

Dear Church family,

Attached is our order of service with prayers, readings and songs. You can hear the beginning and end of the service as well as the sermon by clicking on this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUDtfa2x5wM>.

I have also attached some activities and discussions for our children and youth, and I have sent out extra materials for children under 10 to our church families separately.

PLEASE NOTE – in my talk I make reference to an open letter by Bill Gates. Apparently he may not be the author – so it is a quote *attributed* to him – and is still worth saying!

Thank you to all who have helped to prepare this act of worship: James Burrows who has filmed the talk, Richard and Heidi who have chosen the songs with youtube links, Peta who has prepared our prayers, and Heidi who has helped with the children's pages. Thank you Louise for sending it all out.

Please use these resources to help you worship and draw near to God in these times, both for yourselves and on behalf of our world. We appreciate feed-back so we can keep improving how we lead our community in worship at this time. Thank you to all of you who sent feed-back last week – it was much appreciated and helpful.

In addition – here is the link to the blog that Clare Amos is writing on our Diocesan Website at the moment, which has some inspiring reflections to help us find our way with God and one another, <https://faithineurope.net/>

Don't forget that the clocks go forward tonight!

Keeping you in my prayers,
In Christ, Carolyn

P.S. Please note that there is a *new link* for joining morning prayer at 7h30 on Mondays to Saturdays: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/245448666>

Meeting ID: 245 448 666

For the latest news

Please click on these links

Gingins: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/8570/>

Divonne: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/19960/>

Holy Communion for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

Can these dry bones live? Finding our way back home.



Welcome

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUDtfa2x5wM>

Hymn *My song is love unknown*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRUp5JiRFu0>

Opening Prayer

Living, loving God, breathe your Spirit afresh into our lives as we worship you now. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world and knows our every word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

May the God of love
bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Thanksgiving hymn

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful (Taizé):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAx8gjQrsOY>

The Collect

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

First Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 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. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know."

⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

⁶I 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." ⁷So 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. ⁸I 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. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy 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." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then 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.' ¹²Therefore 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. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I 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.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Hymn or Song

Breathe on me, breath of God,

two possible tunes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmkzSjs9eAw> (includes lyrics) or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8VODIk0IB8> (no lyrics)

Gospel Reading

Luke 15.11-24

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

¹¹Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to

be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!

¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon - Can these dry bones live? Finding our Way back Home.

The Apostles' Creed

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, we thank you for bringing us life, often where we think there is none. Your living and loving presence in every part of your creation means that you live in us, with us and through us.

You suffer with us - whether it be in Syria, Yemen, or here and other countries where Coronavirus is rife and where you long to bring us life in abundance. We ask you to help us draw near in this time of worship and prayer and to offer ourselves as channels of your healing grace and love in every situation in which we find ourselves. In the name of Christ, we pray,

Amen.

A prayer in lockdown

Ever present God,

Thank you that you are

- with us in our isolation,
- close to us in our distancing,
- healing in our sickness,
- joy in our sadness,
- light in our darkness,
- wisdom on our confusion,
- all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar.

Help us to draw close to you and recognise
your loving presence in all these circumstances,
that when the doors reopen
we may, with the zeal of Pentecost,
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

For those who are ill

Merciful God,

we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that, whenever danger threatens,
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God,

give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

We are the body of Christ.

In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Offertory Hymn

The Lord of the Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1yzqsWxcBY>

(nice Irish jig arrangement! – WARNING – spontaneous dancing may break out!)

OR

Contemporary song

Come Alive, Lauren Daigle

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

a favourite of Emily's which fits well with the two themes of the Valley of dry bones and homecoming

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

When circumstances are such that we cannot share in the Eucharist in person, we can still make an Act of Spiritual Communion, in which we express our faith in Christ and in His Presence in the Eucharist, and we ask Him to unite Himself with us. The basic elements of an Act of Spiritual Communion are an Act of Faith; an Act of Love; a desire to receive Christ; and an invitation to Him to come into your heart.

The following text presents a modern translation of a popular form of an Act of Spiritual Communion written by St. Alphonsus de Liguori. You can memorize it or use it as a guide to offering your own Act of Spiritual Communion in your own words.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Hymn

Walk in the light:

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

Blessing

Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope,
and the assurance of sins forgiven; and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and all whom you love, this day and always. Amen

Stay in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

NOTICES – for the time-being we are holding no services or small group gatherings. Our worship and care, however, is still going on through the chaplaincy region.

