve Engle, 1970; harmonized by Don Frederick and Steve Engle

Text and Music copyright ©1970 Steve Engle and the Church of the Brethren, LaVerne, CA

PROCLAIMING: Kingdom

Refrain

I see a new world com-ing when ev - 'ry-one is free! And
all shall be God's peo - ple in jus - tice, love and peace.

Spoken Benediction

Come out! Jesus cries, calling us from our tombs into a world full of grace and possibility. Go out! Jesus commands, calling us into the world to live as God's resurrected people. Go in peace.