

# AUGUSTANA

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

## SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER FOR HEALING

Prelude

Hymn: Day by Day # 790

Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me, bringing comfort to my anxious soul.  
Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you send me draw me nearer to my heavenly goal.  
Love divine, beyond all mortal measure, brings to naught the burdens of my quest;  
Savior lead me to the home I treasure, where at last I'll find eternal rest.

Day by day, I know you will provide me strength to serve and wisdom to obey;  
I will seek your loving will to guide me o'er the paths I struggle day by day.  
I will fear no evil of the morrow, I will trust in your enduring grace,  
Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow till in glory I behold your face.

Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my burdens grow too great to bear;  
Oh, what joy to know that you will hear me when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.  
Day by day, no matter what betide me, you will hold me ever in your hand,  
Savior with your presence here to guide me, I will reach at last the promised land.

The Lord be with you **and also with you**

Let us pray together:

**We lay down our need before you, holy God of compassion and grace, trusting in your great love for us and for all creation. We bear wounds, and we ourselves have wounded others. We open ourselves to the work of your Spirit among us to free us from all that is not of you and to recreate us in your image. Praise and thanksgiving, honour and blessing be to you, divine source of healing and love, through your Word of grace made flesh, and your Spirit of holiness and power. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

## **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

### **The Valley of Dry Bones**

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. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I 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.'

So 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. I 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. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy 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.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then 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." Therefore 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. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I 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.'

### **SOME THOUGHTS ON OUR BIBLE STORY**

Earlier this week someone remarked, "I just can't face Ezekiel and the dry bones this week." The devastation of the valley in Ezekiel's dream reminded them too much of the heart-breaking

toll that covid 19 is taking around the world. And this is true. It is hard to accept the human suffering. I found myself weeping in the grocery store in my quiet Scottish way. It is overwhelming. And this, I think, is how Ezekiel felt overlooking the valley of death.

But this Bible story also speaks to me about more than pain and suffering. It also speaks to me about hope and healing. At God's request Ezekiel spoke God's word to that valley of bones and *click* they came back together.

Every time I hear about people contacting others to check in ... to find out how they are doing ... *click – the bones knitting together* ... every act of kindness I hear about during this crazy time.... *Click* ..... the person in the grocery store who smiled at me from 6 feet away ... *click* ... every time someone tells me they would be happy to deliver something ... *click – the bones knit together and take form*.

But it is the air ... the very breath of God from the four directions of the wind that bring life and healing to those bones. It is the very breath of God that gives meaning to each one of those actions that bring the bones clicking back together.

And so today we call on the breath of God to surround us from every direction. To bring hope and healing to our actions, to our needs and to the needs of the world. Let us begin with prayer:

### **Responsive Prayer**

O God our Healer, show your compassion for the whole human family that is in turmoil and burdened with illness and with fear. Hear our cry, O God,

#### **Listen to our prayer.**

Come to our aid as the coronavirus spreads globally, heal those who are sick, support and protect their families and friends from being infected. Hear our cry, O God,

#### **Listen to our prayer.**

Grant us your spirit of love and self-discipline so that we may come together, working to control and eliminate the coronavirus. Hear our cry, O God,

#### **Listen to our prayer.**

Let us not forget the needs that were there before covid 19 and will be there in the time to come. Make us vigilant, attentive, and proactive in the eradication of all diseases that create suffering and often result in death for many people. Hear our cry, O God,

#### **Listen to our prayer.**

Heal our self-centeredness and indifference that makes us worry only when the virus threatens us, open ways beyond timidity and fear that too easily ignore our neighbor. Hear our cry, O God,

#### **Listen to our prayer.**

Strengthen and encourage those in public health services and in the medical profession: care-givers, nurses, attendants, doctors, cleaning staff and all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Inspire, give insight and hope to all researchers focused on developing a vaccine. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Protect all front line workers at grocery stores and pharmacies. Sustain all who suffer loss of livelihood due to shut-downs, quarantines, closed borders, and other restrictions... protect and guard all those who must travel. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Guide the leaders of the nations that they speak the truth, halt the spread of misinformation and act with justice so that all your family may know healing. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Heal our world, heal our bodies, strengthen our hearts and our minds, and in the midst of turmoil, give us hope and peace. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Hold in your gentle embrace all who have died and who will die this day. Comfort their loved ones in their despair. Hear our cry, O God,

**Listen to our prayer.**

Healing God, we entrust to your keeping ourselves, our friends, our families, the entire human race, and all your creation. We open ourselves to your healing power. through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray in this way:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. AMEN.**

Normally I would place my hands on your head and anoint you with oil as sign of God's healing love. Neither the touch nor the oil is possible today. Today we will do as Ezekiel did and call of the breath of God from the 4 directions of the wind to bring healing and wholeness to our life and times.

## PRAYER FOR HEALING

Loving God, for Jesus' sake, send your Holy Spirit. May the breath of God come to us from the four winds to bring healing and wholeness.

drive away all sickness of body and spirit;  
make whole that which is broken;  
deliver us from the power of evil; and preserve us in true faith from day to day.

Receive the breath of God as a sign of forgiveness and healing in Jesus Christ.

**Prayer:** Living God, 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.

Hymn **GOD BE WITH YOU TILL WE MEET AGAIN** # 536

God be with you till we meet again; by good counsels guide, uphold you,  
With a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; holy wings securely hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; when life's perils think confound you,  
Put unfailing arms around you; God be with you till we meet again

Final Chorus:

Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Hymns & Adaptation of Healing prayers from ELW (Augsburg Fortress 2006) and LWF Intercessory Prayers  
[https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2020/documents/200312\\_-\\_intercessory\\_prayer\\_in\\_the\\_midst\\_of\\_the\\_spread\\_of\\_covid\\_-\\_en.pdf](https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2020/documents/200312_-_intercessory_prayer_in_the_midst_of_the_spread_of_covid_-_en.pdf); prayer of confession from "Praising God: the Trinity in Christian Worship" Ruth C. Duck, Patricia Kastner, Westminster John Knox Press: 1999

**PRAYER FOR A PANDEMIC - Cameron Wiggins Bellm**

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,

let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Amen.