Prayer and Care

If you have any specific needs for prayer at the moment, please do be in touch with Peta Tracey tracey.p@bluewin.ch who will share these in confidence with a small group of praying people in our church.

Collections

If you normally bring collections to contribute each Sunday – please consider putting your offering aside in an envelope until you are able to put it in the collection when we gather again. Or do consider contributing on-line, see details below.

Supporting our Church

Thank you for joining us today. We hope you have found meaning and inspiration while worshipping with us.

La Côte Church is completely self-financing and relies on your generosity to fulfil our ministry at Christmas and all year round. Thank you for remembering this as collections are taken.

Our pledge scheme helps us plan our finances efficiently. To find out more, please contact our Pledge Administrator, Mark Warren (mark.warren@yahoo.fr / +33 4 50 20 63 18).

Church bank details:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| UBS | Nyon 1260. |
| IBAN | CH42 0022 8228 5504 9740 H |
| Beneficiary | La Côte Anglican Church Development Association |

To find out more about us, go to our new website: <http://www.lacotechurch.ch/>

Notes on our Sermon for today

CAN THESE BONES LIVE? Finding our way back home.

*Looking at the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones – given to Ezekiel – a prophet in exile with God’s people in Babylon, where they have given up hope. **It is a story with three scenes.***

***Scene 1 – The Valley of Dry bones** – What pictures does this bring to mind for you? – Scary films, comedy films, the horror of mass graves.. and today the sight of make-shift mortuaries in this Covid19 crisis. For the people of Israel – the valley of dry bones evoked their hopelessness in exile, far from home. For us in the Valley of Dry bones that is Covid19 – we too may feel cut off, fearful and helpless. We are experiencing an inkling of the loss faced by refugees all over our world. Stay with these feelings – wander around the valley of bones as Ezekiel did – and bring your concerns in honest prayer to our loving God.*

You might like to go to LamentSpace – on the Church Missionary Website, for a way of posting your lament at the moment. <https://churchmissionsociety.org/lamentspace/>

*Then comes the KEY, PIVOTAL question “**Can these bones live?**” which Ezekiel is asked, which we are asking ourselves. Where and how can we find hope in all of this? We can answer with the prophet: “**O Lord God, you know.**”*

We turn towards God in trust and watch the dry bones come to life, as God breathes the Spirit within them.

Scene 2 – is the fantastical scene of sinews, flesh and skin covering the skeletons and God’s breath (Ruach) filling so that they come to life.. God’s answer is YES – there is hope and the possibility of newness. The vision echoes creation, where God breathes life into human beings. The vision also points us forward to our Easter joy, that through suffering and death, will come resurrection and new life. We are God’s Easter people, even when life feels more like Good Friday..

Scene 3 is a picture of home-coming. *Israel will not be exiled and cut off forever. They will be led back to their homeland. We too can be led back home in this crisis, with God's Spirit leading us, we can find our way back to the Father heart of God, like the lost Son finding his way back home in Luke 15.*

There are many voices and words at the moment, speaking of this new spiritual awakening – the life of the Spirit moving across the chaos.. I have found a quote attributed to Bill Gates to be one of the most compelling this week. I have since looked up the link – and it has been taken down from the original post which claimed Bill Gates was the author. Nevertheless, the words of this letter inspire hopeful imagination – so please look it up and use it to pray. Here is a link to it: ,
<https://www.rathdowneyparish.ie/a-beautiful-message-from-bill-gates/>

Can these dry bones live? O Lord God, you know.

A closing prayer

Loving God, help us to find our way through this pandemic and its consequences WITH YOU.. WITH your Spirit within us – bringing hope, wisdom, courage, compassion. Breathe new possibilities, fresh imagination into all our lives and lead us back home to you – to live in tune with creation, in tune with our fellow human beings, in tune with you – our loving Creator and Redeemer. Amen

Hope amid despair

LENT 5

ROOTS

Bible Study

You will need: a copy of the Bible passage; a selection of music tracks and the means to play them; musical or percussion instruments.

In reading **Ezekiel 37.1-14** we learn that in a vision, God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy over dry bones, transforming them into living, breathing bodies. God promised that he would bring the people back to hope from despair.

This is the final of five Bible studies during Lent in which we consider how the Old Testament people's faith and trust in God is challenged and developed and what this means for us today.

