

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

March 12th, 2023



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

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A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKTi9c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: Almighty God, because You know that we of ourselves have no strength, keep us both outwardly and inwardly that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen in the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer for Turkey and Syria:

Almighty God, merciful Father, Your thoughts are not our thoughts, and Your ways are not our ways. In Your infinite wisdom which is beyond our understanding, You have permitted this disastrous earthquake to befall the people in Turkey and Syria. Direct all efforts to attend to the injured. Console the bereaved. Protect the helpless, deliver all who are still in danger, and give courage and steadfastness to the relief and aid workers. Bring hope and healing to the suffering that they may find relief and restoration. Open our hearts that we would provide necessary aid to those who are afflicted and distressed by this disaster. All this we ask through the bitter sufferings and death of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You, one God, now and forever.

Prayer for Ukraine:

Please continue to remember in prayer our brothers and sisters of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU).

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: 1 Pet. 1: 13-21 Wednesday: Luke 22: 24-30 Friday: 1 Cor. 4: 9-16
Tuesday: Mark 6: 7-13 Thursday: Luke 4: 38-44 Saturday: Isa. 49: 1-6

Musician: Mayumi Munoz **Wednesday:** Carole Pink
Reader: Daniel Figueroa
Greeters: Fran Porteous

EVENTS THIS WEEK: *(March Break)*

Today: 9:00 a.m.: Sunday School
 9:10—9:40: Confirmation Class today
Monday: 7:30 p.m.: NO Choir Practice
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m.: NO Precious Moments
Wednesday: 6:00 p.m.: Soup and Salvation
 7:00 p.m.: Lent Service - "Baptism Focus"
 8:00 p.m.: Short Choir Practice after Lenten service
Thursday: 10:00 a.m.: NO SOUL
Sunday, Mar. 19: NO Confirmation Class
 Following Service: Youth and Confirmand Event (see note below)

PLEASE NOTE: There will be NO Luther Manor Bible Study until April.

Review and Renew

Back to the Basics

What We Believe & Why It Matters

Lenten Focus 2023

Wednesdays Feb 22 - March 29 7-8 PM

- 1) Ash Wednesday Simple Communion & ashes - Purposeful praying or praying with purpose? [Lord's Prayer focus]
- 2) What does "Living Word" mean [10 Commandments focus]
- 3) What happens when I follow God's lead? [the Apostles' Creed focus]
- 4) Little Christ, little me [Baptism focus]
- 5) How our hearts and mouths align [Confession and Forgiveness focus]
- 6) You are what you eat [Holy Communion focus]



Midweek Lent will have hymns, prayer, Scripture and a Bible Study format message with discussion question time. We meet in the Church Sanctuary.

Holy Week & Easter will be the usual worship services

Lenten Study Material will be available, before Ash Wednesday, for all who wish to join.

Ash Wednesday will be a regular church service with Communion and imposition of ashes.

"**Review & Renew**" is a Bible Study which will be conducted by Pastor Todd in the church sanctuary the remaining Wednesdays of Lent

Holy Week will be regular church services.



From the desk of Pastor Todd

MARCH 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 5 - Lent 2 -- Scripture & Song Service [Worship/Praise band]
[Daylight savings] March 12 - Lent 3 -- LSB DS Setting 3 Communion
March 19 - Lent 4 - Creative Morning Praise
March 26 - Lent 5 - LSB DS setting 1 Communion

YOUTH AND CONFIRMANDS are invited to join us next **Sunday, March 19th following service.** We will have a free pasta lunch, then drive to an indoor mini putt in the Falls, then have a treat at DQ. Cost is approximately \$20. Friends are welcome to join us! We have room for 7 youth, however, parents— we may need another driver. Talk with Val, Elizabeth or Louise to reserve a spot or if a parent can drive please let Louise know. (905-339-8579)

MARY MARTHA: *The following is our Mary Martha Schedule for our Winter/Spring program:*

- March 21: Quilt tying and stamp trimming
- April 18: Speaker-Jude Mersereau
- May 16: Bible Study--Pastor Todd (tentative)
- June 10: Potluck

Please feel free to attend any, or all, of our Tuesday night events!
(If you have any questions, call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: Mark your calendars for VBS. **In-person VBS** is being planned this summer from **Monday, July 17 to Friday, July 21**. The program will run in the morning with an afternoon extended care for Grade 1-6. More information to follow.

