

**Hybrid Worship for March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Third Sunday of Lent**

**Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements**

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

**Centering Music:** "Gather Us In" MV 7

Gather us in, ground us in you.  
Gather us in, ground us in you.  
Gather us in, gather us in,  
ground us, ground us in you.

**Call to Worship and Opening Prayer**

One: We gather once again as God's thirsty people -

**All: needing our thirst for God's grace quenched.**

One: We come together with dry thoughts and dry hearts -

**All: eager to be rehydrated by the Spirit.**

One: We are here in this worship space in ZOOM boxes or in pews -

**All: ready to be drenched with God's Living Water.**

One: Come, and find renewal and refreshment.

**All: We come with prayers on our lips and the music of praise in our hearts.**

One: So let's pray together:

**All: You give us the gift of Living Water, O God.**

**It trickles into our lives, bringing a touch of the Sacred.**

**It flows into our worship, inspiring and enlivening.**

**It gushes into our community, carrying purpose and connection.**

**Let us stand in your life-giving stream, O God,**

**so that we can be rejuvenated in our faith,**

**and pass on your love and justice to a thirsty world.**

**We pray in Jesus' name.**

**Amen**

**Opening Hymn:** "Come, Let Us Sing" VU 222

Come, let us sing to the Lord our song:  
we have stood silently too long;

surely the Lord deserves our praise,  
so joyfully thank God for our days.

O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;  
God's living waters will never fail.  
Surely the Lord will help you to stand,  
strengthened and comforted by God's hand.

You dwell among us and cause us to pray, and  
walk with each other following your way;  
our precious brothers and sisters will grow  
in the fulfilling love they know.

Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing  
to the desire of all living things.  
Come, all you creatures, high and low;  
let your praises endlessly flow.

**Prayer for Reflection and Revelation:** *Prayer for the Day by Thom Shuman*

When we were determined  
to remain at war with you,  
you sent the Prince of Peace.  
When our relationship with you  
was laying in pieces on the floor,  
you offered the broken Bread  
to restore us to wholeness.  
When petty pride  
stiffens our necks so much  
we cannot bow down  
in your holy presence,  
you massage our souls  
with grace's tender touch.  
We worship you in joy,  
God, our God.

When our ears become stuffed  
with our selves,  
you open them with songs  
of grateful praise.  
When our mouths overflow  
with rich, sweet whine,  
you wash them out

with living waters of hope.  
When all we can say  
is 'Give me! Give me!'  
you challenge us  
to submit to servanthood.  
We worship you in spirit,  
Jesus, Water Giver.

When our souls are empty,  
you fill them with living water.  
When we are reluctant  
to follow Jesus,  
you steer us in the right direction.  
When we are tempted to boast,  
your whispers of grace silence us.  
We worship you in truth,  
Comforter of our hearts.

God in Community, Holy in One,  
our joy, our truth, our spirit,  
we worship you today.

#### Call to Reconciliation

One: Walking the dog, reading a bedtime story, recycling newspapers - in every moment, in every place, God is there. Let us confess how often we do not see God in our lives, especially in how we live them. Join me, as we pray together:

**All: God of eternity, you know how often we travel down the rocky roads of doubt and fear. We pester others with our worries; we hurl bitter words at those we love. We have chances to offer ourselves in service, but only give our contempt to those in need. We could share the living waters with the world, but want to store it in jars for safe-keeping. Fountain of Grace, you turn towards us, to meet us wherever we are. You break open our rock-hard sin, so we might be made whole. In Jesus Christ our thirst for hope and joy is quenched.**

One: God does not disappoint us. Our sins are forgiven, our lives are made whole, we are sent forth to serve.

**All: In Jesus Christ, living water breaks through the roof of our hearts, in such abundance that we don't have enough buckets to hold it all. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Sung Response:** “How Deep the Peace” MV 95

How deep the peace, the confidence,  
of those whose wrongs are forgiven.  
How deep the peace, the confidence,  
of those whose hearts are healed.