Bible notes

Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet who lived more than 500 years before Jesus, at a time of great difficulty for the Jewish people. During his lifetime, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians wiped out the whole Israelite army and took many of those left alive as prisoners back to Babylon, in what was known as the Exile. Ezekiel was among the exiles who felt helpless and abandoned by God. Ezekiel had previously criticised Israel for their sins and predicted destruction, but in exile he began to offer a message of hope. He could see God at work even in time of despair and looked forward to the restoration of Israel through a new covenant. In this passage he uses the image of dead bones coming alive to emphasise that God's spirit would raise the people to new life.

Make connections

There are many places today where bones can be seen in great numbers. Think of the catacombs in Italy or elephant graveyards in Africa. Reminders of atrocity at former concentration camps serve as eye-openers to the hurt that people suffer. Ezekiel's words are those of hope to all hurting people. Their identity and the past they treasured is in pieces, and there is little joy left. There are sadly many in our world today – such as those caught by the conflict in Syria – who have experienced being displaced from their homes. You may like to spend some time reading such stories together as a group, and then pray for these people. As we look at today's reading, we are invited to reflect upon the role that hope plays in our lives, and the new life that God can breathe into us.

Explore

This is a very evocative reading, full of imagery and emotion, so it would be good to explore it in a creative manner. Divide into smaller groups and create something that you can share with each other later, or all work together.

Think about how a soundtrack adds to the mood and passion of a film. Spend some time exploring the different moods and feelings in the passage.

Then use the instruments or CDs to create a soundtrack that can be performed. You might like to read Ezekiel's words over the music – or allow it to stand alone.

Stories and activities for children and young people -

The main story we are looking at in our service this week - is the Valley of Dry Bones, where the prophet Ezekiel is led in a vision all around a huge valley of dry bones. It is a picture of loss of hope - but when the Spirit of God breathes life into the bones, they rise up with sinews, flesh, skin and life, to stand on their feet.

Here is a version

of the story

Hope amid despair

based on Ezekiel 37.1-14

Bones, bones everywhere. Dry and brittle. Useless really. Lifeless. A valley full of bones and nothing else. Hopeless.

That is what Ezekiel saw as he looked down over the valley.

He didn't know where they had come from either.

Suddenly a rattling sound could be heard through the valley.

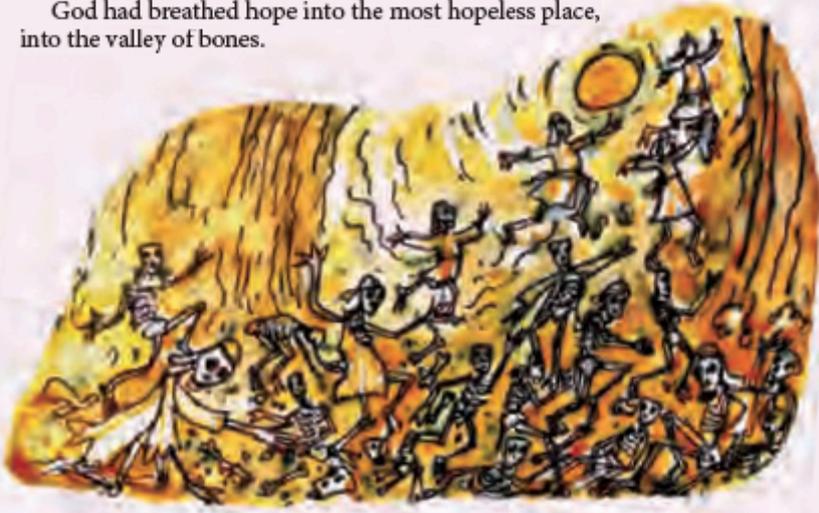
That is how it sounded in the valley as the bones came together. They came together and were wrapped in muscles and skin. Still the bones were lifeless, though. That was until the wind began to blow.

Wind whipped through the valley, quietly at first. Soon you could hear the wind coming from every direction.

That is how it sounded in the valley as the wind whistled through the valley of bones. And as the wind blew it breathed the breath of God into the bones. God's spirit filled the lifeless bodies and gave them life. Soon the sound echoing through the valley was that of feet as each stood up.

That is how it sounded in the valley as each body stood up. As Ezekiel watched, the bodies slowly stood up, one by one, until they looked like a huge army. The valley of dry bones was now filled with life. What was once useless and lifeless was now filled with hope.

God had breathed hope into the most hopeless place, into the valley of bones.



You might like to use the skeleton cards from *Gather*, placing one card down at regular intervals throughout the story until you make a complete body. Try to emphasise the message of hope; the imagery is a metaphor, a story that can remind us that God brings hope and life.

