

Main Spring

From The Rev. Jane A. Beebe

I have always loved Ezekiel's startling vision of the "Valley of Dry Bones"—and the spiritual that goes with it. (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

"The toe bone's connected to the foot bone, the foot bone's connected to the heel bone, the heel bone's connected to the ankle bone, the ankle bone's connected to the shin bone..."

Culminating with: "Now hear the word of the Lord!" With its themes of new life, restored hope, and even bodily resurrection, this passage is also one of the readings that may be chosen for the Easter Vigil service. It also shows up at Pentecost.

The first thing I notice in the Ezekiel passage is that there are many bones. It is my sense is that the bones were scattered around in a chaotic way. It is no longer possible to know what bones belong together. God leads Ezekiel all around them. The second thing I notice is that they are *very* dry: utterly desiccated. New life from these bones seems pretty unlikely. The dryness conveys not only physical death, but a complete demoralization: all hope is lost. No new vision seems possible. And yet God tells Ezekiel to prophesy to these dry bones: "O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD."

I find it interesting that God chooses to work with a prophet to bring about the transformation of these dry bones. Ezekiel was a prophet during the exile of Israel in Babylon. He spent the first part of his prophetic career focused on dire descriptions of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. To say the least, Ezekiel was not popular! However, in later chapters he brings the Israelites hope in some of the more beautiful words uttered by any of the prophets, such as, "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)

God has the audacity to ask Ezekiel, "Mortal, can these bones live?" It is as if God needs someone, even someone thanklessly prophesying in exile, to affirm that this is possible. Yet what answer is possible? "Oh Lord GOD, you



UTO

**Total contributions
to the UTO for this
Fall Ingathering
was \$201.85.**

Rather than looking on
the negative side, with
the pandemic,

I am thankful for (in no
particular order)

a loving family,
good friends,
helpful neighbors,
a warm home,
a job I enjoy,
dependable car,
Rev Jane and her bring-
ing our Church family
together each week,
two great cats,
our freedom of Religion,
a lovely view of the lake
each day.

Thank God,
I am truly blessed.

Sandi

Son to his Mom:

**"Mom, you once said
you would slap me
into next year.**

***Can you do that
now, please?"***

Continued from The Rev. Jane A. Beebe

know." Walter Wink says, "It is the prophetic task, in a time of unraveling hopes, to declare the unimaginable, to assert the rationality of the unthinkable..." Ezekiel prophesies and the bones are reknit. Ezekiel prophesies and sinews and flesh cover the bones. Ezekiel prophesies and the four winds, the essential breath of Creation itself flows in.

I have reason to be thankful that broken and scattered bones can be re-knit, that they can live! I think of those wonderful verses from Psalm 139:

*"For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth."*

Since my arm was fractured I have learned some wonderful things about how bones heal. God has designed an extraordinary process. In the reparative phase of healing, the body creates a new supportive network of blood vessels. They provide the initial structural stability and framework for producing new bone. Next the body creates fibrous and spongy tissue called a callus. I was fascinated to learn the tissues reach out to one another from the broken ends, and literally weave together like Ezekiel's bones. The callus holds everything together until the hard bone remodels the break into its former shape. The body sends in special cells called osteoblasts that help form the new bone. (I visualize them as tiny super-heroes in capes). The beautiful, poetic—and sometimes startling—language of the prophets and psalms points to wonderful truths about how God has made us.

This healing journey is not one I would have chosen. Yet I still abide by Isaiah's words: "...A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench..." (Isaiah 42:3) God has imagined what is necessary for our healing. He does not leave us in our brokenness. Jesus' own body was broken. We have a God who understands what that feels like. And we have a God who assures us, who knows, that "these bones can live."

CHRISTMAS BASKETS

As many of you know, one of the ministries of the church is the annual Christmas Baskets that are assembled for families that are in need. This year the need will be larger than prior years. The elementary school has in years past collected food at this time of year for the baskets. Due to Covid, this is not happening. We will need to provide all of the food for the baskets. If you would like to donate food for the baskets, here is a list of items needed:

Stuffing mix

Gravy

Potatoes

Squash

Apples

Oranges

Pancake mix

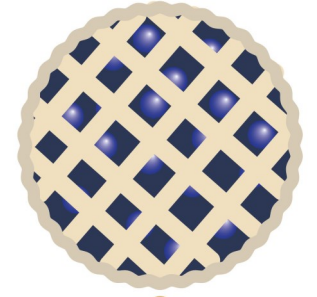
Syrup

Other items for lunches and breakfasts
for the extra time that the kids are at home.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange to drop off
some items, please call:

Mary Hawes at 508-885-6815 or 508-662-8174.

