

**All Saints Episcopal Church  
Chapel of the Resurrection, Steenrijk  
Willemstad, Curacao**

**The Fifth Sunday in Lent (A)**

**March 26, 2023**

**“All God’s Children”**

**DRAFT**

**The Holy Gospel according to**

**John 11:1-45**

Now a certain man was ill, Laz’arus  
of Bethany, the village of Mary and her  
sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed

the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'arus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Laz'arus. So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples said to him,

“Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, “Our friend Laz’arus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but

they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Laz’arus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Now when Jesus came, he found that Laz’arus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. When Martha heard that

Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house.

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do

you believe this?” She said to him,  
“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the  
Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming  
into the world.” When she had said this,  
she went and called her sister Mary,  
saying quietly, “The Teacher is here and  
is calling for you.” And when she heard  
it, she rose quickly and went to him.  
Now Jesus had not yet come to the  
village, but was still in the place where  
Martha had met him. When the Jews  
who were with her in the house,  
consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and  
go out, they followed her, supposing that

she was going to the tomb to weep there. Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from

dying?” Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the

people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Laz’arus, come out.” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

Open our eyes to your power, your love, your healing, and your divinity, O Christ Our Lord. Amen.

[The other readings for 5 Lent (A) are

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Romans 8:6-11

Psalm 130

that are in the URL below:]

[http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA\\_RCL/Lent/ALent5\\_RCL.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Lent/ALent5_RCL.html)

Precious Lord, help us to see  
ourselves and others as you see us.

Amen.

There's a story out of Sarajevo, from the most dreadful days of the Bosnian civil war, around 1995.

A reporter covering that conflict saw a little girl shot by a sniper. He threw down his pad and pencil and stopped being a reporter for a few minutes. He rushed over to the man who was holding the child, and helped them both into his car.

The reporter stepped on the accelerator, racing to the hospital, and the man holding the bleeding child said

to him, “Hurry, my friend, my child is still alive.”

A moment or two later, he said, “Hurry, my friend, my child is still breathing.”

Then it was, “Hurry, my friend, my child is still warm.”

Finally, as they were nearing the hospital, the Bosnian man whispered, “Hurry. Oh, God, my child is getting cold.”

When they reached the hospital, the little girl was pronounced dead. The two men were standing at a sink, washing

blood from their hands and clothes the best they could, when the Bosnian turned to the reporter and said, “I have a terrible task before me. I must go and tell the little girl’s father that his child is dead. He will be heartbroken.”

The reporter was amazed. He looked at the grieving man and said, “But I thought she was your child.”

The man looked back and said, “No, but aren’t they all our children?”

When I did my Clinical Pastoral Education summer requirement during

seminary in 1985 at Goldwater Memorial Hospital in New York, I came upon a twenty-some year old young African American woman who was sitting up in her bed in her room trying to chase some green peas around her lunch plate with a fork that was strapped to her wrist. I helped her eat the green peas and the rest of her lunch as she told me the story that she had developed Guillain-Barre Syndrome and had lost the use of her hands and feet when she was declared dead and had cardiac arrest, and she was taken to the hospital morgue and put in

the refrigerated unit there. There someone heard a moan from the refrigerator and opened her door and saw her breathing. She had come back to life some hours after she had been declared dead. The long term effects of being placed in the morgue refrigerator were that she now could not move her hands or feet. And she said she always felt a bit cold now.

A 27-year-old man in the UK collapsed after overdosing on heroin and cocaine. Paramedics gave him an

injection, and he recovered enough to walk to the ambulance. He went into cardiac arrest in transit. After 25 minutes of resuscitation efforts, the patient was verbally declared dead.

About a minute after resuscitation ended, a nurse noticed a rhythm on the heart monitor and resuscitation was resumed. The patient recovered fully.[5]

A 66-year-old man suffering from a suspected abdominal aneurysm who, during treatment for this condition, suffered cardiac arrest and received chest compressions and defibrillation shocks

for 17 minutes. Vital signs did not return; the patient was declared dead and resuscitation efforts ended. Ten minutes later, the surgeon felt a pulse. The aneurysm was successfully treated and the patient fully recovered with no lasting physical or neurological problems.[2]

