

October 22, 2023

ALL HALLOW'S EVE (HALLOWEEN) DINNER CHURCH

HYMN

Abide With Me

ALL Sing

In moderate time

1. A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide; The dark - ness
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day; Earth's joys grow
3. I need Thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour; What but Thy
4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless: Ills have no
5. Hold Thou Thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes; Shine through the

deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide: When oth - er help - ers
dim, its glo - ries pass a - way; Change and de - cay in
grace can foil the Tempt - er's power? Who like Thy - self my
weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness. Where is death's sting? Where,
gloom, and point me to the skies: Heaven's morn - ing breaks, and

fail, and com - forts flee, Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
all a - round I see; O Thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me.
grave, thy vic - to - ry? I tri - umph still, if Thou a - bide with me.
earth's vain shadows flee: In life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me. A - MEN.

GREETING

Pastor: Light and peace to you, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All People: Thanks be to God!

Opening Prayer

All people: Dear Lord, in the hymn we just sang, we confess our need for your abiding presence. The darkness is deep in our world. An old Celtic prayer reads: "From ghoulies and ghosties, and long-leggedy beasties, and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us." We can certainly say "Amen" to that! Yet, on this night we also rejoice in this opportunity to worship you and to remember the saints, of every time and place. We remember too, through Jesus, our call to be your holy people who shine your light of hope and peace into the darkness. Amen.

Table Grace

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do - do do do do - do do do do! (snap snap)

We thank you, Lord, for giving - the food we need for living.

The food, the fun, the friendship. We are your family!

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do - do do do do - do do do do! (snap snap)

Oh Lord, we are so grateful - for every cup and plateful.

Oh Lord, we are so grateful – and thank you very much!

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do (snap snap)

Do do do do - do do do do - do do do do! (snap snap) AMEN!

Sharing a Meal Together

First-time guests are invited to go first.

Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness & the Jack-o-Lantern

Moment of Silent Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

Pastor: Beloved children of God, let us share God's Good News together, by reading the scripture passages printed in our worship programs: From John 8:12 - "Jesus said to the people, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'"

Liturgist: From Second Corinthians chapter 4, verse 6: "God once said, 'Let light shine out of the darkness!' This is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts to let us know that his own divine greatness is seen in the face of Christ."

All people: We are encouraged to shine the light of Jesus which fills us with these words from the 5th chapter of Matthew's Gospel: "You are the light that shines for the world to see. You are like a city built on a hill that cannot be hidden. People don't hide a [lantern] under a basket. They put it on a stand. Then the light shines for everyone. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven." Thanks be to God for grace and transformation!

SUNG RESPONSE
This Little Light of Mine

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "This lit - tle light of mine___ I'm gon - na let it shine___". Chords above the staff are F, G m7, F, G m7, and F. The second staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "This lit - tle light of mine___ I'm gon na let it shine___ This lit - tle light of mine___". Chords above the staff are Bb, G m7, F, G m7, F, G m7, and F. The third staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "I'm gonna let it shine___ Let it shine,___ let it shine,___ let it shine_____". Chords above the staff are A, D7, F, F, G, and F.

Scripture Reading

Responsive and Participatory with Congregation

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Led by: Rev. Martha Boyer

Introduction and History of Halloween Skeletons and Ghosts

Before reading tonight's scripture passage, commonly referred to as "The Valley of Dry Bones," I invite you to take hold of the Easter Eggs on your tables. You will participate in the reading by rattling your Easter Eggs at various points in the to symbolize the sound of rattling bones. In choosing the Easter egg for our rattle, we are reminded too of the Easter's promise – Jesus rose from the grave! LIFE is victorious! Death cannot contain us! Through Jesus' resurrection we have life eternal!

To prepare ourselves to hear about Ezekiel's vision of Dry Bones, we will hear FIRST, a brief history about dry bones or Skeletons and ghosts on Halloween. After which, we will learn about the context for Ezekiel's vision and read the passage together in dramatic form using our Easter Eggs as rattling bones! Pay attention to, for moments when you will be asked to howl (or oooooooh) – not to represent ghosts of course, but instead, the resurrecting breath of God's Spirit.

So about skeletons and ghosts – it IS brief... Graveyards and haunted houses, skeletons and ghosts are simply, symbolic reminders of the otherworld, death, and human mortality. Hence, their connection to that ancient Celtic tradition known as Samhain (*pronounced sow-win*).

As for our scripture passage...Ezekiel was a prophet and priest in ancient Israel in the 6th century BCE. God had commissioned Ezekiel to deliver messages to God's people, who had been

captured and taken hostage by the vicious army of a nation called Babylon. It was a very dark and terrorizing time for God's people. The bones in Ezekiel's vision represented their feelings of hopelessness. They'd been torn apart. They felt disjointed and dead.

They wondered if they would ever know life again. They wondered if God could restore them and would ever be able to bring them back to their homeland.

Let us read together in dramatic form, the Word of the Lord, with each table participating accordingly, by rattling your dry bone Easter Eggs and howling like the wind as indicated.

Ezekiel said, "The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. He led me all around - among the bones - that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere! They laid across the ground and were completely dried out.

Then the Lord asked me, "Son of man, can these bones become living people again?"

"O Sovereign Lord," I replied, "only you know the answer to that question."

Then the Lord gave me a command saying, "Speak a prophetic message to disjointed skeletons, and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord!

