



The United Church of Canada
Prairie Spirit Pastoral Charge
Coaldale United and St. Andrew's UC
Trinity and First United
Worship leader Ruth Pelletier
Reader: Pat Mikalson
Music: Cheryl Nelson

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Land Acknowledgement:

Introit:

Refrain: Spirit Come – Refrain 2x:

**Spirit come (Spirit come),
Spirit come (Spirit come),
Open our eyes
Open our hearts
Come, Spirit, come**

Call to Worship:

Our God is awesome – full of surprises!
God makes rivers flow in the desert!
God pours out love on all God's children!
God breathes the Spirit into all creation!
Come, let us worship our wondrous God!

Opening Prayer:

Lent 5:

Two candles are lit, as well as the Christ candle.

O Jesus, you wept over your friend Lazarus.

Do you still weep for us?

Do you weep when forest fires rage, when homes are burnt, animals die, and the smoke blows? Do you weep as floods destroy homes and livelihoods?

Do you weep for those suffering from illness and for their families? Do you

weep for those who live with a myriad of worries, anxiety, and depression?

Do you weep for injustice, for those who experience ongoing racism, bullying, and discrimination of all sorts?

Do you weep for those who have no more tears to shed, who have no more prayers to say, who have no more dreams to dream?

Then we are willing to shed our tears with you. We shed tears for the world you love.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

All sing: (MV 90)

“Don’t be afraid”

Don’t be afraid

My love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear

Don’t be afraid,

My love is stronger, and I have promised,

Promised to be always near.

Let us pray.

All: O Christ, who weeps for us and with us, we know that you are in our pain and in our suffering. We also know that you are in our deepest longings. We long for your kingdom to come. We pray that our tears of sorrow will lead to tears of joy. Then may our tears of joy turn into a celebration as we dance our way into a revolution of your love. Amen.

Hymn: MV 138

My Love Colours Outside the Lines

Kid’s Time: Puzzle Me This

Mission Story: Local Knowledge, Global Transformation

At the Asian Rural Institute in Japan, leadership begins with a simple truth: you are already an expert in your own life.

In 2024, 20 participants from 13 countries arrived as pastors, farmers, teachers, and organizers, carrying questions about food security, climate change, and community resilience.

They planted crops. Reduced plastic use in the fields. Practiced nonviolent communication. Travelled across Japan to meet farmers and activists. Reflected deeply on what their communities need most.

And they left equipped—not just with ideas, but with practical skills they will multiply at home.

Their impact will ripple outward: stronger local food systems, healthier land, more confident leadership.

Through Mission and Service, we're helping make that training possible. We're helping to sustain the farm, the classrooms, and the shared learning that transforms participants into catalysts for change.

When we give, we're investing in leaders who will nourish communities long after their year in Japan ends.

Let's continue cultivating that future.

Mission Prayer: from Song of Faith

God is creative and self-giving, generously moving in all the near and distant corners of the universe. Nothing exists that does not find its source in God. Our first response to God's providence is gratitude. We sing thanksgiving. Amen

Prayer of Reconciliation and Words of Freedom:

Gracious God, take our weary bones and change our hearts.

Cover us with grace.

Take our acts of violence that we may become peacemakers.

Cover us with mercy.

Take our hatred that we may be more loving.

Cover us with compassion.

Take our greed that we may be more giving.

Cover us with gratitude.

Take our doubts that our faith will increase.

Cover us with wisdom.

Take our prayers that we might become more whole.

Cover us with your love.

Fill us with the breath of your Spirit!

Amen

Hymn: VU 384

The Lone, Wild Bird

Scripture

Ezekiel 37:1-14 (The Message) Breath of Life

God grabbed me. God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun.

He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “Master God, only you know that.”

He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones: ‘Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!’”

God, the Master, told the dry bones, “Watch this: I’m bringing the breath of life to you and you’ll come to life. I’ll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You’ll come alive and you’ll realize that I am God!”

I prophesied just as I’d been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.