**Scripture Readings:**

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses said to them, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?’ But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried out to the Lord, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ The Lord said to Moses, ‘Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’

John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour

is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

**One:** Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

**Choir:** Al Shlosa D'Varim

*Translation: The world is sustained by three things, by truth, by justice and by peace.*

**Reflection:** Never Thirsty

**Hymn:** "By the Well, a Thirsty Woman" MV 117

By the well, a thirsty woman found the life that you could give,  
we, too, thirst like empty vessels  
fill us full that we may live.  
Jesus, source of living water,  
Wellspring bubbling deep within,  
By the waters of our baptism wisdom purpose

life begin.

Plant us firm, like trees by water,  
send our roots down deep in you,  
quench our parched and thirsty spirits  
with your water, pure and true.  
Jesus, source of living water,  
Nourisher of all on earth,  
By the waters of our baptism quicken growth and  
give new birth.

May we be your streams of justice, as the water, may we move  
through your people by your Spirit  
showing mercy, sharing love.  
Jesus, source of living water,  
Ground swell forcing truth to view  
By the waters of our baptism set us free to  
live for you.

### **Introduction to the Offering**

#### **Gift of Music**

**Hymn of Dedication:** “Grant us, God, the Grace” VU 540

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,  
with a spirit large and free,  
that ourselves and all our living  
we may offer faithfully.

#### **Offering Prayer**

**All: In the name and in the spirit of Jesus,  
we bring our gifts to you, O God.  
Help us to give with them  
a ready mind,  
a willing spirit,  
and a joyful heart. Amen.**

#### **Prayers of the People**

Holy Source of all,  
you give water to our thirsty world.  
We thank you for clean water flowing from our taps,  
and we pray for communities that do not have that luxury –  
Indigenous communities here in our own country where water must be boiled to be safe,

African communities where women and children walk hours to bring just enough water for a day to their families.

We thank you for the cycle of water that sustains creation – evaporation, transpiration, condensation, precipitation.  
Remind us that the water we use today will be reused by our children and grandchildren.  
We pray today for those who are living with the aftermath of both flood and drought.  
We remember people in Malaysia, Brazil and Australia dealing with flood conditions, we remember people in Ethiopia, central and southern South America, and parts of Canada living with drought.

We thank you for Living Water, God, that sustains and nourishes our spirits, the refreshes and renews our hearts, and brings us hope.  
We pray for those who need that refreshment today God – fragile ones who are ill or alone, who are worried or anxious, vulnerable ones who are ignored or abandoned, on-the-margins ones who are excluded or forgotten.  
We name in our hearts people or situations that come to mind for us ...

Keep us thirsty for your justice, O God,  
keep us thirsting for right relationships.  
Keep us coming back to your well of love and acceptance,  
of hope and encouragement, that will never run dry.  
Amen

**The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 959**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.

**Closing Hymn: "I Heard the Voice of Jesus" VU 626**

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad;

I found in him a resting place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down, and drink, and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till travelling days are done.

### **Commissioning /Blessing**

**Sung Amen**     VU971

### **Special Music**

Rev. Joanne's Reflection

Many times, when I have visited folks in hospital following surgery or during illness, they complain of thirst. It is often dry in those environments and the effect of drugs and of recovery can cause people to need more water. So I have heard that same request as the woman at the well heard when she encountered Jesus sitting in the hot sun – "Give me a drink."

It is such a simple request – and we have perhaps made it ourselves after time working in the garden, or a walk on a summer's day, or after giving a speech or talking for an extended period. It is the same request that the Israelite people made on their journey through the wilderness. We all need water to live – and can't survive for long without it. Apparently 60% of our body weight is water, and lack of adequate hydration can have serious and debilitating effects on our bodies. Both Jesus and the Israelites were simply asking that a very necessary and very human need be filled when they asked for water.