According to a 2002 article in the journal *Forensic Science International*, a 65-year-old prelingually deaf Japanese male was found unconscious in the foster home he lived in. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation was attempted on the scene

by home staff, emergency medical personnel and also in the emergency department of the hospital and included appropriate medications and defibrillation. He was declared dead after attempted resuscitation. However, a policeman found the person moving in the mortuary after 20 minutes. The patient survived for 4 more days.[6]

Judith Johnson, 61, went into cardiac arrest at Beebe Medical Center in Lewes, Delaware, United States, in May 2007. She was given "multiple medicines and synchronized shocks", but never

regained a pulse. She was declared dead at 8:34 p.m. but was discovered in the morgue to be alive and breathing. She sued the medical center where it happened for damages due to physical and neurological problems stemming from the event.[4]

A 45-year-old woman in Colombia was pronounced dead, as there were no vital signs showing she was alive. Later, a funeral worker noticed the woman moving and alerted his co-worker that the woman should go back to the hospital.[7][8]

A 65-year-old man in Malaysia came back to life two-and-a-half hours after doctors at Seberang Jaya Hospital, Penang, pronounced him dead. He died three weeks later and could not be resuscitated. [9]

Anthony Yahle, 37, in Bellbrook, Ohio, USA, was breathing abnormally at 4 a.m. on 5 August 2013, and could not be woken. He was given CPR, and first responders shocked him several times and found a heartbeat. That afternoon, he coded for 45 minutes at Kettering Medical Center and was pronounced

dead. When his son arrived at the hospital, he noticed a heartbeat on the monitor that was still attached.

Resuscitation efforts resumed, and the patient was revived. [10]

Walter Williams, 78, from Lexington, Mississippi, United States, was at home when his hospice nurse called a coroner who arrived and declared him dead at 9 p.m. on 26 February 2014. Once at a funeral home, he was found to be moving, possibly resuscitated by a defibrillator implanted in his chest. [11] The next day he was well enough to be

talking with family, but died fifteen days later.[12]

Martin Kent, 16, from New York, was declared dead after he took an overdose of Plavix. When his body arrived at the morgue, it was noticed that he had a heartbeat and was transferred to a hospital where his heart stopped again.

These observations have significant medical implications: the phenomenon has been labelled, the “Lazarus phenomenon”, and it raises ethical issues for physicians who must determine when medical death has occurred, when

resuscitation efforts should end, and also when postmortem procedures such as autopsies and organ harvesting may take place.[2]

Medical literature has recommended observation of a patient's vital signs for [at least] five to ten minutes after cessation of resuscitation before certifying death. [Walker, A.; H. McClelland; J. Brenchley (2001). "The Lazarus Documentary following recreational drug use". *Emerg Med J.* 18 (1): 74–75. doi:10.1136/emj.18.1.74.

PMC 1725503 Freely accessible. PMID  
11310473]

Lazarus syndrome, also known as autoresuscitation after failed cardiopulmonary resuscitation,[1] is the spontaneous return of circulation after failed attempts at resuscitation.[2] Its occurrence has been noted in medical literature at least 38 times since 1982.[3][4] It takes its name from Lazarus who, as described in the New Testament of The Bible, was raised from the dead by Jesus.[5]

>>For reference numbers noted above,  
go to the end notes at

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lazarus\\_syndrome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lazarus_syndrome)

Lazarus syndrome (the Lazarus heart), also known as autoresuscitation after failed cardiopulmonary resuscitation,[1] is the spontaneous return of a normal cardiac rhythm after failed attempts at resuscitation. It is also the spontaneous return of cardiac activity after pronounced dead.[2] Its occurrence has

been noted in medical literature at least 38 times since 1982.[3][4] It takes its name from Lazarus who, according to the New Testament, was raised from the dead by Jesus. [5]

Occurrences of the syndrome are extremely rare, and the causes are not well understood. One hypothesis for the phenomenon is that a chief factor (though not the only one) is the buildup of pressure in the chest as a result of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The relaxation of pressure after

resuscitation efforts have ended is thought to allow the heart to expand, triggering the heart's electrical impulses and restarting the heartbeat.[2] Other possible factors are hyperkalemia or high doses of epinephrine. [5]

[Other stories, ‘everyone dies on dialysis’; how Harvard PhD medical students established the limit of brain death; bodies kept alive—transit from one city to another and back again after brain death; Locked-in syndrome; Amyelotrophic Lateral Sclerosis; one

tear; organ donation issues; forgiveness for one who kept a mother alive ‘too long’]

Since about 26 AD, no one has been found to resuscitate four days after death. Lazarus of Bethany still seems unique, as does Jesus who was many feet away from Lazarus’ tomb and separated from the dead man by a stone covering the opening of Lazarus’ burial cave.