He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath. Prophesy, son of man. Tell the breath, ‘God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!’”

So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

Then God said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Listen to what they’re saying: ‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone, there’s nothing left of us.’

“Therefore, prophesy. Tell them, ‘God, the Master, says: I’ll dig up your graves and bring you out alive—O my people! Then I’ll take you straight to the land of Israel. When I dig up graves and bring you out as my people, you’ll realize that I am God. I’ll breathe my life into you and you’ll live. Then I’ll lead you straight back to your land and you’ll realize that I am God. I’ve said it and I’ll do it. God’s Decree.’”

John 11:1-48 (The Message) The Death of Lazarus

A man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. This was the same Mary who massaged the Lord’s feet with aromatic oils and then wiped them with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Master, the one you love so very much is sick.”

When Jesus got the message, he said, “This sickness is not fatal. It will become an occasion to show God’s glory by glorifying God’s Son.”

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, but oddly, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed on where he was for two more days. After the two days, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

They said, “Rabbi, you can’t do that. The Jews are out to kill you, and you’re going back?”

Jesus replied, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in daylight doesn’t stumble because there’s plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, he might very well stumble because he can’t see where he’s going.”

He said these things, and then announced, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I’m going to wake him up.”

The disciples said, “Master, if he’s gone to sleep, he’ll get a good rest and wake up feeling fine.” Jesus was talking about death, while his disciples thought he was talking about taking a nap.

Then Jesus became explicit: “Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn’t there. You’re about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let’s go to him.”

That’s when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions, “Come along. We might as well die with him.”

When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead. Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother. Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house.

Martha said, “Master, if you’d been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you.”

Jesus said, “Your brother will be raised up.”

Martha replied, “I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time.”

“You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world.”

After saying this, she went to her sister Mary and whispered in her ear, “The Teacher is here and is asking for you.”

The moment she heard that, she jumped up and ran out to him. Jesus had not yet entered the town but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When her sympathizing Jewish friends saw Mary run off, they followed her,

thinking she was on her way to the tomb to weep there. Mary came to where Jesus was waiting and fell at his feet, saying, “Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him. He said, “Where did you put him?”

“Master, come and see,” they said. Now Jesus wept.

The Jews said, “Look how deeply he loved him.” Others among them said, “Well, if he loved him so much, why didn’t he do something to keep him from dying? After all, he opened the eyes of a blind man.”

Then Jesus, the anger again welling up within him, arrived at the tomb. It was a simple cave in the hillside with a slab of stone laid against it. Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

The sister of the dead man, Martha, said, “Master, by this time there’s a stench. He’s been dead four days!”

Jesus looked her in the eye. “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

Then, to the others, “Go ahead, take away the stone.”

They removed the stone. Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed, “Father, I’m grateful that you have listened to me. I know you always do listen, but on account of this crowd standing here I’ve spoken so that they might believe that you sent me.”

Then he shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And he came out, a cadaver, wrapped from head to toe, and with a kerchief over his face.

Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him loose.”

That was a turning point for many of the Jews who were with Mary. They saw what Jesus did, and believed in him. But some went back to the Pharisees and told on Jesus. The high priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish ruling body. “What do we do now?” they asked. “This man keeps on doing things, creating God-signs. If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have.”

Hymn: VU 381

Spirit of Life

Message: Heal These Dry, Weary Bones!

Hymn: MV 150

Spirit God, Be Our Breath

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy tried and true;
with thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus:

Lord's Prayer (sung): music by Pat Mayberry

Creator God, 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 the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.*

Hymn: MV 161

I Have Called You by Your Name

Commissioning and Benediction:

May our mouths be filled with laughter

And our hearts with shouts of joy!

May God's Spirit continue to breathe new life into our days,

Bringing hope to share with others!

Sung Blessing: VU 298

When You Walk from Here with 3-Fold Amen

When you walk from here,
when you walk from here,
walk with justice, walk with mercy,
and with God's humble care. (x2)
Amen, Amen, Amen.