

◆ Melrose Vision ◆

To respond to God's call by being a people of faith who open our hearts and minds to the true power and love of Jesus Christ.

To live our faith by providing within our changing community a welcoming environment which encourages all people to care for and accept one another.

◆ Worship Next Week ◆

We are moving into a new mode of living within our changing world.

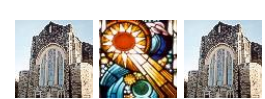
Today, as I begin to write this, it is St. Patrick's Day, a day when we have found out that our beloved, familiar, and comforting place of Worship is being closed to us on Sunday mornings.

By now, you should have received my letter to the congregation speaking to this new situation. We are in the process of deciding how to continue our communication with you in order to assure you of God's all encompassing spirit of love.

Our remarkable Old Testament Scripture for today is found in Ezekiel 37:1-14 - The Valley of the Dry Bones. - Reflection title: "Awakening from Dryness!"

There is no more imaginative, dramatic depiction of Scripture than found in these verses. Dry bones strewn across the dust of a valley - everything in sight - used up, dead.

Dry bones - bereft of life, represents a dark night of the soul - our periods of depression, doubt, hopelessness, fear and anxiety. It is a valid caricature for life as we know it now.



Life and Work At Melrose

March 22, 2020

Disconnected and brittle, set apart, awaiting restoration, what can this teach us about our daily lives which are currently on hold? What can we learn about our relationship with the world from the painful path we are required to walk during this time of separation from friends and family, from preferred choices of pastime and recreation?

Can we rediscover a sense of peace, a longing for the practice of prayer, a new resolve to be kind, patient, gentle and in self-control?

Can we hold fast to faithfulness in the apparent void of God's presence? In spite of this emptiness, know that God breathes into our tired, worn out, discouraged, earth-weary bones and we will rise again to accept both the opportunity and the challenge.

"Can these bones live? Oh God, you know." Ezekiel's vision is to a people who have lost heart. We can understand that loss.

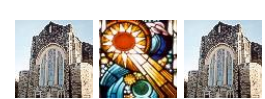
Are you facing a death of spirit, a deficit in your faith, a depletion of your spiritual energy – bones that are brittle and dry from the cares and desolation of the world?

Ezekiel reveals to us The Lord God's promise – I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live.

Mortal, can these bones live? Yes, Lord they most definitely can. Amen.

The Gospel of John 11:1-45 introduces us to the death and raising of Lazarus. The familiarity of this scripture may cause us to quickly gloss over it, having heard it many times before it could have lost its awe-inspiring appeal. Four days in the tomb, body already beginning its descent into decay, Jesus loudly calls out to Lazarus – "Come Out!"

Did it really happen? John is the only Gospel to record this miracle. Jesus says 'I am the resurrection and the life, those who believe in me though they die, will live.'



Life and Work At Melrose

March 22, 2020

Many who have seen come to believe. This theme will appear again in the resurrection narratives as Thomas reaches out to touch the nail wounds and respond – “My Lord and my God!” Jesus answers: – “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

This is the basis of our faith as Christians. Things that we have not witnessed first hand are passed on to us with good authority. Disciples who fled in fear of their lives, abandoned Jesus at the moment when he most needed them, overcame their fear when they witnessed the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb. All laid aside their fear to the point of accepting death in order to tell what they had seen and heard.

As we draw closer to the joy, turmoil, devastation, and victory of the Lent/Easter season, we accept that with God, “all things are possible.” Setting aside the laws of nature in the physical world are most assuredly possible to the One who designed it all.

Reawaken your faith, hold onto it during these stressful times when we face uncertainty, and despair. Let it encircle you, feel its warmth and assurance. God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.