

March 26, 2023  
Lent 5

Service of Worship  
"Can These Bones Live?"

First Presbyterian Church  
Cedar Falls

## Prelude

## Welcome

## Choir Anthem

"Our Hearts with Joy Abound"

Michael Morgan

## Call to Worship\*

One: Have you ever felt washed up, brittle, worn-down to the bone?

**ALL: Have you ever felt grief lay heavy on your back?**

One: Have you ever felt like hope was out of reach?

**ALL: Have you ever wondered, can these bones live?**

One: If you have, then you are in the right place, for this is God's house. Hope lives here.

**ALL: We come and rest our weary bones.**

## Gathering Hymn

"Weary Seekers" (tune: 720 Jesus Calls Us)

verses 2 & 5

2. Grieving seekers, doubting seekers, all are welcomed in this place.  
Wounded and rejected seekers, come and find Christ's healing grace.
5. Seekers, hear God's invitation, for this purpose we are called.  
Act with justice and compassion, We proclaim God's love for all!

## Invitation to Confession\*

### Prayer of Confession\*

Jesus of Nazareth,

**We confess: I forget that you know this feeling.**

**We forget that you, too, have wept. We forget that you, too, have lost.**

**We forget that you, too, have gathered at the tomb,  
have grieved for a friend, have felt the sting of humanity.**

**Forgive us for all the times we place blame on you.**

**Forgive us for all the times we create distance, imagining that you could never feel what we feel.**

**Forgive us for allowing the valley of dry bones to be a sea of space between us.**

**Bring these bones back to life. Bring us closer to you.**

*Quiet Reflection*

### Assurance of Grace\*

One: Hear the Good News! Our God is a merciful God.

God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score.

When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives.

When you lose your way, God comes running.

**ALL: Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

One: Now share this Good News with one another:

**ALL: We belong to God. We are held in God's love. We are made new. Amen.**

## Our Response to Grace #447

"We Are Forgiven"

**Time for Wonder** *children are invited forward*

**We Bless Each Other** *Kids: God be with you as you stay. Adults: God be with you as you go.*

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### Prayer for Illumination\*

#### Scripture Readings

Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:1-45

#### Sermon

#### Affirmation of Faith (Julie)

One: We believe that God loves us—

**All: God loves us enough to weep when we are gone.**

One: We believe that God does not give up on us—

**All: breathing new life into tired bones.**

One: We believe that God returns to us—

**All: always seeking us when we are lost.**

One: We believe that God holds hope for us—

**All: so we hold onto hope as well.**

One: We believe, help our unbelief.

**All: In Christ's name we pray, amen.**

#### The Word in Song

"Can These Bones Live"

Anna Strickland

1. When the past is dead and buried—Lifeless in the barren ground  
What good can emerge from ashes?—Where can any life be found?  
Breathe in deep the rushing Spirit—Life is growing all around
2. When our hearts are bowed in sorrow—And the grief is newly wrought  
Crying, "If you'd only been there"—Weeping for what we have lost  
Resurrect our hearts and spirits—Living God whom we exalt.
3. When our spirits feel so broken—Wrapped in linens and entombed  
Without hope and without feeling—As the storm clouds 'round us loom  
Hear the words of life from Jesus—"Come out, be unbound" and bloom

#### Offering Invitation

*Gifts may also be given online at [firstprescf.org](http://firstprescf.org)*

#### Sung Offering Dedication #710

"We Lift Our Voices"

#### Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer *Specific prayer concerns are listed in the weekly newsletter*

**Our Creator in heaven, holy is your name, your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

#### Our Life Together

#### Sending Hymn 542

"God Be with You Till We Meet Again"

#### Blessing and Charge

#### Postlude

*Go in peace and boldness to love and serve God With Us!*