

# **“Hope-filled assurance”**

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill  
Sunday May 23, 2021

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Acts 2:1-21

The question the Lord asks Ezekiel is:

“Can these dry bones live?”

The answer of faith is: “Only you know, O Lord.”

Today is Pentecost Sunday, when we remember and celebrate the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples, transforming them from fearful, hiding, discouraged people, to bold, faithful, joyful leaders.

God breathed life into the disciples and they were changed.

The Spirit of God gave them direction and power, the spirit of Jesus dwelled in them and the church was built.

Through the power of God’s Holy Spirit, dry bones live, new life comes, new hope is restored, and God’s people serve the Lord in the power of God’s love.

“Can these dry bones live?”

“Only you know, O Lord.”

In 2015, I preached from this passage, we were just writing down our Ministry Plan, our strategies, trying to capture God's dream for us.

I wondered, I expect you wondered, what would become of these dreams.

Lots of churches have visioning days, great hopes, but a couple of years, or sometimes even a couple of months down the road, nothing has come of them. They gather dust on a shelf.

“Can these dry bones live?”

“Only you know, O Lord.”

Well, six years later, our Ministry Plan still shapes who we are, and what we are doing.

Our teams reviewed and updated it last month, and we are different as a congregation; we have known God's work in our midst as a congregation and as individuals.

“Can these dry bones live?”

“Only you know, O Lord.”

When we think about how God has worked in our midst, how God has shaped us and changed us, and grown us in these last years, we know that Jennifer has been a part of that.

And so as we prepare to let her go you may be wondering about the future.

But remember that it was God who called Jennifer here.

God called Jennifer to Calvin in the first place.

It was God who worked in Jennifer, and in all of us, it is God's Spirit that breathes life into us, and it is God who blesses us with people and skills and leadership, and faith, and life.

"Can these dry bones live?"

"Only you know, O Lord."

God is present with us.

The church has always been in the hands of our great God.

The Spirit of God intercedes for us.

The Holy Spirit prays for us, and it is the Holy Spirit who has called Jennifer to new adventures.

AS Ezekiel watched, dry bones came together, and were given new life.

The church in Acts, saw the Holy Spirit descend on a group of people, Peter preached, and 3000 people were added to their number that day.

The Spirit comes and builds the church, teaching us to praise, to rejoice, to dance, to come alive, to be bold witnesses and to trust our great God.

Through the power and Spirit of God, we have seen dry bones come alive.

Thanks be to God.

Holy God there may be some today who are weary, who are feeling a little like their hope is gone. May your Spirit meet them where they are and breathe new life, new hope in them.

Lord, all of us look to you to continue to build your church, to empower your people for ministry, to uphold this congregation and your church in every place. Thank you, Lord, for the work of your Holy Spirit in our midst. Amen.