October 25, 2026

ALL HALLOW'S EVE (HALLOWEEN) DINNER CHURCH

HYMN ***All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*** **Chancel Choir**

GREETING

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

All People: ***Thanks be to God!***

Opening Prayer

All people: ***Dear Lord, the choir has lifted our hearts in praise of Jesus' name. On this All Hallow's Eve, we rejoice that your love is greater than our fears and your light shines even in the deepest darkness. Amid the pumpkins and costumes - and things that go bump in the night - help us remember that we belong to you! As we gather around these tables, bless our food, our fellowship, and all who share this meal. We give thanks for the saints of every time and place who have shown us your love. Following their example, may we be your holy people, sharing your welcome and shining your light of hope and peace. In Jesus' powerful and loving name we pray. 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

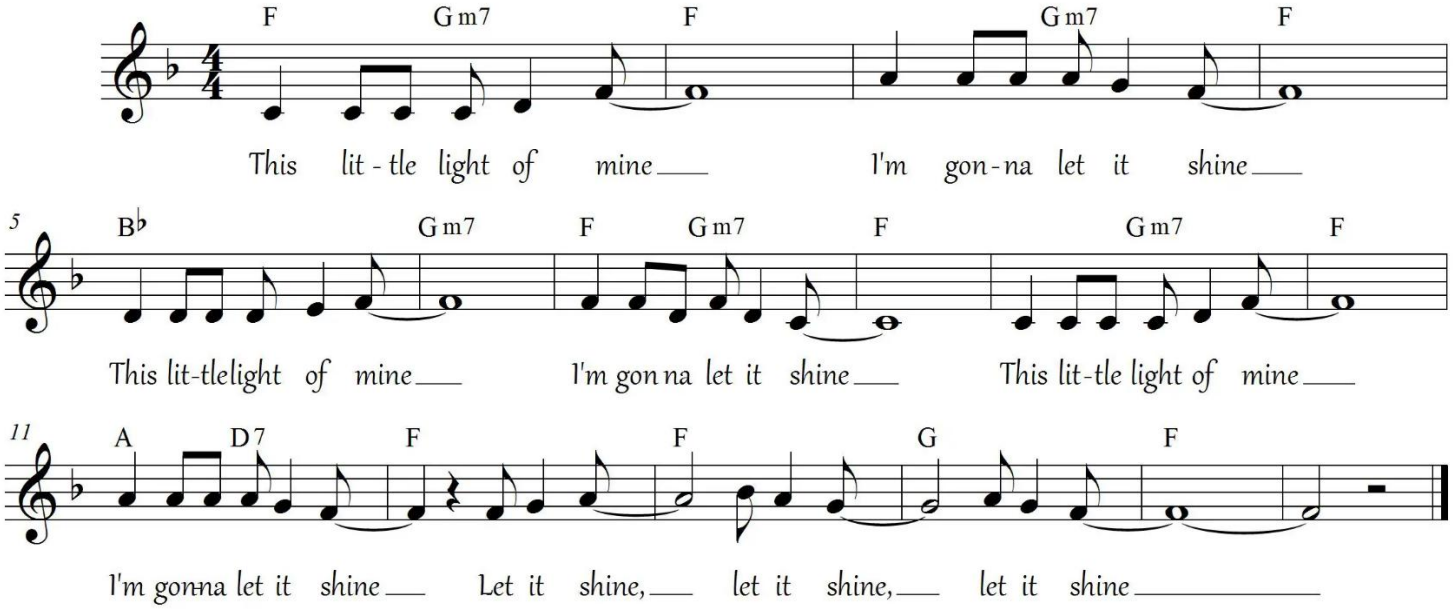
Assurance of Forgiveness

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

Scripture Reading - Ezekiel 37:1-10

Responsive and Participatory with Congregation

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.

