

THE
United Church
OF THE **San Juans**



FIFTH SUNDAY
OF
LENT
MARCH 22, 2026

MEDITATION

Faith goes up the stairs that love has built and looks out the windows which hope has opened.

– *Charles Spurgeon*

To journey without being changed, is to be a nomad. To change without journeying is to be a chameleon. To journey and to be transformed by the journeying is to be a pilgrim.

– *Mark Nepo*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Melinda Veatch

PRELUDE

Sicilienne

Kathryn Kubinyi, flute

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Adapted from Psalm 130 as translated in The Message)

Todd Schroedel

Leader: If you, God, kept records on wrongdoings, who would stand a chance? As it turns out, forgiveness is your habit, and that's why you're worshiped.

People: We pray to God – our life a prayer – and wait for what God will say and do.

Leader: Our life is on the line before God, waiting and watching till morning, waiting and watching till morning.

People: With God's arrival comes love. With God's arrival comes generous redemption. With God's arrival comes new life! We celebrate and worship God!

OPENING PRAYER

Todd Schroedel

Loving God, we confess our moments of despair and doubt. We look around us at all going on in the world, and we let fear guide our way. We turn away from your sustaining grace. Forgive our divisions and lack of love. Focus us on the real hope that is ours when we walk together in your Spirit. Restore us in times of conflict and confusion. As we gather for worship today, be present with us. May we find unity in your mercy and strength in your forgiveness. Lead us to embrace your provision and to seek nourishment in your presence alone. Amen.

WELCOMING SONG*

Through the Darkness of the Ages
(Hilary Jolly, words; Cyril V. Taylor, music)

Congregation

Hymn No. 536

Verses 1-3

*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable

God grabbed me. God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun.

He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Master God, only you know that."

He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones: 'Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!'"

God, the Master, told the dry bones, "Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life. I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am God!"

I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.

He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, son of man. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'"

So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

Then God said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Listen to what they're saying: 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone, there's nothing left of us.'

"Therefore, prophesy. Tell them, 'God, the Master, says: I'll dig up your graves and bring you out alive—O my people! Then I'll take you straight to the land of Israel. When I dig up graves and bring you out as my people, you'll realize that I am God. I'll breathe my life into you and you'll live. Then I'll lead you straight back to your land and you'll realize that I am God. I've said it and I'll do it. God's Decree.'"

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

There is a Balm in Gilead
(Trad. Spiritual; Arr. Jay Rouse)

UCSJ Choir
Kathryn Kubinyi, Flute

*There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sinsick soul*

*Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.*

SCRIPTURE READING**Romans 8:6-11** (*from* The Message)

Pastor Melinda Veatch

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.**SERMON****The Journey with Joy**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

RESPONSIVE SONG**Isaiah the Prophet**

Congregation

(Joy F. Patterson, words; *Southern Harmony* 1835)**Hymn No. 532****Both Verses****RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

*Thank you for your continued support of the church and our mission.***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

DOXOLOGY*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Todd Schroedel and Pastor Melinda Veatch

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, 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 sin, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING SONG***Joy in the Morning**

Congregation

*(Natalie Sleeth)***Hymn No. 533****All Verses****CLOSING PRAYER**

Todd Schroedel

POSTLUDE**Giga**

Kathryn Kubinyi, flute

*from Sonata in F Major (G. F. Handel)***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

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OUR MISSION

- We are a loving and compassionate church family that *respects the dignity and integrity* of each individual.
- We find our joy and meaning through faith in God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- We seek to promote Christian unity and to encourage understanding and cooperation with those from different traditions.
- We seek to foster deeper relationships with God and each other through worship, fellowship, growth and service.

WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA ~ THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



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