<u>Last Sunday Attendance:</u>		March 5th, 2023	Attn: 10 a.m. – 92	SOUL: 37 plus volunteers	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current:	297,841.00	5,840.02	3,194.00	42,458.27	(14,818.85)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	175.00	2,532.50	(736.73)
Property Improvement:			44.00	1,179.50	

MEMORIAL DONATIONS have been given to SOUL in memory of Bernie Kuenzel by Susan Honey; and in memory of John Mewhinney by Mary Silver.

GREETERS: A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board and we would ask that anyone who is interested in assisting for the coming year to please sign up. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know everyone in the congregation.

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED JOINING THE CHOIR? Do you like to sing? We could always use more voices and would give you a hearty welcome. We will continue practices each Monday evening from 7:30 – 9 pm approximately taking us into Holy Week in April. Speak to Carole if you might be interested.



Easter Colouring Contest

Colouring Sheets will be made available in the Narthex starting

SUNDAY, MARCH 5TH.

All entries will be put on display.

The following categories:

- ❖ **SUNDAY SCHOOL**
- ❖ **CONFIRMAND AND YOUTH**
- ❖ **SOUL**
- ❖ **CONGREGATION**

Top winner from each category will receive a gift card.

Winners will be announced at the Easter Breakfast



PANCAKE BREAKFAST!

Annual Easter Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, April 9th at 11 a.m.

(Immediately following Easter service)

Includes: pancakes, sausages, hot-cross buns, coffee and orange juice.

a free-will offering will be collected

It is the custom for the men of the congregation to do the cooking and serving, we are once again asking the gentlemen to sign up on forms in bulletin (*also on table in narthex*) for the time most convenient and place it in the offering basket *or place in the envelope on the back bulletin board.*

March 12, 2023 + 10 AM Worship

GATHERING

OPENING HYMN:

“Christ Beside Me”

St. Patrick's Breastplate hymnary.org

1. Christ be - side me, Christ be - fore me, Christ be -
 2. Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all a -
 3. Christ be in all hearts think - ing a - bout me, Christ be on
 hind me - king of my heart; Christ with - in me,
 round me - shield in the strife; Christ in my sleep - ing,
 all tongues tell - ing of me; Christ be the vi - sion
 Christ be - low me, Christ a - bove me - nev - er to part.
 Christ in my sit - ting, Christ in my ris - ing - light of my life.
 in eyes that see me, in ears that hear me Christ ev - er be.

WORDS: Adapt. James Quinn, 1969, alt.; from *St. Patrick's Breastplate*
 MUSIC: Traditional Gaelic melody; arr. David Evans, 1927
 Music used by permission of Oxford University Press

BUNESSAN
 5.5.5.4.D.

WE BEGIN IN GOD'S NAME

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Who made Heaven and earth.

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. [Brief prayerful silence]

O Almighty God, merciful Father,

I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You, and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of your beloved Son Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD HAVE MERCY [Sung]

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

PRAYER OF THE DAY [Spoken]

Let us pray: O Lord God, You led Your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that following Your Son, we may safely walk through the wilderness of this world toward the life You alone can give. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament: *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?' This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: *Romans 5: 1-8*

[St. Paul writes:] Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SPOKEN GOSPEL VERSE:

**Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Holy Gospel: *St. John 4: 5-26, 30, 39*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. John, the 4th chapter:

♪ Glory be to Thee, O Lord ♪

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.' ... 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.... Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.** 

THE NICENE CREED:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life + of the world to come. Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM:

1. Like the woman at the well I was seeking – for things that could not satisfy
And then I heard my Saviour speaking, draw from the well that never shall run dry

Chorus: Fill my cup Lord I lift it up Lord;
 come and quench this thirsting of my soul
 Bread of heaven feed me till I want no more,
 fill my cup fill it up and make me whole.

2. There are millions in this world who are craving the pleasure earthly things afford
But none can match the wondrous treasure that I find in Jesus Christ my Lord

Chorus:

- 3. So my friend if the things this world gave you leave hungers that won't pass away
My blessed Lord will come and save you if you kneel to Him and humbly pray

Chorus:

Repeat Chorus

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CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL HYMN:

"Living Waters"

www.hymnary.org/LBS502

♩=84 INTRO C⁵ Cmaj⁷ C⁵ Cmaj⁷ % C⁵ VERSE C⁵/D

- 1. Are you thirst-y? Are you emp - ty?
- 2. Christ is call - ing, find re - fresh - ing
- 3. Spir - it mov - ing, mer - cy wash - ing;
- 4. Are you thirst-y? Are you emp - ty?

