

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026

10:30 a.m. Worship



“He said to me, ‘Mortal, can these bones live?’ I answered, ‘O Lord God, you know.’”

—*Ezekiel 37:3*

First Presbyterian Church

Mailing address: P.O. Box 2729; San Bernardino, California 92406

909.882.3308

www.fpcsb.net

MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. BRIAN S. SYMONDS

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available from the ushers.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are **welcome** in worship.

**OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Thursday, April 2nd,
and on Sunday, April 12th.**

Morning Worship†

Lector: Patrick Morris

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

When you find yourself in a valley of dry bones, when all hope seems lost, when death and grief surround you, with desperation you might cry out, “Can these bones live?” In Ezekiel’s vision, God asks this question of us. Do we believe new life can come after death? Can we find hope when things are bleak? Can we really trust in God’s resurrection? While we look to God to carry us through the valley, God looks to us to embody hope for others. As we walk through the valley of dry bones that leads us to Calvary Hill, let us seek out the hope that will stir in us and sustain us. *-Rev. Danielle Shroyer*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Sarabande

G. Handel (1685-1759)

Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

INTROIT

*From the Rising of the Sun*¹

Eric H. Thiman

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord’s Name be praised, the Lord’s Name be praised.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

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

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

Have you ever felt like hope was out of reach?

✘ **Have you ever wondered, can these bones live?**

If you have, then you are in the right place, for this is God’s house.

Hope lives here.

✘ **So, come. Rest your weary bones.**

Let us worship Holy God.

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* **Stand if you are able** ✘ **The congregation will read.**

¹ ©1962 The H.W. Gray Company, Inc. Reprinted with permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

Page | 3

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Friends, there is nothing that we have to keep hidden from God—not our anger, our grief, or the ways in which we have fallen short. In confession, we speak honestly and are met with grace. So let us not hold back. Let us bring our full selves to this prayer, knowing that God is already running to meet us. Let us pray:

✠ **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.**

Friends, you could spend your whole life ignoring God, pushing God away, or trying to solve the world’s problems all on your own, and God would still love you all the same. Even in our shortcomings, we are God’s beloved. So hear and believe this good news:

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

(We stand and sing the Response)

***SUNG RESPONSE 205** *Live in Charity (Ubi Caritas)*² *Berthier*
(Sing through twice.)

**Ubi caritas et amor,
Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.**

**Live in charity and steadfast love.
Live in charity: God will dwell with you.**

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. There is KidSpace today in Room 10 following the Time with the Children.]

² Text: Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier. ©1979 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, agent. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-7062545. All rights reserved.

SCRIPTURE Ezekiel 37:1-14

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 around 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."

John 11:38-45

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. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in 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 Jesus did believed in him.

This is the word of faith that we proclaim.

✘ **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

Creator God, Why is bad news so loud? In the midst of gun violence, hunger, melting ice caps, and anxiety, it often feels like suffering has a microphone. How do we hear you? How do we find you? How do we know that these bones can live? Today we bring our raw selves into this space asking that once more you would rush through this room like a mighty wind. Remind us that these bones can live. Speak to us in your still, small voice and let it be loud enough to speak to the sorrow of the day. We know that good news rests in you, and we know that you are here. So help us listen, not to the bad news of the day alone, but to the hope that you breathe into every word. With open hearts we pray, amen.

SERMON

*Seeking:
Can These Bones Live?*

Rev. Brian S. Symonds

ANTHEM

Wondrous Love³

arr. Paul Christiansen

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul, That caused the Lord of life To bear the heavy cross, What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, ... That Christ should lay aside His crown for my soul! What wondrous, wondrous love.

AFFIRMATION of FAITH

We believe that God loves us—

✘ **God loves us enough to weep when we are gone.**

We believe that God does not give up on us—

✘ **breathing new life into tired bones.**

We believe that God returns to us—

✘ **always seeking us when we are lost.**

We believe that God holds hope for us—

³ Southern Folk Hymn arranged by Paul Christiansen. ©1955 Augsburg Publishing House. Reprinted by permission of OneLicense #A706254. All rights reserved.

✠ so we hold onto hope as well.

We believe, help our unbelief.

✠ In Christ's name we pray, amen.

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our tithes and gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world, and we invite you to take part. You may place your offering in the basket in front or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDDTH

✠ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost, Amen.

*PRAYER OF THANKS

Holy God, we offer these gifts to you, fruits of our labors and a token of our appreciation for everything that you have done for us and given to us. We pray that you guide their use for the welfare of your people.

✠ Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR LORD'S PRAYER

✠ 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 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.

*HYMN 286

Breathe On Me, Breath of God

TRENTHAM

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Sevenfold Amen

John Stainer

POSTLUDE

GREETER: Susan Skoglund

USHERS: Lynn Usher, *Lead Usher*

Tim Usher, Jim Siegmund, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM TEAM: James Welte, Kevin Lamb,
Oliver Lamb, Tim Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Ron & Ruby Kraft, Bob Saenz

Elders: Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith

Deacons: Rebecca Allen, Brent Nord, Chris Thomas

This Weeks' Celebrations

Mar 22 Laura Munz

Mar 23 Grant Garcia

Mar 24 Randy French

Linda Saenz

Mar 26 Marianna Fowles

Mar 27 Noé Falconi

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Seeking...and discovering

Our Lenten theme invites us to seek where God is being revealed in our lives. This could be in subtle and quiet revelations, or in loud and significant happenings. It could be something someone has done for or said to you, or something you offered another. It could be in beauty or in chaos. Take a moment before or following the worship service and find the giant map in the Narthex. Write on a post-it where God was revealed to you, and stick it on the map...anywhere.

