

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Exodus 37:1-14
December 5, 2021



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



- **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome**

Pastor Mel Musser

- **Second Week of Advent: Peace Candle**

Reader One: Just as Ezekiel saw a world of violence, despair, injustice, and unfairness, so we too see the dry bones filling the valleys of this war-torn world.

Reader Two: But God sets forth a light of peace, delivering flesh to bare bones, bringing workers for harmony and justice in places of discord and strife.

Reader One: (*light candle 1*) We light first the candle of hope, trusting that hope for a savior remains.

Reader Two: (*light candle 2*) And we light the second, believing that God's Son might usher in a new order, where lion and lamb lie peacefully together.

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Healing God,

C: We come into this house broken and lost. We bring our worries and our fears. We bring the weight of having acted out in ways that hurt others, you, and ourselves. We wonder if there will ever be a time when light will find us. Forgive what we have done and heal us, for the sake of the one who gave everything for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

L: God offers light and healing. God invites us into a new way of being. Despite our sin, God forgives. Receive and welcome God's forgiveness, for you are made clean and whole again. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

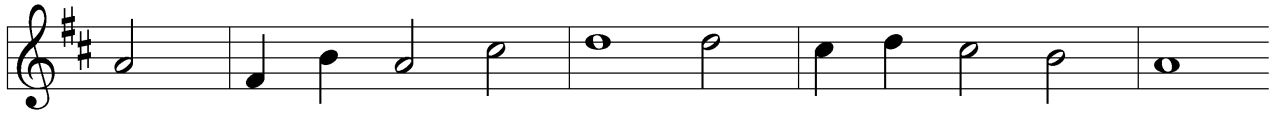
* Please stand if able

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* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Breathe on Me, Breath of God”

LBW 488



1 Breathe on me, breath of God; fill me with life a - new,
2 Breathe on me, breath of God, un - til my heart is pure,
3 Breathe on me, breath of God; so shall I nev - er die,



that I may love all that you love and do what you would do.
un - til with you I will one will to do and to en - dure.
but live with you the per - fect life of your e - ter - ni - ty.

* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

* **KYRIE**

A: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord have mercy.**

A: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord have mercy.**

A: For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord have mercy.**

A: For this Holy House, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord have mercy.**

A: Help, save, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: **Amen.**

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of new life, You showed Ezekiel that you have the ability and willingness to restore Israel to new life. We ask that you restore us, too, to new life filled with abundant blessings and gratitude.

C: **Amen.**

* Please stand if able

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- **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Theme: Our very Life Comes from God

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Object: American Girl Doll

Good morning girls and boys. I hope you had a great week since the last time we got together. I don't know how you feel about coming to Church, but I always feel so much better, more alive after I come here to Worship the Lord our God. It's kind of like an old story from the First Testament book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was a prophet. Do you know what a prophet is? Yes they do sometimes predict the future, but did you know that's not their main purpose? The main thing a prophet does is speak the Words that God gives them to speak. Really, all they do is repeat after God tells them exactly what to say.

So, this really old prophet named Ezekiel was told by God to tell a bunch of long dead dried up old bones to get up and walk around. That sounds pretty silly, doesn't it? That would be like me telling this American Girl Doll to start breathing and to come to life. I can't make that happen, no matter how hard I try...

Can you guess what happened when Ezekiel told those old dead and dried up bones to get up and walk? That's right they did exactly as Ezekiel commanded them to do. Then God told Ezekiel to tell the bones to gather flesh and skin and to breath into their lungs the breathe of life. Amazingly, the bones all came together. Did you ever sing the old song about Ezekiel? Maybe you can learn it in Sunday School some day. It goes like this... Maybe some of the adults can help me sing it this morning...

The toe bone's connected to the foot bone. The foot bone's connected to the ankle bone. The ankle bone's connected to the leg bone. Now hear the Word of the Lord. Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Now hear the Word of the Lord!

Let's pray... Dear God, thank you for this story about dry bones coming back to life. We have all experienced the loss of someone we love and look for the day when we will all be together again in the your big, big house. Amen.

• **SCRIPTURE READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from Ezekiel, Chapter 37.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

37The 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.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.” ⁷So 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. ⁸I 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. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹Then 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.’ ¹²Therefore prophecy, 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. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I 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.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

• **SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who brings our dry bones back to life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, amen.

* Please stand if able

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Anyone remember the hit song recorded by Bill Haley and the Comets back in 1954 called, “Shake, Rattle, and Roll?” their version was the most popular, but it was originally recorded by Big Joe Turner a Blues singer and a couple of months later by the King himself, Elvis Presley. Shake Rattle and Roll has been listed by Rolling Stone Magazine as their 127th of the top 500 Rock and Roll songs of all time. Almost 70 years later some of us old rockers still like to shake, but we do a lot more rattling when we rock and roll...

