

Apologies!! The calendar says it is now Tuesday afternoon. Inclement weather issues have delayed sending this newsletter.



Fifth Sunday in Lent

Holy Eucharist IIA

26 March 2023

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio**

Seeking to know and serve Christ
in loving service to the campus, the
community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

Old Testament – Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Psalm – 130 (Sung)

New Testament – Romans 8: 6-11

Gospel – John 11: 1-45



<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

ALMIGHTY GOD, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and

desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



John 11:1-45

NOW A CERTAIN MAN was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who

believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When 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." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus 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." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I 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." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 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."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Gospel Commitment Question:

What part resonates with you?

The Sermon

Rolling the Stone

Living with grief can feel terribly heavy, like an enormous weight has been put on you. Comedian and actor Billy Crystal described grief this way in his deeply touching and funny one man show *700 Sundays* where he talked about how he processed the grief he felt after his father died when he was only fifteen years old. After his father's death, Billy Crystal said it felt like he had to carry a huge stone boulder around with him everywhere he went and it made it impossible for him to fully engage with life; to care about his schoolwork, his friends, his family, even sports. Everywhere he looked all he could see was who was not there, and that felt as heavy as an enormous boulder.

A friend of mine who is a marriage and family therapist, and teacher also uses a boulder to explain how grief feels. She says that when grief is new, it feels enormous, heavy, and as impossible to move as a boulder. Everywhere you go, it feels like you have to push this boulder – figuratively speaking of course – which is hard, emotional work, and is one reason why people feel tired in those early days of grief. As life goes on, and you keep pushing the boulder, day after day after day after day, gradually, slowly, it gets smaller and smaller and smaller. Until the day it is as small and smooth as a pebble. Then you can bend down, pick it up, and put it in your pocket so you can carry it with you wherever you go. That is how grief transforms from a burden to a comfort, something that is no longer in your way, but has become part of you.

Today's Gospel reading is about grief. All 45 verses are heavy with grief, like the boulder or stone covering Lazarus' tomb. The grief in today's Gospel is primarily that of two women, two sisters, Martha and Mary who were grieving the death of their brother. What is remarkable about their grief is how through it, they came so close to resurrection life, they were transformed by it. This makes them not only exemplary followers of Jesus, they are also models of faith we can learn from and find inspiration for our own lives.

Today's Gospel did not begin with death. It began with a message from the two sisters about their brother's illness. We also learned Jesus cared deeply for Lazarus and his sisters. These were not causal friends or acquaintances; they were part of the kind of family you can create along the way of life. The word used to describe their relationship is love, the kind of love families of all kinds share.

Despite his love for this family, Jesus did not rush to their side. Lots of folks have trouble with this part of the story. Maybe you do too. Because it doesn't look like love the way many would describe it. But what we all need to remember is love is not a means to control people. God's love is bigger than that.

When Jesus finally showed up, Martha went to talk to him and at first, she didn't sound that different from Billy Crystal when he talked about how

inadequate he found the rituals of mourning. All Martha could see was the death of her brother, even when looking at Jesus. That's normal and understandable. Jesus didn't not shame her. He listened to her with deep compassion. And at the same time, Jesus challenged Martha to let her grief draw her closer to who Jesus is. In their conversation, Martha revealed she understood the doctrine or academic understanding of resurrection. But Jesus responded by stating he is the resurrection. Jesus is not a doctrine. Jesus is a person. This is how he challenged Martha by saying the resurrection isn't only a theory or doctrine, it is a person. It is Jesus himself.

Biblical scholars like to remind us, this point is the pivotal moment in today's Gospel because the conversation between Martha and Jesus summarizes the main question of John's Gospel: Will the faithful continue to try and force Christ to fit their limited understanding of reality, religion and faith, even if those understandings are well intended, or will they allow the Risen Christ to change their minds and hearts, and receive the radical fullness of his grace? It's a powerful question. A deep question. One we still are invited into.

The question invites the possibility that through the sadness and pain of her grief, Martha could actually glimpse resurrection life on the other side of grief. That is what she did. It is Martha who in John's Gospel proclaimed belief in Jesus not as a nice guy, not as a teacher, not as a prophet. Martha proclaimed and believed Jesus is the resurrection.