A promotional lead-in to the film “The Lazarus Phenomenon” talks about

a man's search for life after death and Near Death Experiences (NDE). It is a captivating true-life drama that plays itself out in various locations such as the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius.

The film promo continues: "Ian McCormack, a young New Zealand surfer, while enjoying an 'endless summer vacation' dies after being stung by one deadly ocean creature, yet comes back to live to tell his tale.

"Daniel Ekechukwu, a pastor from Nigeria who was certified dead and lay

in state, returned from the dead to tell his tale.

The film promo continues: “These two stories will both shock you and intrigue you. Are you ready for what lies ahead? What happens when you die?” is the film’s promo end-statement.

The gospel miracle of the raising of Lazarus, the final and greatest Jesus performed that we can read about in the Bible, was a miracle of “revivification”, “re-enlivening”, bringing back to life a person who was stone cold dead for four

days, and “revivification” seems to be very significantly different from “resuscitation”. “Revivification” harkens back to God’s command to the prophet Ezekiel “to blow life into these dead bones”, recorded in our Old Testament reading for today, in Ezekiel Chapter 37, verse 9. And in text we just heard read here in church, the dead bones came to life as Ezekiel “prophesied”. That was mighty prophesying, wouldn’t you say?! It is probably the hope of most all preachers that we could ‘prophesy and blow life into dead

bodies’! It would certainly look good on a business card, “One who preaches life into the dead”! Of course, Jesus demonstrates that the prophesying only needed a word of life from Jesus’ lips: “Lazarus, come out!” And Lazarus exited his tomb after Jesus told those around him to “take away the stone.” And then Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father: “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send

me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Laz’arus, come out.” And Lazarus came out of his tomb alive.

Father God in God’s infinite mercy let this one miracle stand to represent to us humans just how powerful God really is. God did not even let God’s own Son continue doing these miracles, as within days God’s beloved Son himself would be sacrificed to death on a cruel wooden cross. Alas, the miracle which all would have hoped for was not to be continued,

for surely would not Jesus have had to revive Lazarus over and over again?

So, the limits of this miracle say to us that even one raised back to life by the Lord Jesus would eventually have to face death as a final end to the journey of life. Life here on earth will simply not ever go on for eternity—all these bodies will sometime die and decay, and our only survival will be in our spiritual bodies which St. Paul briefly alludes to in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

The Good News, the God News, is that God is still in control; God will always rescue God's Chosen. It is on the chosen-ness of the followers of Christ that our own lives are staked. We serve the one and only God, the one and only Lord, Jesus Christ. There is no other way known that will ultimately save us, but only in Christ's Holy Name can we find eternal and everlasting comfort. As did Lazarus, we too will one day hear our Lord Jesus call us from our graves, from our deaths, and into life once more,

but not life on Planet Earth, but eternal life, never to leave God's side again.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

## “All God’s Children”

Description: The Lazarus Phenomenon is a medically observed condition when people in cardiac arrest come back to life with or without resuscitation efforts over a matter of minutes or hours. However, Jesus calls Lazarus back to life after being dead four days in the tomb, which is quite different from resuscitation and is sometimes called revivification; but this differs still dramatically from resurrection when those who have died

with faith in Christ are raised to life eternal at Jesus' side with God the Father in heaven.

Tags: Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Jesus, Christ, God, resuscitation, revivification, death, life, dead, live, tomb, stone, weep, resurrection, cave, planet, Earth, Bible, Ezekiel, bones, breath, flatline, heart, monitor, defibrillator, declared, pronounced, doctor, ethics, Wikipedia, Goldwater, Memorial, Hospital, African-American, woman, peas, lunch, refrigeration, refrigerated, compressions,

defibrillation, shocks, St. Paul,  
Corinthians, spiritual, body, New  
Zealand, UK, US, Indian Ocean, island,  
Mauritius, Love, preaches, raises, Plavix,  
hospice, coroner, nurse, morphine,  
heroin, cocaine, phenomenon, medical,  
certify, heart, beat, John, disciples, four,  
days, green, peas, cold, Guillain-Barre,  
syndrome, hospice, pulse, neurological,  
pastor, surfer, abdominal, aneurysm