Not even Big Joe Turner can take credit for the debut of this distinctive shaking, rattling and rolling sound. Going back way more than 70 years, we find the prophet Ezekiel in exile in the city of Babylon. This happened more than 500 years before the birth of Christ. While in captivity, the prophet sees seven visions, which include messages of judgment against Judah, messages of judgment against the other nations of the world and promises of future blessings for the people of Judah. Sadly, chapter 37 of Ezekiel begins in a lifeless place. Bones... Dry bones... No signs of life... No dancing to the rock 'n' roll drumbeat. Only death and wasteland.

Into the wasteland of our lives God asks us, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I know I’ve had days, weeks, maybe even months at a time when it sure didn’t seem possible that these bones would ever live again. The bones are so dry.

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Maybe not in the physical sense, but I've been through times when my bones were certainly spiritually dry. I'm not alone in this either. According to the organization, Mental Health in America, over 47 million Americans are living with mental health issues. I know mental illness is not the same as Spiritual illness, but I believe there is a correlation. In the United States as the number of people who claim some type of religious affiliation decreases and the people who check None of the Above on surveys about their religious affiliation increases it just seems obvious to see the corresponding rise in Mental illness. There may not be a direct cause and effect between what people claiming on some form about their religious practices and the increase in mental illness, but there can be no doubt there is something connecting the two.

To be clear, I'm not saying that if a mentally ill person starts attending a Church then their illness will disappear. On the other hand, a close relationship with the Lord can sometimes give those who suffer from mental illness a solid foundation to help them when their demons begin to manifest. People who are addicted to alcohol and narcotics often are able to remain sober due to the help of their "Higher Power," as it's called in the AA Ten Step Program. Even as I say these words I know I'm guilty of interpreting this ancient prophesy through my modern, western context. This story is not about any one person or even about us

as a congregation. Ezekiel was given these words from God in order to comfort the beleaguered and defeated people of Judah. The rebellion in Jerusalem had been squashed and almost everyone taken into exile some 1500 miles away in Babylon. Ezekiel, unlike Jeremiah, whom we heard from last week was taken to Babylon with the others in exile. Prior to his deportation Ezekiel was a fire and brimstone, finger pointing prophet who continually warned the people of Judah their sinful ways would not be tolerated by God forever and that eventually God's wrath would rain down on them for their sin. The people refused to listen. They told Ezekiel their God would never abandon them. After all God lives in the temple built by Solomon. Since our God is the most powerful God in the universe, we are safe from all our enemies. They had some pretty good precedent to back them up. About a hundred years earlier the Assyrian army had laid siege to Jerusalem. At that same time, they handily defeated the northern tribes, but their plans to defeat Judah and Jerusalem failed because God sent a plague through the Assyrian army. They were forced to withdraw and return to their home leaving Judah and the beautiful city of Jerusalem intact, for now. As you can imagine this made the Judeans pretty sure of themselves and so they ignored all the prophets that God sent to them telling them to repent and return to the Lord their God.

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So, if I'm going to faithfully interpret this prophesy for us today I have to ask in what ways is the Church in need of repentance? I can't answer that question because I'm a Pastor and a leader in the Church. When I or other leaders claim to know God's will or claim to exclusively know the truth, I'm reminded that Jesus often criticized the Jewish Temple leaders, the Scribes, Pharisees, and the Sadducees for claiming to know God's will and God's truth. So, I'm not the best one to try to answer that question. We need another Martin Luther to help us see what and where the Church is in need of reform today. Also, if I'm being faithful to the proper interpretation of this story of dry bones living again, I can't help but notice this as being a foretaste of the resurrection of the dead that will happen when Jesus returns. All the dry bones that have laid in the grave for far too long will one day breathe the breath of life once again. They will sing and dance and rejoice for what was once dead and gone will live again! I think that's the best news we can get for the people of Judah in exile, for the people today who feel the Church is nothing more than dried up old irrelevant dead bones. God has not abandoned the Church and God has not abandoned you.

I noticed that once Judah had fallen and Jerusalem was destroyed, Ezekiel changed his message. The Word of God that was given to Ezekiel before the fall of Jerusalem was one of repentance from your evil ways, but after the fall, God's

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Word went from predicting doom and gloom and utter devastation, to one of a much more positive, encouraging, and comforting nature. Yes the people had strayed far from God. They had gone so far as to worship the Assyrian and Babylonian gods right inside the very temple Solomon had built for their God YHWH. Imagine how that must have been so offensive to the Lord. The religious leaders allowed and probably participated in pagan rituals that often-involved sexual relations right inside the very walls of the Holiest place on earth. Is it any wonder God pulled out of that kind of relationship with the remnant of his very own “Chosen “people?

Then, sometime during their 70 years in exile God had a change of heart. God remembered the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God remembered his servant David and how God loved David, despite David’s sin with Bathsheba. God remembered how much He loved His people. That’s why the message Ezekiel had from God changed. It wasn’t so much they were suffering in exile, or they had somehow changed their sinning, evil ways. It was because God remembered just how much He loved them. So, God sends this very graphic message through Ezekiel to His people. Your exile will not last forever. Soon enough I, the Lord, your God will make your dry bones live again!