Martha's sister Mary had a different encounter with Jesus. She gave Jesus her grief, and he received it. So much so Jesus did not shed one or two sympathetic tears, he wept. When presented with her sorrow, Jesus didn't tell Mary to pull herself together, he entered her grief with her. Love does that. Love isn't afraid of grief, or sorrow or sadness. Because grief is just one of the many forms love takes.

It was the love of God in Jesus that restored Lazarus to life. For clarity's sake, what happened to Lazarus is not the same resurrection of Jesus. The detail about how the author of the Gospel described Lazarus when he came out of the tomb helps us understand this. Even though life had been restored, Lazarus was still referred to as the dead man, and was described as still being bound with strips of cloth. His face was covered with the shroud. Like grief itself, Lazarus emerged from the tomb not being able to see and had to have all the death garments removed from him. Lazarus would need those garments again. However, when Jesus was raised those same garments were all that was in the tomb. Jesus was no longer wearing them and would never need them again.

While it might sound like a a happy ending, the point of today's Gospel reading really isn't Lazarus' restoration of life. The point is God is the giver of life, not the one who takes it. Through Jesus' resurrection, death becomes part of life, not its end. The love God has for us is much too powerful to end in nothing. God is willing to show us this by dying with us and raising Jesus to new life.

That is why grief, as awful and heavy as it can feel, especially when it is new, can also – slowly, gradually, with the help of belief in Christ – be transformed into a lifelong comfort and new life.

If you find yourself feeling that heavy burden of grief today, perhaps you can find some comfort in knowing you aren't alone. Martha and Mary not only felt what you feel, they can show us how faith produces the endurance to roll those stone boulders of grief down to size. One way we can start is to share your grief with Jesus, let him enter your grief with you. Another step is to pray for those who show you compassion and be grateful for what you do have and remember that grief is part of love. Perhaps if we learn to practice this kind of gratitude, we'll find ourselves closer to the transformation resurrection life can bring, and better recognize when it is in our midst.

A sermon by The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, 26 March 2023, at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

Sermon Commitment Question:

What has helped you move your "boulder of grief"?

Please include in your prayers

IN OUR WORLD, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

IN OUR DIOCESE, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

IN OUR PARISH, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university,

and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Connie D., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, R.C., Douglas and Gwynne Campbell, Ann Carswell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Norm Fox, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Julie Nehls, Rev. Ed Payne, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Flo and Jack Roach, Katyana Sayrs, Annette Secoy, Dale Showman, Michael Vaughn, and we pray for all who care for them. **

BIRTHDAYS: Julie Nehls (3/27), Amy Larson Dinger (3/29), Zella Nisley (4/1)

FOR THE DECEASED: Connie DeBerardinis

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or grahammowery@aol.com.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccf/join-online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Tuesday, March 28, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting (Nehls Hall)

Wednesday, March 29, - - Last call Easter Flowers

Wednesday, March 29, 12:30 p.m. - - Compassion/Well-Being (Nehls)

Sunday, April 2, 9:00 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, April 2, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Palm Sunday)

Thursday, April 6, 7:30 p.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Maundy Thursday)

Friday, April 7, 12:00 noon - - Good Friday

Saturday, April 8, 7:30 p.m. - - Easter Vigil

Sunday, April 9, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Easter)

Sunday, April 16, 9:00 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, April 16, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour Schedule

Taken Dates for Altar Flowers

During Lent there are no flowers and for Easter we will have an announcement for lilies.

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Easter Flowers



If you would like to contribute to the fund for altar flowers on Easter as a memorial or thanksgiving, those contributions as well as names should be given or sent to Barbara Martin no later than Wednesday, March 29.

Lenten Lunch Discussion Series on Compassion

You can still join us Wednesdays at 12:30 pm in Nehls Hall. We begin with

the brief service of Noonday Prayer followed by discussion from the Lenten Devotional *Practicing Compassion with Your Whole Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength*. Bring your own lunch.

Next week we will discuss Compassion and Well-Being.

[To more about the Lenten Series.](#)

Memorial for Rev. Jan Griesinger - April 2

Community Memorial: Join in the celebration of the incredible life and legacy of Reverend Jan Griesinger on Sunday, April 2, 2023, from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Come ready to sing and share memories of this incomparable advocate for social justice. Location: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens (184 Longview Heights, Athens, OH). Reception to follow at Purple Chopstix.