Closing Prayer of Dedication & The Lord's Prayer

All people: ***Loving God, we thank you for the gift of life, the gift of faith, and the love of those who have gone before us. As we remember the saints of every time and place, bless these offerings and the offering of our lives. Use us to bring hope, healing, and joy to those around us.***

You have formed us from the dust of the earth and breathed your Spirit into us. Though our bodies will someday return to dust, we trust in your promise of resurrection and life everlasting. Through Jesus Christ, who rose victorious from the grave, help us to live with courage, serve with love, and face even death with hope. Hold us in your mercy, now and at the hour of our death, and unite our voices with all your saints as we pray as Jesus taught us:

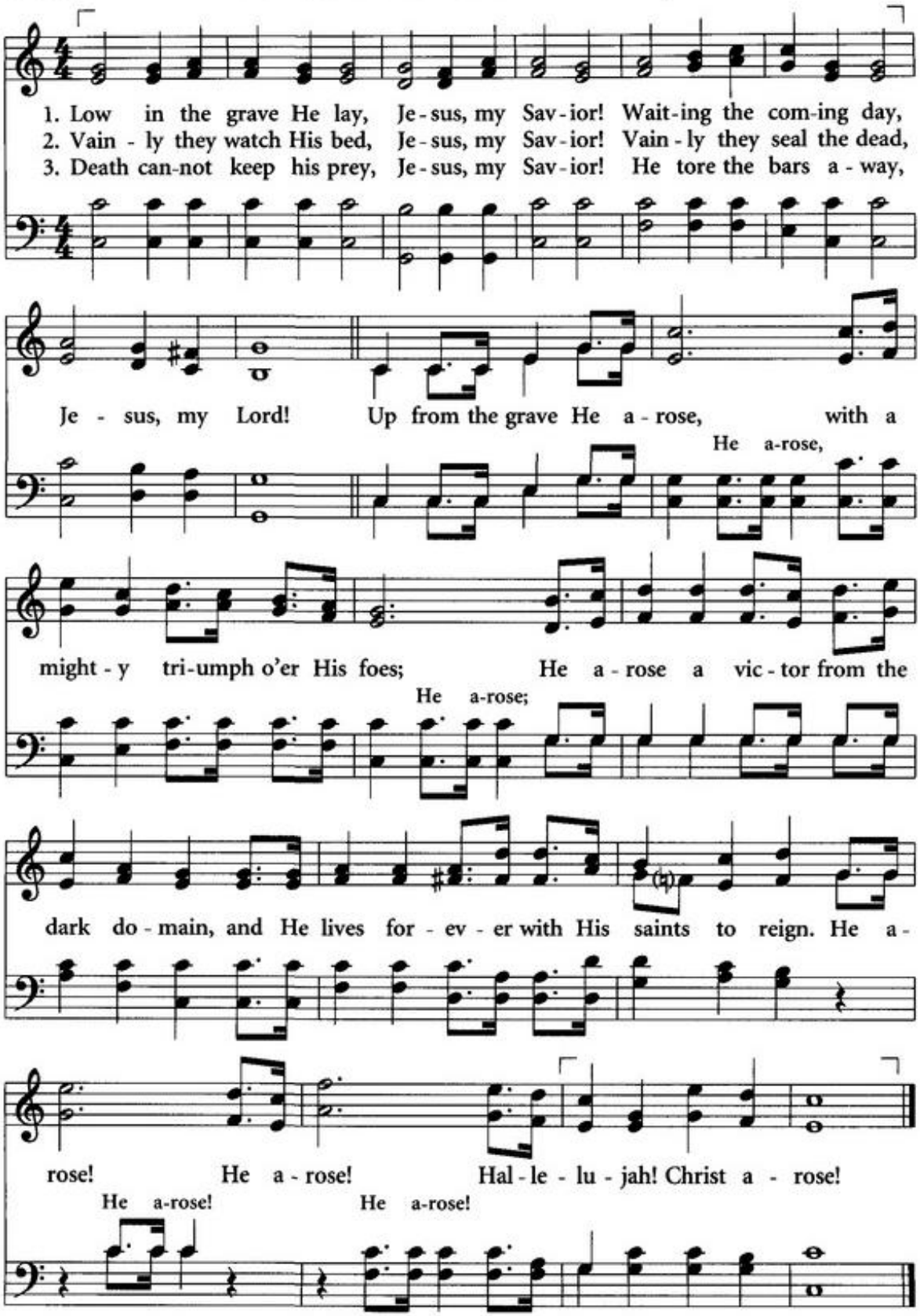
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN ***Low in the Grave He Lay (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

TRUNK OR TREAT in the PARKING LOT

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