5 C⁵/F C⁵/G C⁵ (Cmaj⁷) C⁵ C⁵/D

Come and drink these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ Tired and bro - ken, peace un - spo - ken,
at the cross of liv - ing wat - ers. _____ Lay your life down, all the old gone,
Heal - ing in these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ Lead your chil - dren to the shore - line,
Come and drink these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ Love, for - give - ness, vast and bound - less,

9 C⁵/F C⁵/G 1. C⁵ Cmaj⁷ C⁵ 2, 3, 4. C⁵

rest be - side these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ wat - ers. There's a
rise up in these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ wat - ers.
life is in these liv - ing wat - ers. _____ wat - ers.
Christ, He is our liv - ing

CHORUS

13 Am F C Am F

riv - er _____ that flows with mer - cy _____ and love, bring - ing joy to the cit - y of our
Last time to Coda ♪

16 G^{sus} G C G C/E F

God; _____ There our hope is se - cure, do not fear an - y - more,

1. TURNAROUND 2.

19 Dm⁷ G C⁵ Cmaj⁷ C⁵ Cmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G

praise the Lord of liv - ing wat - ers. ____ praise the Lord of liv - ing

23 C⁵

wat - ers. ____

33 Φ Coda ENDING

Dm⁷ G C⁵ C G

praise the Lord of liv - ing wat - ers. ____ There our hope is se - cure, do not

36 C/E F Dm⁷ G C

fear an - y - more, praise the Lord of liv - ing wat - ers. ____

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MESSAGE

GOSPEL RESPONSE

C Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
 way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it

from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray to God in the name of Jesus for the church, the world, and those in need.

Heavenly Father: thank you that Jesus gives us the living water of his saving word and holy baptism. Keep us close to him by staying close to the scriptures and the church.

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

We pray for all people preparing for baptism or catechism classes, Bible reading and counselling at this time. Lead them in your truth and give them confidence in witnessing you before others.

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

Bring justice to people who are wrongly treated by others. Curb all violence and crime, and bring peace to all nations and communities.

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

Heavenly Father, teach our world the truth about marriage and the blessing you give through it. Give your grace and strength to all married couples and help them fulfill their marriage vows, that they would always seek to serve and forgive each other.

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

Supply all people with the water they need for daily life, and remove disease and famine. Bless us with seasonable weather. Inspire growth in crops, communities, factories and places of learning.

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

Bring health to all who cry out to you for help and comfort, especially (*insert name(s) here*). Comfort those who face the loss of loved ones and provide for all in need, including those known to us personally and whom we now name in our hearts...(*brief silence*)

We speak to You, O Lord; **hear our humble prayer.**

You united people from many different nations and cultures by your Holy Spirit. Bring together those who have been divided by misunderstanding, hatred, and mistrust, and join us with them and all the angels as we adore you forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reign with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT [Spoken]

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts! **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is meet and right so to do.

It is truly good, right and joyful that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; You bid Your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the Paschal Feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God. And so with the Church on earth and with all the company of Heaven, we praise Your name and join their un-ending hymn:

SANCTUS



☐ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is He,



bless-ed is He, bless - ed is He that com-eth in the name of the Lord.



Ho-san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name....

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My + body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD



☐ O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer-cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that

tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up - on us.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the

world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

HOLY COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION [Pilgrim style]

COMMUNION HYMNS: "I Heard The Voice" Tune: "The Lord's My Shepherd"

I heard the voice of Jes-us say, Come un-to

Me and rest;--- Lay down, O wea -- ry one, lay

down, your head. up -- on My chest.

2. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one, Stoop down, and drink, and live.
3. 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.
4. I heard the voice of Jesus say, My Father's house above
Has many mansions; I've a place – prepared for you in love.