R.S.V.P. requested to assist with reception planning, but not required. Email: Jan.G.Memorial@gmail.com

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.



Invitation to Observe Holy Week

Holy Week starts next Sunday, April 2. The observation of Holy Week is one of the oldest traditions in the Christian Church and was a significant spiritual season for the earliest Christians. For them, and for us who follow Jesus today, the invitation is the same: to be with Christ by remembering his final days of ministry, life, his death, and his resurrection. Doing so can have a profound impact on our own spiritual lives and help us learn to recognize how Christ is present in our lives and how our lives can reflect Christ to the world.

Each liturgy of Holy Week is uniquely participatory. They incorporate all five of our senses and include prayers, music, and rituals that are ancient. When we pray the Exultet, strip the altar, pray the Solemn Collects, ring bells at the return of the Alleluia, we are connecting with the many Christians who have gone before us and those who come after us.

Please join us as you are able for Holy Week:

Palm Sunday - - Sunday, April 2, 10:30 a.m.

What makes it unique:

Palm Sunday begins outside with the blessing of palm branches to celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We all get the opportunity to wave the palm branches just like the people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem over 2000 years ago. We follow the cross into the church building to represent our commitment to follow Jesus, even to the cross and the tomb and look for the Risen Christ in the world.

Maundy Thursday - - Thursday, April 6, 7:30 p.m.

What makes it unique:

Maundy Thursday can have two rituals that make it unique: washing feet and stripping the altar. The emphasis of this service is the institution of the Eucharist and how for Christians we encounter the living Christ in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. One beautiful way this is emphasized is the stripping of the altar and the washing of the altar with water and vinegar. This symbolizes the significance of the altar as our physical connection to Christ.

Good Friday - - Friday, April 7, 12:00 noon

What makes it unique:

Good Friday has beautiful prayers said only on this day. It is the day we remember all the injustice and horror of Jesus' death, and how we as individuals and society continue to reject the Love of God Jesus brings. Part of the service features a cross that will be carried through the congregation. This year, a small cross made of 200 year of wood repurposed from the wooden frame that held a church bell gifted to Mother Deborah will be carried through the congregation. This is to symbolize the connection all parishes share no matter our location.

Great Vigil of Easter - - Saturday, April 8 7:30 p.m.

What makes it unique:

The Great Vigil is the oldest of all the church services. It has three parts: 1) lighting a new fire, to symbolize hope. 2) telling the story of salvation in the dark of the church, symbolizing what followers of Jesus do in difficult or frightening times, we remember how God is always with God's people. 3) celebrating resurrection, we bring back the exclamation of alleluia that has been missing during Lent with joyous ringing of bells.

Coming up

Julie Nehl's 102nd birthday reception

Looks like there was some mix-up on the date and time for Julie Nehl's 102nd birthday reception, but a good many folks from around the community came on Saturday and Julie seemed to have a good time. The first order of business for Julie was looking over the goodies.

Thanks to David Burton for sending in these snapshots.







Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines for in-person worship](#)

In light of local conditions, we still recommend wearing masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.–

[E-News Guidelines
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

2:00 p.m., Monday through
Thursday.

Masks recommended.

The **Church Building** is not
open for public meetings and
gatherings but during office
hours the thrift shop and chapel
are available for individuals.

Masks are required.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily
closed.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please
contact The Rev. Deborah
Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell)
or 740-593-6877 (church),
or by e-mail at
revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

**To find out more about Good
Shepherd** and other matters,
please contact Alex Buckley,
Senior Warden, at 740-593-
5513 or by e-mail at
macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters,
please leave a note at the office
or contact Dana Carlson,
Junior Warden, at 740-664-
2022 or by e-mail at
carlsondana@hotmail.com.

For emergencies, please call
The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at
937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages
can be left on the church's
answering machine (740-593-
6877).

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the
Parish page where you
can find instructions
or donate on-line via
PayPal, If you have a
preference, please
indicate on the the
"Add special
instructions to the
seller" section the
purpose of the
donation
-- e.g. organ fund,
plate collection, etc.

Check out the
Church's
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The parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or barbara@chogs.org.

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701

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chogs@chogs.org
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[the Good Shepherd](#)
[45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks are required.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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