

Peoples. With gratitude and respect for their stewardship of creation, we seek to live into right relations with all.

(based upon A Song of Faith, 2006)

Announcements

Reverend Jan

Words of Welcome

Theme Introduction

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship

Reverend Jan

Wait and watch for God!

Even when we feel in the depths of despair?

Wait and watch for God!

Even when life seems like a night that never ends?

Wait and watch for God!

Even when the news grows worse every day?

Wait and watch for God!

In God there is constant love and kindness.

In God there is new life and hope.

Come, let us worship God together.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,

**there are times when we feel dry and empty,
like the dry bones that Ezekiel saw in the valley.**

**Breathe upon us, O God, and revitalize us,
reanimate us, reawaken us,**

rekindle in us the fire of your Spirit,

that we may share fully

in the life that you give.

In the midst of despair,

you offer hope.

**In the midst of uncertainty and confusion,
you offer a new way of seeing things,
a new way of understanding things.
In the midst of all the challenges we face, you offer life.
Help us to remember this, always.**

Amen

Hymn: Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New MV: 115
(sung several times)

Seeking to Grow Spiritually

Prayer for Illumination

Morgan Perigo

Let us pray:

In the stories of Israel, in the stories of Jesus, in the stories of faith, you speak to us, O God.

Holy One, may we hear your word today. May we feel your breath of life in our bones. Any may we open ourselves to the new life that only you can create. Bless our reading, bless our listening, we pray.

Amen

Hebrew Testament Reading

New Revised Standard Version

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I

answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath^[a] to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath^[b] in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath:^[c] Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath,^[d] and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your

graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ 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.”

Gospel Reading
John 11: 1-45

New Revised Standard Version

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, ^[a] “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus ^[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight?”

Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.”^[c] ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin,^[d] said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus^[e] had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.^[f] Those who believe

in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, [\[a\]](#) the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said,

“Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

**For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!**

Gift of Music Sam Vacca and the East Plains Choir

Message Hope When It Seems Hopeless Reverend Jan

Hymn Jesus Christ Is Waiting VU: 117

Responding In Care

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

What Can I Do?

MV: 191

Offering Prayer

Ezekiel saw a vision
of new life transforming death.
Accept our gifts, O God----
and transform them
for your life-giving work in the world.
Bless us with the same kind of transformation,
that we may become your hands and feet
for new life in the world.
In hope we bring our gifts.
Amen

Pastoral Prayers

Lord's Prayer (this version was written by Fred F. Keip)

Indwelling God,
infused throughout all existence,
we honour you with many names.
Your realm is within the human heart.
We accept life for all that it can be,
on earth as throughout all creation.
May we continue to draw sustenance from this earth,
and may we receive forgiveness equal to our own.
May we ever move from separation toward union,
to live in grace, with love in our hearts,
forever and ever.

Amen

Reaching Out In Love

Closing Hymn Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery VU: 121

Commissioning

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Postlude

Worship Resources: *Gathering Magazine Lent/Easter, 2026 Year A* (page 13, 28-34); *Abingdon Worship Annual 2026* (pages 58-61); *Feasting On the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, Volume 2* (pages 122-145); *Texts For Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year A* (pages 218–227). Used with Permission.

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM STATEMENT

We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work at East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us following the service as we celebrate the birthdays of Helen Park and Alice Harding, provided by the Support Group and the Flower Committee.

EASTER MEMORIAL FLOWERS—The deadline to order flowers (bulbs) in memory of someone dear, is TUES, MARCH 24th. Please remember to fill out a *separate order form* if more than one order, and give them to Linda Kennedy with your payment. The flowers will be placed in the sanctuary for our Easter Service and ready for you to take home after.

SOLO is celebrating it's **10th anniversary** with a Gala Concert at BPAC on Wed, Apr 22 at 7:30 pm



The next order for Vista gift cards is due on **Mar 29th**. Please see forms in The Gathering Place for payment information. All proceeds applied to the EPUC General Fund.

