Dry Bones & New Life

By: Rev. Dale Clem

Read: Ezekiel 37:3, 9

*“Human, can these bones live?”*  *Ezekiel 37:3*

The Lord led Ezekiel to a place of many dry bones and asked him: “Can these dry bones live?”  During 2020, questions that have crossed my mind are: Will we live again? Will we come back to life?  Everyone has some bones— places in body, mind, heart, soul which feel dead. You may be wondering if you will experience life in those areas again.  Maybe you are living in a boneyard of grief, guilt, or loneliness? Maybe you are living in a boneyard of disillusionment with “rulers, powers, authorities,” or systemic racism? Maybe you are living in a boneyard of economic stress or thinking that your personal struggle will hold you back from truly being happy?

The Lord tells Ezekiel to speak life back into the dry bones—not passively but actively.  In other words, Ezekiel had a role to play for the new life to come.  He couldn’t sit back and expect God to do the work.  He had to get in the game with practices and actions that kindled the new life.  God wanted the dry places to come back to life.  “Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”  (Ezekiel 37:9). In other words— “Live!”  Instead of just feeling sorry for ourselves or feeling paralyzed, God can use our pain, loneliness, or struggles to bring goodness, love and justice in the world.

One of the gifts of Advent is to take time to contemplate where the dry dusty bones are in our lives, and ask God to breathe new life into those seemingly dead places at the same time we are actively working to discover new life within ourselves.  God has placed the life-force in all of creation and God wants us not only to live but to thrive.  Not long ago in our daily walks around Panorama Drive I spotted in a trash pile a root ball among rhododendron branches. Kelly rolled her eyes as I drove my truck back to the pile and picked up the root ball. I placed it in water for a few weeks and then planted it in our yard.  Would this root ball live? I watered it and gave it some plant food and several weeks later I was delighted to see some green shoots coming forth.

*Prayer*:   Breathe on the dry dusty places in our lives O Lord, and help us to fully live once more.  Keep hope alive within us that our futures are full of promise. Amen