

Fifth Sunday in Lent
A Liturgy for use at Home

Notes:

*This liturgy may be used at home or in small groups. Feel free to adapt it as you see fit. Children present might enjoy lighting candles, reading scriptures and leading some of the prayers. Words in italics are instructions. Words in **bold** are said by all.*

Call to Worship

Light a candle

Jesus said: **“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die (Jn 8:12).**

A moment's silence

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the
morning,
**more than watchmen wait for the
morning (Ps. 130:5-6)**

Song (*listen to a song or sing one that you know*)

Opening Prayer

Oh Lord, we cry to you from the depths,
From the deep within our hearts we share
our longings, our fears, our cry for help.
Because with you there is forgiveness, you
don't keep a record of wrongs, you listen
to our cries. You are the God who saves,
who helps, who cares. You alone have
power over life and death; with great
power you raised Jesus from the dead and
seated him at the right hand of God, far
above all rule and authority and power
and dominion. We praise His holy name!

Confession

We confess that sometimes selfish desires
and unhealthy fears rule our hearts;
and then we cannot rest in your loving
provision,
or obey your command to love our
neighbour.

But you have given us the Spirit of Christ!

Silence

Have mercy on us Lord:

**Restore our faith so that we can trust you
more completely.**

**Renovate our hearts so that we can love
you more fully.**

**Renew our lives so that we can love
others more freely.**

For in Jesus name our sins are forgiven.

Amen.

Scripture

(read one or more of the following)

Psalm 130

Ezekiel 37:14

John 11:1-45

Reflection

- *A written reflection by Rev. Vuyelwa Ntshinga-Yawa is appended to these notes.*
- *You could listen to Sunday Sermon (online)?*
- *Or share how God spoke to you through the Scripture.*

Response

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what acts of love and service you can give yourself to in the week to come e.g:

- *Call a friend and share God's love.*
- *Give blood (The "Bloodbank" will continue at DMC during "Lockdown") and use the opportunity for prayer.*
- *Listen to one another's concerns and pray for each other.*
- *If you are able continue the discipline of Tithingⁱⁱ*

Prayers for Others

Pray together as you are led.

For the lonely

Lord Jesus, I beseech you, by the loneliness of your sufferings on the cross, be near to all who are desolate and alone today: let your presence transform their sorrow into comfort and their loneliness into fellowship with you; for your dear name's sake.

Grant me Lord, a vision for our land; a land of justice where none shall prey on others; a land of plenty, where poverty shall cease to fester; a land of work, where all can find employment; a land of openness, where all are accepted and equal; a land of healing, where hatred and racial prejudice exist no more; a land of peace which is free of violence; and bring this vision to fruition, for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**ⁱⁱⁱ

Our Father...

Song (listen to a song or sing one that you know)

Benediction

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever more. Amen

**Reflection by Rev. Vuyelwa Ntshinga-
Yawa on Ezekiel 37: 1-14**

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a wonderful message of hope for God's people in the midst of the disruption of life by experiences that cause doubts, hopelessness, fear, and anxiety. The lectionary points us to this beautiful passage at the right time, when we are entering a national lockdown, joining the world in our race against the spread of the coronavirus that has gripped the world with fear and anxiety.

This vision came to the prophet Ezekiel at a time when the Israelites were feeling as hopeless and as lifeless as dried bones because of the difficulties they experienced when they were in captivity in Babylon. They felt disconnected from God, and they had lost their way of life and all hope of ever going back home. Ezekiel's vision is held up again today when some people are overcome by fear and hopelessness because life is disrupted by unforeseen multiple events that can shake one's faith. Whilst we are grappling with poverty, the economic instability and the impacts of climate change, we have to deal with a pandemic as well.

In Ezekiel's vision, we hear a promise only God can give, that God does not only give life, but God also restores life. God promises God's life-giving breath, the same

breath that was breathed into the crucified Jesus and lifted him up to resurrection life. God wants to breathe into us and fill us once more with the transformation that allows us to be a part of the kingdom of God. This breath moves through the world, raising people into new life when all the odds are against it.

The vision highlights the cooperation of the divine and the human. As God invited Ezekiel to be his agent of hope, God is inviting us to be Christ to a troubled world. The brokenness of our world is a reality we cannot deny. May God transform us, open our eyes, so that we may see the reality of the world as God sees it. May we allow God to use us as he heals and restores broken communities to new life and vitality. God's capacity for restoring life is beyond our understanding because God is able to bring good out of tragedy. Nothing is impossible with God.

May your hearts find healing and wholeness in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Trust the power of the God who gives life. God's great harvest of joy is coming.

Grace and Peace
Vuyelwa

ⁱ Since we will not be able to broadcast from DMC we are uncertain as to what we will be able to provide online. You will receive SMS and Social Media updates.

ⁱⁱ ACCOUNT NAME: MCSA DURBANVILLE SOCIETY, BANK: STANDARD BANK. BRANCH: TYGER MANOR,

BRANCH CODE: 050410. ACCOUNT NUMBER: 275125750

ⁱⁱⁱ These prayers are from "My Personal Prayer Book by Bishop Geoff Quinlan". Copies are available at the church office for R40 (obtainable when we return to normal activity)