It would seem that our gospel story begins rather unremarkably; a thirsty man sits at a well during the hottest part of the day, and requests a drink from someone who comes by to draw water. As I just mentioned, it was a simple and life-sustaining request. But this is Jesus, and we have come to expect

the unexpected when we hear about his encounters with the people on his path. First, he spoke with a woman he did not know, with no others present. This action was certainly contrary to the customs and practices of his time. Secondly, this woman is a Samaritan, a member of a community that had long been seen as separate from (although related to) the Jewish population, including a disagreement about holy sites, which Jesus refers to later in the conversation.

Even though the woman Jesus meets at the well is never given a name, this is the longest exchange Jesus has with anyone in the gospels. He does not name her as sinful, despite their discussion of her life and marital status, nor offer her forgiveness that she perhaps does not need. He does not heal her, as he did with so many; in fact he asks something of her instead. He ends up simply offering her the gift of God's grace, and revealing himself to her as the Messiah she knows is coming. Their encounter leads her to become one of the first to spread the good news – "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony."

This is a remarkable interaction – for Jesus' time, for our time, for any time. At the heart of this story is thirst - our physical need for water, our spiritual need for the Living Water that only God provides. Jesus knows us, as he did the Samaritan woman, knows that we can be a parched and dry people, knows that we need Living Water to keep from becoming 'spiritually dehydrated.' When we do not get enough to drink, we can develop fatigue and sleepiness, confusion and dizziness. When we lack Living Water in our lives, I believe we can become fatigued in our faith, confused about our relationship with God and unable to be open to the grace God provides, and not capable of sharing the good news and doing God's work of justice and compassion in the world.

So how do we keep our spirits moist with Living Water? Where do we find what Jesus offered? We can perhaps do what Jesus did – engage with the 'other' that we might encounter. Perhaps that comes in the form of a new idea, like the hybrid worship we have embraced in this community that has kept us refreshed and connected as the world changed around us. Maybe the 'other' that can give us a splash of Living Water is a trans person that we read about in the Broadview magazine, and choose to learn more about, or a sales person wearing a name tag that includes their preferred pronouns of 'them' and 'they', and we then work hard to use those pronouns. We can stay damp when we respect each other's stories without judgement, and share our own truth about who we are and whose we are. There may be some discomfort for us as we seek out 'other', just as Jesus must have experienced some discomfort as he sat outside in the full heat of the sun, but the outcome is rich and rewarding.

God's Living Water flows through our scripture stories, and in stories of those whose lives have been transformed by the faith they live – so we may find refreshment by reading scripture regularly, and letting the words wash over us. We may search out writings from individuals like former priest Uwem Akpan, or Anne Lamont, Henri Nouwen or Mother Theresa in order to be showered with the Spirit. Responding to these words of scripture and inspiration with prayer, even for a moment, even if our own words remain unspoken as we sit in silence with God, can refill our spiritual glasses and rejuvenate our faith.

One of the most challenging tasks for us as we yearn to let that Living Water gush over us is simply to know that we are accepted, beloved, and worthy. The Samaritan woman learned this, in just a few moments of Jesus' company. She becomes so filled with that Living Water that she is able to mobilize an entire community to come, to see, to interact with the Divine, and to believe. She has accepted her own worth – despite what her past contained, because Jesus accepted her without judgement, just as he accepts us all. She sees her own belovedness, despite the differences that may have otherwise kept her

and Jesus from ever meeting or conversing. She is able to say “sir, give me this water,” just as Jesus asked her for water at the beginning of our scripture story.

Of course we will encounter ‘dry’ spiritual moments, and even times when, like the Israelites, we ask if God is truly with us. There may be moments when we feel as if there is only dust at the bottom of our wells of faith. But we are not alone, we journey in community, and the Living Water of God’s love, acceptance and promise can soak us again and again – when we pray, when we reflect, when we reach out to others, and when we see in ourselves the belovedness that God sees.

Amen