



**LENT 5 22 March 2026**

## **St Matthew's Holland Park**

**God breathes life into what seems hopeless.**

These readings show a God who moves toward human despair, not away from it. Whether it is a nation that feels finished (Ezekiel), a heart needing renewal (Romans), or a grieving family (John), God's message is the same: **death and hopelessness do not have the final word-God does.**

### **Ezekiel 37:1–14**

**What is happening:** Ezekiel is given a vision of a valley filled with dry bones, representing Israel's deep despair in exile. The people feel cut off and without hope. God tells Ezekiel to prophesy, and as he does, the bones come together, receive flesh, and finally breath. God promises to put his Spirit into his people and restore them.

**Why it matters:** This shows that God works where hope has died. When people feel spiritually empty or defeated, God does not abandon them. **He restores life through his Spirit.**

**What to wonder about:** Where do I see "dry bones" in my own life? Where have I lost hope? Am I willing to believe God can still bring life there?

### **Romans 8:6–11**

**What is happening:** Paul teaches that there is a difference between living with a mindset focused only on ourselves and living guided by God's Spirit. He reminds believers that the same Spirit that raised Jesus now lives in them, bringing life and peace.

**Why it matters:** Faith is not only about life after death but about life now. **God's Spirit helps us live with hope, strength, and inner peace even in difficulty.**

**What to wonder about:** Am I allowing God's Spirit to shape my thinking. What would it look like to live more consciously aware of God's Spirit within me?

### **John 11:1–45**

**What is happening:** Jesus arrives after Lazarus has died. Martha and Mary express their grief. Jesus shares their sorrow and even weeps. Then he calls Lazarus from the tomb, showing his power over death.

**Why it matters:** Jesus shows both compassion and authority. He enters our pain but also brings hope. **He reminds us that he is the resurrection and the life.**

**What to wonder about:** Do I trust Jesus with the parts of my life that feel beyond hope? Do I believe Jesus is present in my grief as well as my hope?

God still speaks life to our weary hearts, breathes hope into our lives and stands beside us in our grief. **Our task is to remain open to his Spirit and trust that even now, God is working to bring life where we least expect it.**

[Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year A, 22nd March 2026 - Hallam Diocese](#); [Salesians UK – Sunday Reflection - 5th Sunday of Lent \(Year A\)](#); [Fifth Sunday of Lent: The Resurrection of Lazarus and a Call to Care for Life - Laudato Si' Movement](#); [22 March - Fifth Sunday in Lent – Year A | The Church of Scotland](#); [Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year A - Crossings | The Crossings Community](#)

**Working bee date set for 28/3/26 @ 9 am** to clean up the church and grounds for Easter;

Commissioning of **Revd Donna Petersen at St Bart's** 10/4/26 @ 6 p.m; **800th Anniversary of the death of St Francis** 16/5/26 @ 6pm **St Philips** - see Rev'd Morris if you are able to come. **Wine and Cheese Evening 18 July-Kiwi Theme**

**Meditation** Wednesday night 5pm; **Men's Breakfast** 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday 7am  
**LENT AND EASTER: 3 Lenten Bible Studies** offered: Wednesday nights, Zoom on Thursday nights and Friday Mornings @ 10 am in the Lady Chapel.

### **Holy Week**

**Palm Sunday** 29/3/26; **Maundy Thursday Christian Seder Meal and Foot Washing** 6 p.m. 2/4/26; **Good Friday** 9am and 2 pm 3/4/26 **Easter** 5/4/26 9 am

**Next Sunday 9am Palm Sunday-Sunday of the Passion 29/3: Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 31.9-18; Philippians 2.5-11; Gospel: John 11.1-45 RED**

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Parish website : <https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/> Parish Private Facebook site : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ;

Public Site: <https://www.facebook.com/StMatthewsHollandPark> ; Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.