

# Lenten Guided Prayer 2017

## *Restore us, O God!*



## Prayer Sheet 5: *We breathe*

Week starting April 2

### Call to Prayer

This week you are invited to visit two stories; both begin with a bleak scene of death and then the life-giving Spirit of God breathes in new life. Our hope is in the promise that death is never final; God's glory and purpose are revealed in life-giving breath, restoring even the most hopeless of situations.

**Opening Prayer:** *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning (Psalm 130:5-6).*

### Meditative Reading

Begin by requesting that the Spirit breathe a word into you and open your own spirit to receiving. Read **Ezekiel 37:1-14** and/or **John 11:1-45**. Resist the urge to search out a word or phrase; rather, allow a word or phrase from the text to emerge and reveal itself to you.

### For Reflection

- How have you experienced death recently, either literally or figuratively?
- In what ways are you longing for new life?

### Additional Prayer Options

*Select a prayer suggestion from the list below that grabs you, challenges you, or causes you to question. You may stay with one way of praying throughout the week or try several options.*

### Praying with Scripture

**John 11:1-45:** It is puzzling that Jesus takes so much time to reach his friend, Lazarus. He waits two extra days before setting out for the village (v.6) and then takes his time getting there (v.30). Upon his arrival those who are desperate and rushed tell him that he's too late; Lazarus has died and has already been in the tomb for four days. In the face of crisis, Jesus chooses to move slowly and intentionally. Like Jesus, how might you practice slowing down, breathing deeply, and moving intentionally toward the hard realities of life, especially when all you want to do is find a quick fix?

### Thoughts and Reflections

## Praying through your life

The story from Ezekiel begins with a valley of dry bones. Sketch or imagine your inner landscape or a scene from your life. Are there parts of your landscape that are parched, in need of new life? Ask the Spirit of God to ***send breath from the four winds, bringing what is needed to live*** (37:9). Become aware of any shifts in the scene or landscape, and as you feel led give thanks through words, music, movement, or art. If nothing shifts immediately, continue to pray and check back with the landscape from time to time in the next days and weeks.

## Praying with music

Listen to, sing or play one of these (or your own) musical selections as prayer.

*You are all we have* STJ 29

*Breathe on me, breath of God* HWB 356

*I will come to you in the silence* STS 49

[Youtube: You Are Mine - David Haas](#)

*Breathe* by Michael W. Smith

[Youtube: Michael W. Smith - Breathe \(Live\)](#)

## Praying with movement

Pay attention to the movement of the wind while walking, working with your hands, or spending time in nature. Invite the Spirit of God that enlivens you to breathe in you. Notice the subtle movement of the Spirit, providing your body and spirit with needed nourishment.

## Praying for our world

In the account of the valley of dry bones, the prophet Ezekiel is speaking to the whole house of Israel as if the people are dead. They are indeed scattered; some are in the land and some are exiled. The prophesy speaks of God causing breath to enter the bones so that they may live. Pray for groups of people who are scattered, who desperately need the breath of new life to come to them.

## Closing Prayer

*Giver of Life,*

*Sometimes I become so accustomed to*

*holding my breath, breathing shallowly, or breathing in polluted air*

*that I forget that you invite me*

*to take full, deep breaths,*

*enlivened by your Spirit.*

*Restore me, O God!*

*Amen.*