Jan's Journal



From the valley filled with dry bones in Ezekiel, to the death of Lazarus in the Gospel according to John, the theme for the fifth Sunday in Lent is the hope of new life in God.

We may feel dried up, devoid of breath, aching from the death of a loved one, but death and loss do not have the last word. God brings new life, new visions, and new hope to our lives.

Please plan to stay following worship this Sunday for a Birthday Celebration. We will gather to celebrate the recent Birthdays of Alice Harding and Helen Park.

Last Sunday, Jim McMaster announced a new long-term rental agreement. Beginning on Friday, April 3, 2026, the

Halton Islamic Group will be using Peart Hall for Friday prayers between 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. This will begin for a three-month trial period and will hopefully continue for much longer. This arrangement fits perfectly with the church's intention to be a place of connection in the Aldershot community.

The United Church of Canada Mission and Service is launching an Easter Campaign in support of rural congregations. In many small communities across Canada, churches are central to the community, but are struggling financially as church membership declines. For more information about making a donation, please visit the United Church of Canada website.

Plans for the "Week of Guided Prayer" are taking shape. The week will take place between **May 3rd and May 9th, 2026**. You will soon see trifold information boards at the church entrances. Registration forms will soon be available. You are invited to participate in "A Retreat in the Midst of Daily Life," as you pray with scripture and then meet with a trained Companion to discuss your prayer experience. The time with your Companion will be arranged to fit your schedule. The registration cost is \$20, which will be used to cover the cost of materials. Those materials are produced by the Week of Guided Prayer Network. If anyone is unable to afford the \$20 registration fee, the church will cover the cost for you. No one will be unable to participate due to financial restraints.

If coming to the church to meet with your Companion each day is difficult due to mobility limitations, we will provide a Companion who is able to meet with you on Zoom or FaceTime, or telephone.

The Theme for the Week of Guided Prayer is "Hope," which seems quite pertinent at the present time!

There is a lot happening at East Plains in the next two months:

Looking ahead in March:

- There will be a meeting of the Official Board on Tuesday, March 24th
- Companion Training for Companions for “A Week of Guided Prayer” will take place at East Plains on Saturday, March 28th, beginning at 9:30 am. A Week of Guided Prayer will be shared with Appleby United Church. Companions will be trained for both churches.
- Palm Sunday is next Sunday, March 29th.
- Reports for the Annual Report 2025, need to be submitted to the church office by March 31st.

Looking Ahead to April:

- The Good Friday Service is a joint service with West Plains United Church, at West Plains. The service will begin at **10:30** a.m. Good Friday is April 3, 2026.
- We will celebrate Easter Sunday on April 5th, 2026.
- The Community Connections Team has been very busy since last July exploring the goal of making the church building an asset in the Aldershot community. East Plains has partnered with Community Development Halton to plan and implement a community discussion, which we hope will help to identify the needs of the community and possible ways in which space at East Plains might be available to fulfill some of those needs. A Community “Round Table” discussion is planned for Thursday, April 16th from 1- 3 p.m. in Peart Hall. Representatives of community -based organizations and programs will be invited to attend, but more importantly, you are invited to attend. In order for the congregation of East Plains to decide on a path forward, everyone needs

- to be involved. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this very important event.
- The Annual Meeting for 2025 will be held following worship on April 19, 2026. If you are the Chair of a Ministry Team, please submit a report for the Annual Report to the church office by the end of March. Please mark your calendars with this date and plan to attend the Annual Meeting following worship on April 19th.

Looking Ahead to May:

- We will be holding a “Week of Guided Prayer” at East Plains during the first week of May, May 3rd to 9th. A Week of Guided Prayer is described as “A Retreat in the Midst of Daily Life.” Whether or not you choose to participate in the “Week of Guided Prayer,” this will be a prayerful week within the church. All activities which are not related to long-term rentals (ie: The Aldershot Child Care Centre) will be suspended for the week. If you are scheduling a Ministry Team meeting in early May, please avoid the week of May 3rd to 9th. More detailed information will be coming in the next few weeks.

You can reach me at: revjanmcc@gmail.com or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,

Pastor Jan