

COME FOR HEALING AND TO REMEMBER



"If you are sick, call for the church leaders. Have them pray for you and anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14)

Scripture:

Psalm 24

¹The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; ²for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. ⁵They will receive blessing from the LORD, and vindication from the God of their salvation. ⁶Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. ⁸Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle. ⁹Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

John 11:32-44

³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench

because he has been dead four days.”⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



COME TO HEAL AND REMEMBER

“Unbind him and let him go!” Are those the words you would say if you had just raised someone from the dead?

I think most of us would probably shout out something more exciting to show our amazement at Lazarus rising from the dead, than just “Unbind him and let him go.” But Jesus knew his own powers to raise Lazarus. He was about to experience resurrection himself. Still, unbind him and let him go seems a bit ho-hum for an exciting answer to his prayer.

Yet, that prayer is a clue to this, too. Jesus says that he knew God would answer him and that the prayer was basically to show those watching what faith looks like.

So what is going on in this story that John tells about Jesus arriving in Bethany four days late.

Jesus seems to have used this raising of Lazarus as a huge teachable moment before he enters Jerusalem and faces his own death and resurrection.

But the part of this story I like to emphasize is not so much the raising of Lazarus as the emotions described in a way never before given to Jesus.

There is anger, frustration, disappointment, hurt, abandonment, and you can probably think of other emotions in this story that show us that God understands our sufferings and God can take it when we are mad.

JESUS WEEPS

Yet the response Christ shows is not anger in response, but deep, deep feelings that lead him to weep. Jesus cries in this story, showing us that God cries along with us when we are sad.

Even though Jesus knew he would conquer death and that God’s love always wins over death, Jesus weeps in empathy with Mary and Martha.

Lazarus was about thirty years old at this time when he died. After Jesus raised him, a legend says he lived another thirty years and died on the island of Cypress where there is now a Church of St. Lazarus that has his burial site under it.

Jesus raised Lazarus for a purpose, to show his power and to also show that he had feelings, too.

This happened just before the Passover and his crucifixion. So this was also a foretaste of Christ’s death and resurrection which happened the very next week.

God knows it is good for us to feel love deeply for one another and to grieve. We are not created to stuff our feelings. We humans are healthier and live longer when we love one another and when we express ourselves. So let’s do an exercise that shows grieving can be healing. It may seem odd to have a healing and wholeness service along with an All Saint’s service, but those who passed on have experienced healing in a heavenly way. And we who are left behind must work on our own healing through prayer and through loving one another here on earth.

AN EXERCISE TO HELP US HEAL

So this is an exercise that one of my Princeton professors, Dr. Donald Capps, developed to help people heal from things that grieve us.

“Close your eyes and cover them with your hands. As you do this, shut out all light. Let the darkness symbolize death. Meditate on the truth that death is part of life, inevitable but never final on the spiritual journey.

As winter precedes spring, and as night turns to morning, death gives birth to resurrection life. You have probably experienced the death and loss of relationships, dreams, ideals, loved ones, mental or physical abilities, beliefs, and many other things associated with the privilege of aging.

As you meditate in the darkness, reflect on your losses, and ask God to help you accept them. Move deeply within yourself. Feel your feelings. Allow yourself to grieve. Ask for the strength and grace and healing to let go of what you cannot change and get on with your life.

Wait patiently in the stillness, letting it speak to you of hope and healing. When ready, remove your hands from your eyes while keeping them closed. Be present to the light that now shines into your darkness.

Ponder for a moment the ways God is bringing forth new life out of the deaths you have experienced. Present the unsundered parts of yourself. Present the places in your body and mind to God now for transformation, and humble yourself, surrender, let go and let God heal your wounds.

Let us pray: O God of the eternal sunrise, because of your Spirit's presence within us, we need not fear death. Yet we do fear. We tremble when we contemplate the death of a dream or a cherished relationship, the death of a beloved friend or the diminishing of our own bodies. Death scares us. It brings confusion to our minds and anguish to our hearts; it makes us weep.

**O God of resurrection, we cry
to you in our woundedness.
We easily forget that the old must die
in order for the new to be born.
Even when old ways of thinking and
feeling and acting no longer work,
we cling to them because they are
familiar and comfortable.
Teach us the truth of the seasons, O God.
May we remember that there is a time
for birth and a time for growth, a time
for maturity and a time for death.**

Just as the year progresses from spring to summer to autumn to winter, make us attentive to the seasons of our spirits. Help us listen to each emotion and show reverence for each feeling. Remind us amid darkness and death that resurrection will eventually come, bringing light and warmth, as surely as the spring melts winter's ice and snow. We need a springtime and an Easter, O God, not once a year, but every day. Lead us

toward transformation through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

SERVANTS AND HEALERS

We are called to be servants and healers of one another as Christ showed us how to be servant leaders and healers. When we have anointing with oil and prayers by our Deacons, we are acting out what the scripture tells us to do in the book of James, to request prayer from the leaders of the church and to pray for one another. It is a Biblical and a Presbyterian thing to do to anoint with oil and pray for healing in body, mind, and spirit.

ANOINTING AND COMMUNION

Wait for the Elders to go out to their places. Then if you are unable to go to the nearest communion station or to a Deacon for prayer or anointing, please raise your hand and we will come to you once all are served. Otherwise, go to the nearest station for communion. After you receive communion from one of the four stations, you can come to either Chris or me for anointing and then to the nearest Deacon for a short prayer. Move as you are able and while you are sitting and waiting for your turn please sing along with Althea as she plays the hymn, or silently pray.

Hymn: There is a Balm in Gilead

**Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make
the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick
soul.**

**1 Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think
my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul
again. [Refrain]**

**2 Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is
your friend,
and if you lack for knowledge, he'll not
refuse to lend. [Refrain]**

**3 If you cannot preach like Peter, if you
cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He
died for all." [Refrain]**

Invitation to the Table:

**Let God transform you and nurture you.
Jesus says: Come all who are weary and
heavy laden and I will give you**

rest....This is the joyful feast of the people of God. This is the Lord's Table of grace prepared for you. Christ invites those who trust in him (or hope to trust in him) to partake in this feast. All are welcome. Nothing can separate us from the love of God!

Rev. Dr. Cindy Alloway
Presbyterian Church of the Roses
2500 Patio Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
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In Recognition of All Saint's Day
we remember our beloved church
members who have passed away.

*Rev. Rit Anderson ~ November
16, 2014*

*Carla Edwards ~ December
20, 2014*

*Dan Ramage ~ January 7,
2015*

*Art Borchers ~ February
28, 2015*

*Thomas Peugh ~ March
2015*

*Sally Henderson ~ March 28,
2015*

*Jack Gaffney ~ March 31,
2015*

*Rev. Ted Crouch ~ April 8,
2015*

*Bill Fuller ~ May 31,
2015*

*George Menchen ~ July 14,
2015*

Sara Alden ~ July 21

