

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 22, 2026 (Setting 4)

Don't Stop at Verse 21

My son died suddenly at the age of thirty-three in 2017. It was probably a pulmonary embolism. My wife and I were devastated and shed many tears. The grief struck deep into our souls and bodies.

We decided to have a private last viewing of Matthew for our family before the funeral. When the time came, we went in—my wife and I, our three children and their spouses, two grandchildren, and Matthew's godmother. Sue and I held each other and sobbed. Then one by one we stepped up and said our good-byes. His body was cold and lifeless. I held his head one last time and simply said, "Rest in Christ's peace, Matthew."

For the funeral, we had selected John 11:17-27. However, the secretary must have mistaken the 27 for 21, and the reading in the service folder stopped with this line: "Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'" I could have said that. "Lord, if you had been there, my son would not have died." Yes, those words were my words too.

Our pastor saw the mistake, and he quickly grabbed a Bible. He read on, and we heard Jesus say, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." Then Jesus asks Martha, "Do you believe this?" Martha's reply expresses her faith: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

I had stood helpless in front of my son, who was cold and lifeless. I had asked Jesus to keep him alive. But he chose a different way to answer that prayer. He assured me that he is the resurrection and the life. One day, he will return, and the tears, the sobbing, will be no more. Yes, I believe he will do that, and my "Rest in Christ's peace, Matthew" will become a joyous reunion with him on the Last Day. But for now, all I can say is, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the resurrection and the life."

~Rev. Glenn A. Nielsen, St. Louis, Missouri



Welcome

We are thankful you have joined us today!

Hymn

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less | 576

Confession & Absolution

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

[Matt 28:19b; 18-20]

Our help is in the name of the Lord **who made heaven and earth.** [Psalm 124:8]

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** [Psalm 130:3-4]

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying God, be merciful to me, a sinner. [Luke 18:13]

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** [John 20:19-23]

Psalm

[Psalm 130:1-8]

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!

O LORD, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

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

But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

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

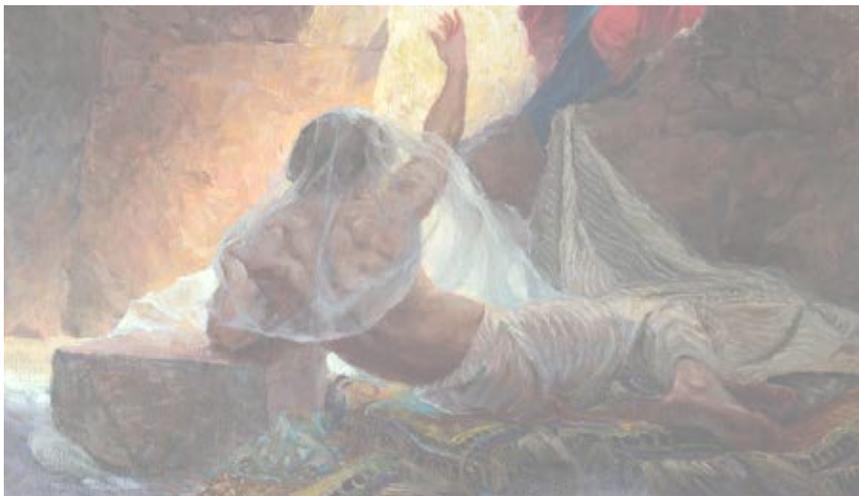
my soul waits for the LORD more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

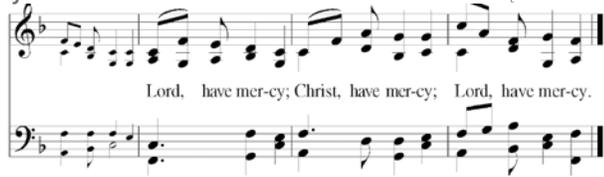
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.



Kyrie

[Southwell LSB 424]



Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** [1 Timothy 4:22]

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

Please be seated.

Readings from God's Word

The Old Testament Reading is from Ezekiel.

The 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. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O LORD GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And 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."

So 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. And 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. Then 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." So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Then 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 indeed cut off.' Therefore 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. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And 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." [Ezekiel 37:1-14]

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle Reading is from Romans.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For 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, in 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. For 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. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, 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. But if Christ is in you, although 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 Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. [Romans 8:1-11]

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand to greet the Gospel reading.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

Glorify to You, O Lord.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But 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."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.... Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 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. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary. Now 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." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. 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 also have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus 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." 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 lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I 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." When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The 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."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."...So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

[John 11:1-45, 53]

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Our Confession of Faith

*Please stand to confess the **Apostles' Creed** printed on the inside back cover of the hymnal.*

Children's Message

Please sit. The children are invited forward for a message led by Pastor Fitch.

Hymn Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing | **421**
Sermon

Prayer of the Church

[1 Timothy 2:1-4]

...let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Those for whom we pray are listed on the Life at Faith insert. Please be seated.

Offering

In Person | Mail to Church | Bank Bill Pay

Please stand.



Hymn

On My Heart Imprint Your Image

*On my heart imprint Your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may Your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation.* [LSB 422]

Sacrament of the Altar

[2 Timothy 4:22; Colossians 3:1; Psalm 136]

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:

The Holy, Holy, Holy

[Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9]



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo - ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san - na in the high - est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

The Lord's Prayer

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He taught us:

**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.** [Matt 6:9-13]

The Words of Our Lord

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat: this is My \dagger body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me."

In the same way also he took the cup after supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this is My \dagger blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

[Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25]

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.** [John 20:19]

Lamb of God

[John 1:29]

1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;
O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Please be seated and come forward at the direction of the ushers.

Distribution of Holy Communion/Hymns

The Lord's Supper is a meal for disciples of Jesus who have been baptized and taught (as our Lord says in Matthew 28). Those who have confessed their sins, acknowledge Jesus as their Savior from sin, believe that with the bread and the wine Christ truly gives us His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, desire to commit themselves to Him in loving obedience, and share the faith confessed at this altar, are welcome to participate. If you have any doubts or questions about the gift of the Lord's Supper, we ask that you consult with the pastor or an elder. Children are invited to come to the altar with their parents to receive a blessing.

Hymns

Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won | 490
Christ, the Life of All the Living | 420

When all have communed, please stand.

Post Communion Song

[Luke 2:29-32]

1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray...one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

Benediction

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor

and give you \dagger peace. **Amen.** [Psalm 103:1; Numbers 6:24-26]

Hymn

My Song Is Love Unknown | 430

Postlude

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Faith Lutheran Church, Preschool & Extended Childcare

A Member Congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its members and community and to spread the Kingdom of God by preaching the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments and by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church, and to foster Christian fellowship and charity. It shall also be the purpose and the responsibility of this congregation to provide a Christian and parochial education for its children to the best of its ability.

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