Donations need to be in by **Friday, December 18th.**



UPDATES TO THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Rowena Hanson—tel # (508) 867-6715

Mary Martin—tel # (413) 436-9638—corrected

THE 119TH DIOCESAN CONVENTION: THE MISSION CONTINUES

The 119th Convention this year was anything but conventional! While we were unable to see or speak to our fellow Episcopalians in western Massachusetts, it was great having our Diocese leadership only 18 inches away. Without the need for snacks and lunch, the whole meeting was over by lunch. The virtual convention was only possible thanks to the incredible collaborative and technological effort of so many.

The morning began with beautiful music, followed by Morning Prayer and Bishop Fisher's Address to Convention. The meeting itself consisted of several reports and elections, all voted on electronically – and quite simply.

The numerous diocesan ministries that are usually featured at convention were instead posted on the <https://www.diocesewma.org/> website. A few however, were briefly highlighted.

Rev. Jose Reyes spoke about the efforts with the Hispanic Ministry of Worcester which was officially admitted as an Organized Mission into union at the Convention.

The mission of the *Good News Gardens* is to establish a community of people with the ability to plant gardens of all sizes and kinds together – from small pots of herbs to hundreds of acres of corn – in order to share the love of Christ through word and action, food and labor.

Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for *Creation Care*, quoted a friend, “*Climate change has spread its wings*” and rooted in our Gospel faith, we must rise up to protect every neighbor that we can. We pray, learn, act, and mobilize.”

UTO: a grant of \$36,948 was awarded for the Big Blue Drop-In Center; Christ Church Cathedral which provides a comfortable place where the unhoused and disenfranchised gather for rest, physical and spiritual nourishment, and strength during the day.

A resolution was approved to commend and applaud Bishop Fisher for his inspirational leadership during this challenging time. “We thank him for his reminder of Corrie Ten Boom’s words: “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” And we do promise to continue Jesus’ revolutionary mission of mercy, compassion, and hope by being be sons and daughters of encouragement in our churches, communities, and families.”

It is my hope to get further information on the *Good News Gardens* and see if there is any simple and logistical way CMC could create a similar outreach.

Sue Lewandowski, Vestry

SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY NEEDS UPDATE

From Missy

**We have helped to make the
high school pantry FULL!!!**

With that being said, they are looking ahead to the Thanksgiving supplies.

Stuffing mix

Gravy mix / canned—no glass

Cranberry sauce

Au gratin potatoes

Potato side dishes

Rice / Noodle side dishes

Also consider breakfast items as the kids will be home for 2 days more that week.

Granola bars

Pop tarts

Breakfast bars

Thanks you again for all you





THE MEANING OF IT ALL

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have Hope. Romans 15:4

Thank goodness I was not asked ahead of time if I would accept the burdens that are in my life right now. God, I know what I would have said. But even though I didn't have advance knowledge of what to expect. I do have Your knowledge of what to carry me through each day. Your words, communicated through obedient servants over time now serve to build me up and restore my strength. My chance to say no would have eliminated my opportunity to say yes—yes to learning to trust You yes to enduring the dark to reach the light and yes to receiving the hope that gives all my days meaning.

(from the One-Minute Prayers by Hope Lyda)



Hearts for Heat 2020-2021

Has Covid-19 affected your or a friend's ability to pay heating bills over the winter? Now it the time to reach out to WCAC for fuel assistance. There are other benefits as well – reduced rates for electric bills and repairs made to your furnace up to \$1,000.00 in one fuel season. Call 508-754-1176 and leave a message with best time for their staff to call back, or access <https://www.wcac.net/fuel-assistance/>

All North Brookfield Hearts for Heat applicants must first reach out to WCAC; our application requires a copy of the WCAC award or rejection letter. Our application will soon be available at the Haston Library, North Brookfield Town offices, North Brookfield Senior Center and online at: <https://www.heartsforheat.org/NorthBrookfield/assistance.html>.

Due to the pandemic, Hearts for Heat has cancelled the 2021 Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser and will be doing an only GoFundMe campaign in early January. North Brookfield Savings Banks will again be matching \$2000 in donations. If you would like to make a donation, please send your check to: North Brookfield Hearts for Heat, P.O. Box 44, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

Stay warm and healthy,

Sue Lewandowski
NB Heart for Heat *President/Secretary*

Recipe from Behind the Red Door—1978 edition

PIES

PIE CRUST

MRS. CHARLES A. POLAND

5 C. flour
2 C. crisco
 $\frac{1}{2}$ t. salt

Blend the above well. Break an egg in a cup and mix with a fork, and fill the cup with water. Add to the mixture and mix.

This makes several 9" pies. You can separate dough into rolls (a roll of pie dough that is enough for a shell or top), place in freezer. When you want to make a 1 crust pie or a 2 crust pie, your dough is already mixed.

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