Words: H. Bonar, public domain. www.lutheranhymnal.org
 Music: BELMONT W. Gardiner, 1770-1853 www.hymnary.org

"Come To Cal'vry's Holy Mountain"

1 Come to Cal - v'ry's ho - ly moun - tain, Sin - ners, ru - ined
 2 Come in pov - er - ty and mean - ness, Come de - filed, with -
 3 Come in sor - row and con - tri - tion, Wound - ed, im - po -
 4 They that drink shall live for - ev - er; 'Tis a soul - re -

by the fall; Here a pure and heal - ing foun - tain
 out, with - in; From in - fec - tion and un - clean - ness,
 tent, and blind; Here the guilt - y, free re - mis - sion,
 new - ing flood. God is faith - ful; God will nev - er

Flows for you, for me, for all, In a full, per -
 From the lep - ro - sy of sin, Wash your robes and
 Here the trou - bled, peace may find. Health this foun - tain
 Break His cov - e - nant of blood, Signed when our Re -

pet - ual tide, O - pened when our Sav - ior died.
 make them white; Ye shall walk with God in light.
 will re - store; They that drink shall thirst no more.
 deem - er died, Sealed when He was glo - ri - fied.

<https://www.gracelutheranracine.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/435-Come-to-Calvarys-Holy-Mountain.pdf>

SONG OF SIMEON

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -
 cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
 which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,
 a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy

peo-ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and
to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ev - er shall be, world without end. A - men.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good –
And His mercy endures forever.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

O Father, as You fed Your children with the True Manna, the Living Bread from Heaven, give unto us, we humbly pray You, that the Body and Blood of Your Son may be our support throughout our earthly pilgrimage, until we reach that land where there is neither hunger nor thirst, Your magnificent Heavenly Banquet; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE BLESSING [Sung]

The Lord be with you – **And with thy spirit.**

Bless we the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; he Lord lift up His countenance upon you and + give you peace.

Amen! Amen! A—men!

CLOSING HYMN:

“Lord Of All Hopefulness”

www.hymnary.org



1 Lord of all hope-ful-ness, Lord of all joy, Whose
 2 Lord of all ea-ger-ness, Lord of all faith, Whose
 3 Lord of all kind-li-ness, Lord of all grace, Your
 4 Lord of all gen-tle-ness, Lord of all calm, Whose



trust, ev-er child-like, no cares could de-stroy: Be
 strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe: Be
 hands swift to wel-come, your arms to em-brace: Be
 voice is con-tent-ment, whose pres-ence is balm: Be



there at our wak-ing, and give us, we pray, Your
 there at our la-bors, and give us, we pray, Your
 there at our hom-ing, and give us, we pray, Your
 there at our sleep-ing, and give us, we pray, Your



bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
 strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
 love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
 peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

©Text: Jan Struther, 1901-53
 Tune: Slane, Irish folk tune

REV. TODD HOEFFS

Lent 3

Scripture: St. John 4: 5-42

Title: “How Deep Is Your Love?!”

March 12, 2023

There are times we choose to avoid other people.

One Friday night my Mom took me grocery shopping with her as a kid.

As we pushed the cart over to the rear of our car, My mom noticed her “big mouthed” cousin walking around the parking lot. I liked him, but his voice was “as big as all outdoors” to quote my mom. She found him embarrassing. Trying to avoid him, my mom put up the trunk of the car and we hid behind it until he was out of sight. I felt foolish, but she didn’t want to see him.

The woman at the well is avoiding. Drawing water from a large well at high noon with a hot beating sun means she wants to be alone. No one is pulling water buckets out of Jacob’s well at noon, the 6th hour of the day. Like walking around Florida in August without a hat [me 2018 – 138 degrees! Loved it!] She’s avoiding and everyone avoids her. She’s a Samaritan. They descend from Abraham and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They also have heritage with the conquering Assyrians generations earlier. They worship a different version of God on a different location, Mount Gerizim. They even use a different order of worship than Israel.

They have a right to God because their temple is the place Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac.

Samaritans and Jews HATE each other. Samaritan is synonymous with sinner; yet the word “Samaritan” means “Keeper of God’s Law”. Not only would the ancient culture NOT support that ideal, this woman is a known adulteress. A woman with how many different husbands, 5, and her current partner is not married to her. Thinking she’s alone, Jesus walks up and sits down.

