

Reflections from Pastor Brooke

March 27, 2020

I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.

~ Ezekiel 37:14

Congratulations, you are well on your way to having sheltered in place for nearly a week! Many of us were “mostly” staying inside, but I will speak for myself, that when the governor ordered it, I became more serious about it. But after not even a full week, it can start to feel like we may never get to be “on (y)our own soil”: The soil of the sanctuary; the soil of our daily routine; the soil of physical touch from a friend.

This passage comes from the story of the valley of dry bones. It is part of our lectionary this week, but not one of the passages on which I will preach. However, with all of the things going on in our country and around the world right now, it may feel like we are living in a valley of dry bones. This book in the Bible was written for the Israelites when they were in exile, feeling like they would never return to their country. It is an illustration that even when we are out of our routines, missing family and friends that we can only see virtually at best — and fearful for those same people — God promises us that God is with us. God is not only with us during this time, but the book reminds us that we have to do our part in order to be able to return to that familiar soil. That means we keep on staying home, washing our hands, and do not gather in groups. Yes, God is powerful, but we have our responsibilities as well.

Mostly, this is a passage about hope. Hope may be in short supply right now — particularly if you are listening to the news. But we worship a God whose son came to this earth to live among us and overcame death. If that is not a story about hope, I don't know what is. There will be days when it is harder to grasp that hope; but know that even on those days, God is working to restore your hope.

We will meet again this week on Facebook Live on the Church of the Redeemer UCC page at 10:30 a.m. If you are unsure how to watch that, please call the church office, 440.331.0834, ext. 2, and I will call you back and walk you through that. Also, in anticipation of celebrating communion next week (April 5), make sure you have some bread or a cracker and some type of liquid so that we can all celebrate communion together from our own “soil.”

Blessings,
Pastor Brooke