You could do this once or multiple times throughout Lent. The Worship Committee along with Pastor Brian may collect the post-its throughout the season to pray over them and to make room for more revelations. **Blessed discoveries.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Final LENTEN QUIET NIGHT is planned to help us be faithful to the journey. In the contemplative space of the Fireside Room, we share prayer, readings and silence centered around the theme *God, Always Seeking Us*. **5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday evening: March 26**

Please enter the Fireside Room in silence.

SIMPLE SOUP SUPPER. Simple, and simply delicious, soup and bread suppers are offered following the Quiet Night service.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A Memorial Service for Jeoff Molcan will be held on Saturday, March 28th at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Fat Fish! In South Sudan, women have found hope as they learn to farm and grow food for their families. Give a gift for every plant in your house. **The Fat Fish banks will be collected on Palm Sunday in a special collection.** We will take up **the One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering over two weekends, on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.**

Palm Saturday! On Saturday, March 28th, we will gather in the **Library** at **8:30 a.m.** for a morning of fellowship and creation, to make palm crosses and **to prepare the sanctuary for Palm Sunday.** Everyone invited! No experience required. (Please bring your own scissors.) Join us!

On Palm Sunday (March 29) at 2:00 p.m., come see Cecil B. DeMille's silent film ***The King of Kings (1927)***, presented in the Sanctuary with live accompaniment by William on the organ and Curtiss on the tuba. DeMille's ***The King of Kings*** tells the story of Holy Week in a sweeping visual style closer to the medieval Passion Plays than to modern historical films — a mythic pageant unfolding on a cosmic scale, inviting us not just to watch, but to enter into the mystery.

Come experience this timeless story in a new way.

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd: Join us for an experiential evening in three movements. Beginning with a simple **soup and bread dinner at 5:30pm**, then moving into **contemplative stations** that will guide us into a deeper space of reflecting on the day, and finally concluding with a **Maundy Thursday worship service and communion.** Pastor Brian will be joined by Nancy Wiens to lead us through this experience and act of worship. Come ready to embody the beginning of the story of Jesus's final days leading up to the resurrection. **5:30pm-8:00pm - Come for part of or all of this evening's movements.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Butterfly Cookies Needed to celebrate resurrection and new life during Coffee Hour on Easter Sunday. ***Please call the office or leave a note in the collection plate to let us know if you will bring cookies (and how many),***

then bring yours to the kitchen before Worship on April 5th. Thank you for your help!

Saturday Morning, April 4th, you're invited to help the Worship Committee prepare our sanctuary for Easter morning. Bring your garden's most beautiful flowers, blooming branches, and greenery. (If you bring them in buckets of water, they will stay fresh until arranged!) Bring pruning shears and garden gloves if you would like to help make arrangements. **We will gather at 9:00 a.m.** Come join us, whether you have flowers to bring or not, in our tradition of beauty and creativity, as we prepare for Easter!

Deacon Fun-Raiser! The Deacons are having another fun-raiser **Wednesday, Apr 15th at Red Robin**, 27476 Lugonia Avenue in Redlands. 20% of food sales will be donated to the Deacons. You may show the flyer (available in Fellowship Hall, or just mention it to your server to have your order counted toward our donation. You can also order take-out on that day and have it counted.

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. Thank you for your generous donations of shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list is available at reception, and on our website. We encourage bargain shopping since all donations can be put to good use. **Currently we would especially appreciate pouches or pop-top cans of meat, fish, or fruit.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Music Box

The Selection had been held every year for as long as anyone remembered.

Each family was given a bead, pale and smooth, marked with the family name. On Selection Day, they came forward one by one. The urn stood on the dais.

Each family placed their bead in the urn. One was drawn. The selected family was expected to step into the Abyss.

For the good of the kingdom.

None returned.

Once there had been a reason. No one could remember it.

The Urn-Keeper had tended the urn for many years.

His hands no longer trembled. He no longer felt the weight of the beads.
He did not let himself.

They came in silence. Some set their bead firmly in his palm. Others held it a moment too long.

He received each one the same way.

A nod. A turn of the wrist. A small drop into the urn.

One year, someone asked:

“If your bead were chosen – who would tend the urn?”

It was a fair question. The urn had to be tended.

So for his own bead he learned another motion.

A pause.

A shift.

A slight sleight of hand.

And another family’s bead dropped into the urn.

No one noticed.

One year, he was summoned by the king.

“The crown would be grateful if a certain family’s bead were chosen. For the good of the kingdom.”

He understood.

His daughter had watched the ceremony for years from the wings.

His wife had passed long ago. It was only the two of them.

This year, old enough now, she stood with him on the dais.

He put their bead in her hand.

“For us.”

When their turn came, she stepped forward.

He waited, his hand outstretched, the other bead ready.

But instead of placing it in his hand, she placed the bead directly into the urn.

For a moment, he panicked. Then he thought –
so many beads.

Ours will not be chosen.

The urn filled. The hall stilled. A name was drawn.

Their name.

They were led to the Abyss.

He had stood there before, many times — on the other side.

The opening waited as it always had.

He took her hand.

“For the good of the kingdom — ”

He did not finish the thought.

-- William Zeidler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann, Lynda Savage,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda,
Amy Gano, Rick Rodriguez, Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith,
Rebecca Allen, Brent Nord, Dave Thomas, and Chris Wright-Thomas.