What a great message for all of us who feel tired and worn out this holiday season! What a great message for all of us who still grieve and mourn our deceased loved ones! God knows your pain and God has a plan for your welfare and not for your continued suffering. God's salvation is near. Trust in the Lord, your God and live! God has won the victory over sin, death, and the devil! With that victory in hand, God will raise all the dry bones to new life and they will live again in glory and fully forgiven for all our sins by God our creator.

May this message bring you not only comfort, but peace this holiday season. Knowing God will not allow our current suffering to continue forever and that our dry bones will once again breathe the breath of life that can only come from God. May the coming birth of our Savior be that breath of life that comes straight from God to you this holiday season. Wait! What's that sound I hear? Can it be the sound of shaking? No. It sounds more like rattling... May all our bones begin to shake, rattle and roll once again! For the Lord, your God will make all our dry bones to live again! Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

*** NICENE CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

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C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Israel had so lost hope that it was as though they had died. Show us the places where we have become resigned and have given up—on our dreams, on others, on ourselves. Nothing is truly lost with you, O Lord. May bones reanimated be our reminder and our motivation to start again. Life-giving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In war zones, droughts and famines, disaster areas and places of mass persecution, breathe your spirit of life where hope has dried up. Use your people to minister to one another's needs and to restore a sense of what is possible. Life-giving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless the work of healers, caregivers, and all those who work tirelessly to find new treatments and cures for chronic diseases. Inspire them to discover what they never imagined could be done, and to use their talents for the benefit of many. Life-giving God,

* Please stand if able

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C: Hear our prayer.

L: Those who believe in you—even though they die—will live. This is a lofty promise, but one which you deliver to all who put their faith in you. Impart your healing to us all this day, especially... Life-giving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: They who once were dead are now alive in you. We have no fear of death because we belong to you. Join us with the saints in never-ending praise to our loving and redeeming Creator. Life-giving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Renew our strength and rekindle our zeal for your word and your work in this world, and make of us the living answers to prayer for the sake of all whom you love.

C: Amen.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping online if you go to www.pitsburgtlc.org you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... Out of dry bones, you can restore a nation to new life. Out of lifelessness you can create vibrant abundance. Take our humble offerings and make of them an overflowing blessing from which the thirsty may drink and the dead may find new life. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*** DIALOGUE**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*** THE PREFACE**

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

* **THE SANCTUS**

C: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C: **Amen**

*** THE LORD’S PRAYER**

P: We are united together by this heavenly food, which is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. So, let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God breathes new life into our lifeless souls and continues to feed us with grace and goodness. As we gather at this holy meal, we are revived to new life so that we might serve a new day as God’s faithful followers. Arise, come, and be renewed!

• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

During the distribution the minister says these words to each communicant:

P: At this time you may open the communion bread and partake of the body of Christ, given for you.

Now please open the wine and you may now partake of the Blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: May this Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen, keep, and unite us.

C: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... Jesus, Bread of life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray.

C: Amen

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: People of God, you are Christ’s body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, † one God, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

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* **SENDING HYMN**

“Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling”

LBW 523



1 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er dwell-ing in the ho-liest realms of light;
2 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er liv-ing as the church's ver-y life;
3 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er work-ing through the church's min-is-try;



Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er brood-ing o'er a world of gloom and night;
Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er striv-ing through us in a cease-less strife;
quick-'ning, strength-'ning, and ab-solv-ing, set-ting cap-tive sin-ners free;



Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er rais-ing those of earth to thrones on high;
Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er form-ing in the church the mind of Christ:
Ho-ly Spir-it, ev-er bind-ing age to age and soul to soul



liv-ing, life-im-part-ing Spir-it, you we praise and mag-ni-fy.
you we praise with end-less wor-ship for your gifts and fruits un-priced.
in com-mu-nion nev-er end-ing, you we wor-ship and ex-tol.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

* **POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Teresa Neitzelt
Acolyte	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	Given to the Glory of God by Dean & Donna Thompson

CHRISTMAS AUCTION – Today before worship is your last chance to bid on items in the Christmas Auction! Bids will be finalized after the worship service. Check out the goods in the lobby and basement and get your bids in **EARLY!**

Health Tips for the Week
BODY: Eat at least one high-fiber food every day
MIND: Color with a child
SPIRIT: Say Merry Christmas



Scripture readings for next Sunday, December 12th
Isaiah 55:1-13



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

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This Week @ Trinity – December 5 thru December 12, 2021

Sun, December 5 10:30 am Worship Service
 11:30 am Children’s Program Practice
Wed, December 8 6:30 pm Christian Education Team Meeting
 6:30 pm Confirmation Class
Fri, December 10 3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sat, December 11 10:00 am Children’s Program Dress Rehearsal
Sun, December 12 10:30 am Worship Service- Children’s Christmas Program

AROUND THE PARISH

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Trinity Contact Info

Pastor:	Mel Musser
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Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
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