

Friday News from South West

March 24, 2023

Lent Five: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Our focus reading for the 5th Sunday in Lent is John 11:1–45.

This somewhat disjointed conversation between Jesus and the disciples contains complex layers of imagery and allusions to Jesus' coming anointing, death, and resurrection.

The act of raising Lazarus happens right at the end of the narrative, followed by the observation that some people "believed in him."

Jewish understanding was that it took three days for a soul to leave the body completely; thus, Lazarus had been dead long enough to have nothing left other than a body decaying rapidly in the desert heat.

This fact doesn't quite explain Jesus' delay. When Jesus does decide to return to Judea, the disciples are concerned for his safety, but the need to "work while it is still light" drives Jesus on. Thomas expresses loyalty and fear but also foreshadows Jesus' self-sacrifice.

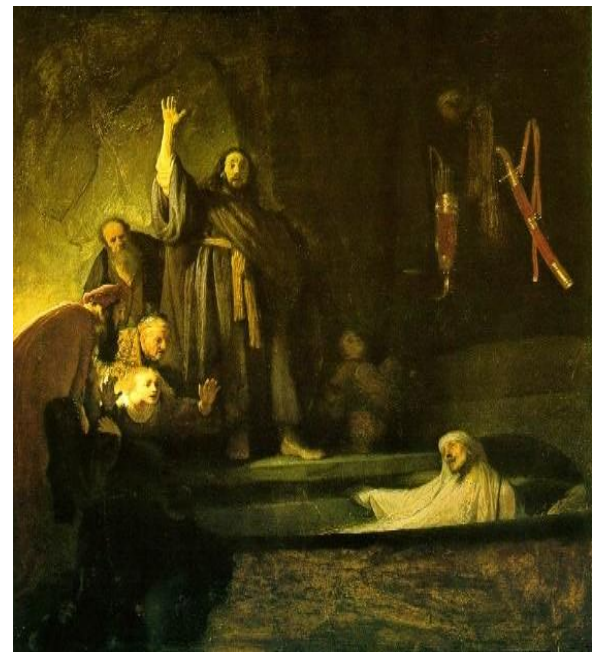
Burial took place immediately after death in the hot climate of the Middle East, and ritual mourning followed. Family, especially the women, sat in the home and were visited by friends.

However, when Jesus approaches, Martha defies custom and goes to meet him. Was she impatient for his arrival, or was she protecting Jesus from a potentially hostile gathering?

Her statement, perhaps, reveals Martha's grief. She understands the Jewish teaching of resurrection at the last days but finds something hopeful in what Jesus says. She puts her faith entirely in him. Mary's plea to Jesus is similar to Martha's, and the sadness of the situation disturbs Jesus greatly.

Martha, Mary, and the assembled mourners all ask the same question – why didn't Jesus come and heal Lazarus? Jesus' prayer sums up the purpose of this final sign.

God's glory will indeed be revealed, but at enormous pain and cost to both Jesus and his friends. Jesus then issues



three commands. Everyone has a task to do. Jesus calls Lazarus back to life, but it is the community that rolls away the stone and unbinds Lazarus from the trappings of death and releases him.

This is a story of hope. In our new reality, listening to the news, absorbing images of uncertainty around the world, it is easy to give up hope. It is easy to assume that things will not turn out well and, unfortunately, there is always that possibility.

But it is precisely in the face of such times that God challenges – almost dares us – to read the stories of new life and new hope in the Scriptures.

Resurrection is not a one-day event. It happens each and every time we greet a new day. Each day is a chance to see new possibilities, different answers to old questions, a better way of dealing with things. Each day is a new beginning, a resurrection in its own way.

How can we give up hope when God is so loudly proclaiming life in the midst of chaos?

And, perhaps more important, how can we, isolated as we feel we might be, continue to find ways to share that hope with one another?

My prayer for this week is:

Creator God, in the midst of darkness you offer light.
In the midst of despair you offer hope.
In the midst of confusion and uncertainty you offer new ways of seeing and understanding things.
Help us to remember this always.
Amen

In peace
Pastor Beryl, DLM

Upcoming Summerlea Events

MAUNDY THURSDAY POTLUCK SUPPER APRIL 6TH – 6:00PM Sign-up sheets will be circulated in the sanctuary on Sunday

Octet Plus, a chamber choir, is giving a fund-raising concert of classical, gospel, Broadway and popular songs on Sunday, April 16th at 3:00pm at Summerlea United Church, 225 50th Avenue, Lachine for the benefit of The Trail/Le Sentier Music for Veterans programme. Tickets \$20., to be announced.

The Artisan Fair & 2-Day Book Sale is Back! on Saturday, April 29th, from 10am-3pm There will be many artisans displaying their beautiful crafts, delicious home baking, and many books for adults and children at great bargain prices! The book sale will take place on Friday, April 28th from 10am-3pm and Saturday, April 29th from 10am-3pm. If you



know anyone who would like to participate in the fair and would like to rent a table, please have them contact the church office at 514.634.2651. Any contributions of sweet or savory goodies for the Bake Sale table are greatly appreciated.

Books Needed! Please bring your used books (adult & children) before April 22nd to the church for our upcoming book sale on Friday, April 28th , 10am-3pm and at the Artisan Fair on Saturday, April 29th, 10am-3pm

Help Needed for Ukrainian Family Living in Dorval:

Rev. Christine recently spoke with a family who have arrived here from Ukraine, Liudmila and her dad, to ask how we can help and what they need. If you would like to help with any of the items on this list, we will collect them on the pew in front of Rev. Christine's office.

Kitchen items needed:

- small kitchen appliances
- one pot
- one frying pan - plates
- cups
- kitchen knives
- dishes
- kitchen towels
- bath towels

Items they have: an electric kettle and an iron



You are invited to a special event

“Movie Night”

The Boxing Girls of Kabul
Friday, March 31st at 7:00pm

Summerlea United Church,
225-50th Avenue, Lachine H8T 2T7

The NFB production by movie-maker Ariel Nasr

Ariel Nasr hopes to be present, as will Shahla Sikandari, one of the girls featured in the film! Ariel and Shahla will be happy to answer questions after the movie.

Refreshments will be served, and there will be a freewill offering. The proceeds will be sent to Shahla's three siblings in Pakistan, to cover their expenses while waiting for their Canadian visas. Any questions about the funding of the siblings will be addressed by Sheila Laursen, chairperson of the West Island Refugee Coalition.

Calendar

**Sunday March 26th: 5th of Lent. Summerlea and SouthWest service at 10am;
SouthWest Annual Congregational Meeting after the service.**

Friday, March 31st: Movie Night, 7pm

April 2: Palm Sunday

April 6: Maundy Thursday potluck supper

April 7: Good Friday

Sunday April 9: EASTER

Sunday April 16: Octet Plus, 3pm

April 28-29: Artisan Fair and Book Sale

Our Prayer List

Bridget McCarthy

Phyllis Luther

Shirley Mitchell

Patrick O'Leary

Natalie Lalonde

Doris Smith

Maurice Tringle

Gilles Gauthier

Helen Cameron

May Cook

Donna Cobb

Keith Wood

Violet L'Esperance

Roberta Roberts

Sylvia Vallee-Girouard

If you would like your name added to the prayer list, or if you are requesting on behalf of a family member, call the office or contact Pastor Beryl directly.



Southwestunited SouthWest United Church

phone: 514 538-0624

email: southwestunited@gmail.com

Web: southwestunited.net