

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Introduction to the day

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."

PSALM: Psalm 130

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11

A reading from Romans.

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT - Roll the Stone Away

You can understand why they don't want to roll the stone away. "Already there is a stench," Martha says (John 11:39). Why open the grave? Why let out that smell? There could be no purpose. After all, Lazarus is dead.

This is not unbelief. "I believe that you are the Messiah," Martha says (v. 27), confident that her brother would one day rise again. But it is a faith that desperately wants God to provide an escape from suffering and struggle: "If you had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32). The presence of Jesus, they think, should protect them from pain and death.

What they don't understand, though, is that the places of pain and suffering are exactly where Jesus goes. He enters dead places to bring hope to life. He transforms the stench of decay into an aroma of thriving. He summons Lazarus out of the tomb to walk into freedom.

This is why Jesus tells them to take away the stone. He wants to open the place that they are convinced holds only grief, and to expose what they believe to be a shameful smell. Yes, it is difficult to face. However, only when the grave is opened can Lazarus respond to Jesus' call. Martha and Mary must remove the stone that hides what they do not want to bear, so that new life can emerge from the tomb.

What are the stone-covered places in your life? What are the places in your heart that you are convinced hold only pain, decay, and fear? In the tender love of Jesus, you do not need to hide them. Jesus is calling you to open them. He will enter these places with resurrection power, transforming death into life and shame into glory. Facing these tombs takes courage. But you can trust that Jesus will bring healing to your brokenness. He is in the business of calling the dead back to life. Let the stones be rolled away.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick especially Chris Burchat, Natasha Gagnon-Burchat, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Doug Sell and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

HEALING SERVICE

Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

Sisters and brothers, I invite you to come and receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of the triune God.

Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, send your Holy Spirit upon your servant, *name*; drive away all sickness of body and spirit; make whole that which is broken; deliver *her/him* from the power of evil; and preserve *her/him* in true faith, to share in the power of Christ's resurrection and to serve you with all the saints now and evermore.

Response: Amen.

May the God of all healing enfold us in love, fill us with peace, and lead us to wholeness and strength.

Let us pray.

Living God, through the laying on of hands, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing.

When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus 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.**

BLESSING (ELW p. 221)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 222)

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Announcements:

Sunday, March 22nd - 5th Sunday in Lent

9:00 M – Bonnechere – Service of the Word

Following worship – Annual Meeting at Bonnechere

10:30 AM – Grace – Service of the Word – Healing Service

-

Monday, March 23rd

9:00 to 3:00 – Grace Quilters

4:00 – Confirmation

7:00 PM – Grace Church Council

-

Tuesday, March 24th

10:00 AM – Grace Bible Study

Wednesday, March 25th

9:00 AM – Tie Quilting

Thursday March 26th

9:00 – 11:30 – Toy Bus

9:30 AM – Grace Choir

Friday, March 27th

Pastor's Day Off

9:00 – 11:00 – Toy Bus Parents

Sunday, March 29th – Palm Sunday

10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion

Sunday School

Fellowship following worship

-

COINS FOR LENT

Grace Sunday School invites you to participate in the Coins For Lent Outreach project, ending on Easter Sunday. Hard copies of this are available on the table near the office. All money raised will go directly to the Eganville Foodbank.

Thank you for your participation.

Easter Services as follows:

March 29th - Palm Sunday

10:30 AM – Grace

April 2nd - Maundy Thursday

7:00 PM – Grace

April 3rd - Good Friday

9:00 AM – Bonnechere

12:30 – “Walk of the Cross” starting at St. James and finishing at Grace, Eganville

April 5th - Easter Sunday

10:30 AM – Grace

Easter Breakfast at Grace:

The Ladies Aid have begun preparations for serving Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026 from 8:15 AM to 10:15 AM.

Please plan to attend for a delicious meal and fellowship on this special occasion. Everyone welcome.