



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 23-29, 2020

Sermon by Rev. Stephen Coleman

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sermon Title: *"The Waiting"*

<p>Notes from sermon on 3/22:</p>	<p>Things to Pray For This Week:</p>
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Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Read John 11:1-45 as a family and then ask one another, "What captures your attention most in this story and why?"

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

- 1) 1. What do you learn from Mary and Martha and their interaction with Jesus in the story?
- 2) How do you define life and eternal life?
- 3) What does this story tell us about God and Jesus Christ?

In a time when we are reminded more than ever that you can never "cancel church" because the church is us, we thank you for continuing to grow, pray, and serve with us through the GPS.

Monday, March 23: Read John 11:1-28

We wait. We wait to hear the news each night, then each morning. We wait to find out when we might go back to our regular lives, or when our lives might be disrupted even more. We wait for the second shoe to drop. We wait for deliverance to come.

Rarely have we ever needed this week's Lenten scriptures more. They remind us that God notices, God is in control, but God works on God's own time. They remind us we are more than weak flesh, but are immortal spirit. They encourage us that even when our landscape seems nothing but a valley of dry bones, God is ready to revive, heal, and renew. They also let us know that it is okay to be scared and impatient sometimes – just keep reaching out, crying out to God, for God hears us. Today's scripture begins the long passage on Lazarus. We may know how the story ends (20/20 hindsight) but Mary and Martha didn't at this point. God already has 20/20 hindsight on 2020. Can we trust him as Mary trusted Jesus?

Tuesday, March 24: Read John 29-45

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is one of seven sign stories – stories that tell us something about God and about Jesus – that we find in the Gospel of John. It's arguably the most powerful. Here, we see an emotional and loving Jesus, the Great Physician, who just seems to be in...no...rush. The situation is clearly dire, and Jesus obviously cares (he weeps!) for his friend. So why not a greater sense of urgency?

Waiting for God to show up is a big part of our spiritual life. How do we do it gracefully? What are we supposed to DO? This Sunday, we are excited for the return of Stephen Coleman's preaching and will have a chance to watch his sermon on "The Waiting," which will encourage us to be strong, courageous, and patient in the midst of our waiting.

Wednesday, March 25: Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

There have been many times in history where it seemed all hope was lost – that things had passed the point of no return and could never fully recover. The prophet Ezekiel wrote during the time of Babylonian exile, when the ravaged and mourning Jews wondered aloud if God heard them at all – could reach them at all. Jerusalem seemed lost forever. Then Ezekiel's vision took readers on a visual journey to a valley of dry bones that miraculously, beautifully came back to life. How can we be like Ezekiel to our anxious friends, coworkers, Facebook friends, and neighbors? Where in our past, present, and future can we see God's ability to save us when all hope seems lost?

Thursday, March 26: Read Romans 8:6-11

What beautiful, encouraging, healing words the Lectionary gives us from Paul today. Set our minds on the Spirit, not the flesh. These words take on a whole new light right now, don't they? Rather than ruminating on our physical weaknesses and vulnerability, let us use this time to focus on our redeemed, renewed, and eternal Spirit. Let us balance our intake of news with an intake of the Word. As we are called to be socially distant with each other, let us respond to the call to cleave to Christ.

Friday, March 27: Read Psalm 130

What a gift the Psalms are. They allow us to feel every emotion and still know we are connected to and heard by God. We can be angry, scared, worried, impatient, vengeful...then transformed when we remember God's goodness and power. Wherever we are on that continuum, we can have blessed assurance of how things will ultimately turn out. Let us all put Psalm 130 into our own words, say them aloud, and know our words are heard and that God is coming. In fact, God is here right now.

Saturday, March 28: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Romans 6:11

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies
also through his Spirit that dwells in you."

Sunday, March 29: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Gracious God who by your love has made us, and through your love has kept us and in your love would make us perfect: we humbly confess that we have not loved you with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and that we have not loved one another as Christ has loved us. Your life is within our souls but our selfishness has hindered you. We have not lived by faith. We have resisted your Spirit. We have neglected your inspirations. Forgive these and all our sins. Help us to amend what we are and in your Spirit direct what we shall be. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.*