This is not what I say, but what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you WILL come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

So I spoke this message, just as the Lord commanded me!

Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley.

Table 1 rattle your "bones." Continue to rattle as scripture is read...

The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons.

Table 1 AND 2 rattle your "bones." Continue to rattle as scripture is read...

Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones.

Tables 1, 2 AND 3 rattle your "bones." Continue to rattle as scripture is read...

Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

Everyone RATTLE your bones – LOUDLY.

STOP when indicated...Be SILENT...

Then the Lord said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man! Speak a prophetic message and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.’”

So I spoke the message as the Lord commanded me...

EVERYONE howl and swoosh like the wind...Continue as scripture is read.

breath came into those dead bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army!

Wind and bodies are silence...

Then the Lord said to me: “Son of man, these bones are my people. They cry out, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’”

Therefore say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD promises: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put MY Spirit in you and you WILL live...’”

This is God’s Good News – DEATH is not the end of God’s story, nor our story as God’s holy people. Life eternal, through Christ, reigns victorious!

All the people: Thanks be to God for this Good News!

Offering Invitation and Prayer of Dedication with a History of Soul Cakes

Having received God’s Good News, we come to that moment when we have an opportunity to share and spread that Good News, through the committed giving of our time, talent, and money. The act of “giving and receiving” is also a favorite Halloween tradition that takes place in the form of “trick-or-treating.” It is from the English Catholics, that we get begging from door to door on the third day of the celebration we’re studying. It happens on November 2nd and is called All Soul’s Day.

Historically Christian children would go door to door, begging their neighbors for a “Soul Cake,” for which in return, they would offer a prayer for their neighbors’ deceased loved ones. Instead of knocking on a door and saying, “Trick-or-treat,” children would either say:

All people: A Soul Cake, a Soul Cake, have mercy on all Christian souls for a soul cake!

OR

All people: Soul, soul, an apple or two. If you haven't an apple, a pear will do! One for Peter, two for Paul, three for the Man who made us all!

While Soul Cakes were originally a type of shortbread, it is said that a clever medieval cook wanted to make Soul Cakes designed to remind people of eternity, so she cut a hole in the middle of round cakes before frying them, thereby inventing donuts!

While we don't offer Soul Cakes to spread God's Good News, we do offer a generous portion of our time, talent, and finances so that others may taste and share in God's love and light. Let us now dedicate all we promise, with a prayer. (*A white offering box is located by the door as you enter and exit, into which you can place your financial offerings*)

All people: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of life and the gift of faith. We thank you for the love and support of those who have gone before us, especially those who have died. We ask that you bless our offering and use it to further your kingdom here on earth. We dedicate ourselves to your service and pray that you will use us to bring hope, healing, and joy to those around us. Amen.

ANTHEM

Chancel Choir

The Lord's Supper

Pastor: As we have gathered tonight, to fellowship and share a meal; as we have gathered to prayer and sing and read again of God's Holy Word, we remember that Jesus often did the same with his disciples. Jesus said, "where two or more are gathered in my name, I am with them."

All people: Therefore, we know that Jesus is present here and now. Right HERE, with us, on this holy night, in this holy place.

Pastor: Gathered together, we remember how on a night that was to be a long and dark one, Jesus gathered with his disciples. During the meal Jesus took bread that was on the table; he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying:

All people: Take and eat. This is my body which is broken for you.

Pastor: In the same way, near the end of supper, Jesus took a cup of wine. He lifted it towards heaven and gave God thanks. To his disciples, Jesus said,

All people: *This cup is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink it, remember me.*

Pastor: And so tonight, we remember Jesus' death on the cross and celebrate his resurrection.

All people: *We share in the bread and cup and remember Jesus, as he asked us to do.*

Pastor: Good and gracious God, pour out your blessing upon this bread and cup and upon us. Grant that these holy elements and our fellowship may serve to nourish us mind, body, and spirit, that we may go forth to shine your light in places of darkness and proclaim the good news of life beyond death. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

“The Bread of Heaven. The Cup of salvation.”

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together in one voice, using the prayer as printed in our worship program:

All people: *You, O Lord, have made us from the dust of the earth and to dust our bodies will someday return; yet you have also breathed your Spirit upon us and called us to new life in you. Have mercy upon us, now and at the hour of our death; through Jesus Christ, we continue to pray as he taught us: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*

HYMN

Up from the Grave, He Arose

Last Page

Benediction

Pastor: Brothers and sisters,
since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses,
saints - each of whom lived a life of faith in God,
let us lay aside every weight that slows us down,
especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress.
and let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us,
keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ,
on whom our faith depends from start to finish.

All people: *May the love of God,
the light of Jesus Christ,
and the peaceful presence of the Holy Spirit,
be among us and within us as we go. Amen*

Communal Clean-Up

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Low in the Grave He Lay

1. Low in the grave He lay, Je-sus, my Sav-ior! Wait-ing the com-ing day,
2. Vain - ly they watch His bed, Je-sus, my Sav-ior! Vain - ly they seal the dead,
3. Death can-not keep his prey, Je-sus, my Sav-ior! He tore the bars a - way,

Je - sus, my Lord! Up from the grave He a - rose, with a
He a-rose,

might - y tri-umph o'er His foes; He a - rose a vic - tor from the
He a-rose;

dark do - main, and He lives for - ev - er with His saints to reign. He a -

rose! He a - rose! Hal - le - lu - jah! Christ a - rose!
He a-rose! He a-rose!