Talk about

After reading the Bible story to your group, use these discussion points.

1. Have you heard other stories about skeletons? They might be scary, but often they are just funny. You might like to look up some interpretations of the skeletons coming to life:

Thriller, Michael Jackson

Danse Macabre, Saint Saens <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcOZmtbLRP0>

This story reminds us to have hope.

2. Have you ever felt really scared or hopeless? How are you feeling right now with this lock-down?
3. What are your valleys of dry bones? Where you feel sad or angry or worried?
4. How do the bones come to life? What is the key?
5. How might this story help you? What is God saying to his people THEN and Now through this vision?

Here are some prayers to help you think about people at the moment:

A prayer for when a friend is ill

Dear God, (*name of friend*) is ill.

I'm sad because I miss them.

They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.

Please be close to them.

Please be with the people who are looking after them.

Please help them to get better and to know that you love them.

Amen.

A prayer for the world

God of love and hope,

you made the world and care for all creation,

but the world feels strange right now.

The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.

Some people are worried that they might get ill.

Others are anxious for their family and friends.

Be with them and help them to find peace.

We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,

and all who are working to discover the right medicines

to help those who are ill.

Thank you that even in these anxious times,

you are with us.

Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.

Amen.

A prayer at bedtime

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.

Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are affected by Coronavirus)*
and the people of *(country or place which is affected by Coronavirus)*.
Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them.

Amen.

A prayer remembering God is with us

Lord God, you are always with me.
You are with me in the day and in the night.
You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad.
You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill.
You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.
Today I am feeling *(name how you are feeling)* because *(reasons you are feeling this way)*.
Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today.

Amen.

A sending out prayer

As we wait on you, Lord God,
renew our strength, our hope, and our vision
to be your arms in this world,
reaching out and enfolding with love *(even if not physically right now!)*
all those we meet this week.

Amen.

Bible notes

Ezekiel 37.1-14; John 11.1-45

Old Testament Ezekiel 37.1-14

Ezekiel, one of the three great prophets of Hebrew Scripture, was active in the sixth century BC, during the Babylonian Exile. This oracle, one of the most dramatic visions in Hebrew prophecy, is the sort of vision that nightmares are made of, yet Ezekiel 37 is an oracle of salvation. Devoid of hope and feeling cut off from their God, the message is that God will restore the life of his people, even a people as good as dead. In verse 14 we are transported back to Genesis 2, where God breathes life into the human being he has made. It brings to mind the freshness of creation and the hope of new life.

This oracle is well known because it has become enshrined in music. The bottom line of this oracle is that God will restore Israel to life because God loves them. It's that simple.

Gospel John 11.1-45

Both Martha and Mary greet Jesus with the words: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' One thing we cannot pick up from the written word is the manner in which words are spoken. With Martha, the narrative goes on to tell us that Martha has hope in the resurrection for Lazarus. Jesus uses their dialogue to make clear that he himself is the resurrection and the life. The exchange with Mary is not as clear, and we are left to fill in the gaps. Were Mary's words spoken in rage or disgust? Did Mary speak those words out of deep disappointment and a loss of faith in someone she had believed in and followed? And were Mary's tears simply an expression of her grief – or might they also be an expression of her disappointment that Jesus hadn't arrived in time to heal her brother?

However, there is still more to this story of love, as the next few sentences tell us: Jesus begins to weep.

Moved by the love and grief the townspeople have for Lazarus – and by his own emotions – Jesus requests that the tomb be opened. He then offers a prayer of thanksgiving to God; thanksgiving – which is normally reserved for after the fact – because Jesus knows the loving power of God. Having also prayed that those watching might have understanding and believe, Jesus cries, 'Lazarus, come out.' And the man, once dead, leaves his tomb: loved to life. The love of God in Jesus restores Lazarus to new life.

Hope amid despair

Faith adventure Week 5

Some may look at these stories and be overcome by despair at the destruction described there. In that case, they are not looking deeply enough, for in order for there to be grief and pain there first must have been love. As we approach Holy Week, Golgotha can look as much a place of despair as the valley of dry bones or Lazarus' tomb. But if our adventure in faith has taught us anything, it should be that, having loved us into life to begin with, God in Christ promises us nothing but love to the end – and beyond. It's Christ's one commandment to us: 'love one another' – for in such love is eternal life.

Q When in your life have you encountered such despair that you felt not even God could dispel it?

Q Have you ever loved so much that it hurt?

