



When we finally know we are dying, and all other sentient beings are dying with us, we start to have a burning, almost heartbreaking sense of the fragility and preciousness of each moment and each being, and from this can grow a deep, clear, limitless compassion for all beings.

~ Sogyal Rinpoche

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

Keith Ciccone, piano

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Passing the Peace

Peace be with you!

Peace be with you!

Let us pass the peace with one another...

*Introit

Tree of Life

**Tree of Life and awesome mystery,
In your death we are reborn,
Though you die in all of history,
Still you rise with every morn.
Still you rise with every morn.**

**God of all our fear and sorrow,
God who lives beyond our death;
Hold us close through each tomorrow,
Love as near as every breath.
Love as near as every breath.**

*Call to Worship c.Thom Shuman

Here, we gather to worship God; here, we come to gather up hope.

Here we come to find renewed strength, here we come to put flesh on our faith.

Here, we wait for God to speak; here, God waits to fill our hearts.

Here, we are reminded of God dwelling in us; here, we encounter the One who wipes away our tears

Here, we bring our pain and loneliness to God; here, we seek the constant love of our God.

Here we stand in the midst of life and death and call upon our Creator. Here we are, Lord. Here we are.

*Hymn 550

All Are Welcome

Unison Prayer

God, we confess that we are frightened by death.

We have experienced the loss of loved ones and we grieve.

We hear of death in places of war and strife and we despair.

We scarcely tolerate our own mortality.

We want to undo how death has wounded us and restore those we love.

Your promises of resurrection and eternal life ring hollow in the emptiness within us.

Be present to us, O God, in our grief. Heal us with gentleness.

Remind us that we are called to life even amidst the inevitability of death and that you will never abandon us to grieve alone. Amen.

Children's Time

* Indicates all who are able may stand.

Please silence your cellphones.

Scripture

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits, and in God's word I hope;
My soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with God there is great power to redeem. It is the Lord who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

John 11:1-45

A man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. This was the same Mary who massaged the Lord's feet with aromatic oils and then wiped them with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Master, the one you love so very much is sick."

When Jesus got the message, he said, "This sickness is not fatal. It will become an occasion to show God's glory by glorifying God's Son."

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, but oddly, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed on where he was for two more days. After the two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

They said, "Rabbi, you can't do that. The Jews are out to kill you, and you're going back?"

Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in daylight doesn't stumble because there's plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, he might very well stumble because he can't see where he's going."

He said these things, and then announced, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him up."

The disciples said, "Master, if he's gone to sleep, he'll get a good rest and wake up feeling fine." Jesus was talking about death, while his disciples thought he was talking about taking a nap.

Then Jesus became explicit: "Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let's go to him."

That's when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions, "Come along. We might as well die with him."

When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead. Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother. Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house.

Martha said, "Master, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you."

Jesus said, "Your brother will be raised up."

Martha replied, "I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time."

"You don't have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world."

After saying this, she went to her sister Mary and whispered in her ear, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you."

The moment she heard that, she jumped up and ran out to him. Jesus had not yet entered the town but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When her sympathizing Jewish friends saw Mary run off, they followed her, thinking she was on her way to the tomb to weep there. Mary came to where Jesus was waiting and fell at his feet, saying, "Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him. He said, "Where did you put him?"

"Master, come and see," they said. Now Jesus wept.

The Jews said, "Look how deeply he loved him."

Others among them said, "Well, if he loved him so much, why didn't he do something to keep him from dying? After all, he opened the eyes of a blind man."

Then Jesus, the anger again welling up within him, arrived at the tomb. It was a simple cave in the hillside with a slab of stone laid against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone."

The sister of the dead man, Martha, said, "Master, by this time there's a stench. He's been dead four days!"

Jesus looked her in the eye. "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Then, to the others, "Go ahead, take away the stone."

They removed the stone. Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed, "Father, I'm grateful that you have listened to me. I know you always do listen, but on account of this crowd standing here I've spoken so that they might believe that you sent me."

Then he shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And he came out, a cadaver, wrapped from head to toe, and with a kerchief over his face.

Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him loose."

That was a turning point for many of the Jews who were with Mary. They saw what Jesus did, and believed in him. But some went back to the Pharisees and told on Jesus. The high priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish ruling body. "What do we do now?" they asked. "This man keeps on doing things, creating God-signs. If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have."

*Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.

World without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon

"Where Were You?! Questions in the Face of Death"

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Special Music

God So Loved the World

Archie Sanchez, tenor

Prayers of the People/Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our Father (Creator), 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Dedication of the Offering

*Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures, here, below.
Praise God, above, ye heav'nly hosts.
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication

God, we know that out of death comes life, out of grief comes renewed hope, out of loss come the fragile stems of renewed faith. As your son Jesus wept with Mary and Martha in their grief so we weep with each other and for our world. And as Jesus brought life back to them in the midst of suffering and death, so we offer our gifts to the work of new life through ministry and service. Amen.

*Hymn 227

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

*Benediction

Postlude



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