

## ***Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, June 5, 2016***

### **Notes for the sermon on The Power to Revive**

**Ps 30 and Luke 7:11-17 – Sermon Text = Luke 7:15**

***The dead man stood up and began to speak,  
and Jesus gave him to his mother.  
(Luke 7:15)***

**[Hymns = 534, 530, 556]**

**Key ideas = God has the power to revive – but there is a clear purpose, more important than the mere fact that God can breath life into a person – to provide for the well-being of a widow – to make that kind of compassion the primary mark of following Jesus – to remember God’s promise of life eternal, life in the compassionate community of heaven – whenever God revives us from the clutches of the many forms of death we face in our lives, this purpose is at work – we are revived to be a blessing**



### **Breathed into a life of compassion in community**

We lose much of the richness of this story if we focus simply on the resuscitation of the son – I don’t pretend to understand it – I don’t expect it to happen in our day – I do believe fervently that God has the power to breathe new life into us and is continually trying to do that in the midst of the many forms of death that confront us in our daily lives – just a few of those forms – isolation and loneliness, disrespect and dismissal, illness and debilitation, depression and despair, fear and dread – all of these forms of death, and others you can imagine, cut us off from the communities in which we can both receive and give compassion – and compassion in community with God, others, and self is what life is all about – anything less is a form of death

Sermon notes of Rev Dr Brian Fraser,  
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## **The Widow of Nain in Luke**

Nain was a village in Galilee – there was a steep ascent into town, on a road lined with tombs – encountered a funeral – widow left helpless – impoverished and prey to fraudsters – Jesus had compassion – same word used in story of the Good Samaritan – would have reminded Luke's readers of the raising of the widow's son by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:22 – there, interestingly, the widow was a non-Israelite – God was clearly bestowing his grace on the Gentiles, drawing them into the compassionate community of his agents bringing heaven to earth, a key theme for Luke

Another important detail in this story is the fact that Jesus touched the funeral stretcher – an affront to the way Jewish leaders of his day say death – any contact made that person unclean – and that itself was a form of death – what Luke is asserting in both the healing and the raising stories is that Jesus is the Messiah, the benefactor that God sends, in whom God comes, to defeat death and expand the compassionate community of his agents to include all of humankind – this violates all the rules and expectations of a closed, exclusive and arrogant community that has lost the true vision of the covenant of blessing that created them in the first place – their exclusivism is a form of death – and God sends Jesus to breath his life of compassionate community back into them – a community in which justice, faith, fellowship and beauty dance together in the joy of true and eternal life

### **And what about us?**

All of the miracles of raising people from the dead in the gospels point to Jesus conquest of death in the resurrection and the life of intimacy with God that flows from that generous act of reconciliation – Christians believe that we are continually revived by that God's breath, day by day, in this dimension of life and in the next – to pick up on a phrase from the Lord's Prayer, we believe that heaven has come to earth, that God's everlasting and steadfast love revives us daily for service to his compassionate community as it blesses the world with justice, faith, fellowship and beauty

One of the great ritual gatherings in which this nourishing revival from God is experienced is what is variously called Holy Communion or Eucharist – I like those two ways of describing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper – they point to our gratitude for God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ

Listen afresh this morning to the words of the service itself, to the hymns that we always sing on this first Sunday of the month, to the ways God is using all that happens to revive you in your participation in the compassionate community through which God offers the fullness of his blessing to the world

Come, taste and see how the Lord revives his goodness – in you, in this congregation, in the global church, and in the world – feel his compassion nourishing you to flourish in justice, faith, fellowship and beauty