THAT DIDN’T HAPPEN THEN. No man would sit down next to a woman in broad daylight and approach her with conversation....This man, Who claims to have Living Water asks for a drink, how funny. Yet no bucket for any water! Is HE expecting to share hers? Jesus is more focused on giving than taking. He asks for what we should ask for. He’s reminding us that people don’t know what they need until He tells them. We prefer coffee or 7Up, but He gives water;

we complain for ease and excitement and He gives us a Bible, a church, Sacraments, and people.

Recognize the Giver and you know what to ask for. If this Samaritan woman sees Jesus for Who He is she’ll have everything. Nothing else matters. I’ve heard aged seniors say that if you haven’t got your health, you haven’t got anything. When those same seniors get ill, deathly ill, they say ‘where would we be without our faith?’ THERE’S THE TRUTH. If you know the gift of God,

You can humbly see that your personal successes in life are all God’s doing through you.

If the Samaritan woman knows the gift of God,

She can let the world condemn her for having 5 husbands. If you know the gift of God, you can let Jesus expose the 5 hundred or so skeletons you've crammed into your closet thinking no one notices. You see, we may feel sorry for her but she has a false modesty evident in her lie:

"I have no husband." She's right. As keeper of God's Law, it's written all over her heart what's wrong. Having 5 husbands is but a side effect of a deeper, rigid insecurity; a sin saturated heart that can't commit and won't trust and must hide under false pretenses to get by.

She might feel justified: everyone hates her. She no doubt must live with men outside of marriage to even get a man's attention. Even an honourable divorce is a kiss of death to a woman in Jesus' day. Marked, doomed, penniless. Not that her sin isn't a sin, but every sin is wrong, no matter the outcome. Even those who avoid her. That's the trouble when we categorize sins. [maybe a personal story here?] Jesus meets her before she grows bitter and arrogant. Jacob may have made this ancient well, but Jacob's Creator is sitting right there. The One Who once formed Mount Gerizim uses His thirst to quench her thirst. Jesus wants her back in God's hands drinking from Holy Water of faith bringing eternal life. This woman is curious of this guy, Who must be a prophet to know her for who she really is. And expecting condemnation, she gets water that satisfies and words that uplift. Rather than saying the cultural climate is right about her, He shows her the WAY out. She finds acceptance in The Real Husband who won't let her go. Who calls her out - not just for having too many husbands, but for worshiping the wrong god and harbouring too many wrong ideas about God's Kingdom. At the same time Jesus overturns Israel's arrogant idols of ancestry and hypocrisy. Real believers, those who long to receive from the Lord, from all nations,

will worship God in Spirit and in Truth. As they adore the One Who is Truth. As they come to know the gift of God with the outpouring of the Spirit. By water and word! When you know the gift of God, you trust the one Who's burned up the skeletons in your closets to ashes in the flames of His love. When you know the gift of God, you reject all the devilish poison Satan peddles your way; you grab onto the One Who thirsted at the 6th hour on the cross, in the deadly noontide heat, crying out to His Father, only to receive a cold shoulder to soothe a parched tongue; when you know the gift of God, you trust it, you thirst no more. Your thirst is satisfied at the fountain of living water, cascading from the side of the Body of the True Temple hoisted up on the cross, destroyed, but rebuilt in three days. For One greater than Jacob is here! The God Who is more powerful than our little throwaway idols and worries. Jesus loves every person He encounters.

This is why He lays down His life for every person, that He welcomes His church back into God's Kingdom, cleansed and made new by a living water washing. This Samaritan woman KNOWS this

Messiah is coming to her. And NOW He's here! The great ancient earth-shaking YAHWEH – I AM!
And now YOU know the gift of God. You have the gift of God within. This gift is part of you, making you who you are. You drink from the well of salvation Jesus dug with His own nail-printed hands. You trust more and more in the God you don't see because you remain close with the people you do see. You dine on Jesus' meal, His bread and cup. His touch of grace has healed your scars, brightened your eyes, transformed you from a burden into a blessing. And notice!
This woman all of a sudden is so moved She runs and tells others about this Jesus?
People she's avoided and who've avoided her!? Incredible! She has nothing to lose and all to gain. The water, the visit, the Man, the optics! She runs and tells! We can learn from this outcast woman now turned evangelist. We don't have our act together most of the time. Maybe we don't know your Bible so well. Maybe you and I only pray when we need a favour from God. Faith expressions don't come to you when you're asked a tough question. You fail and falter in your love for others. Your spiritual lives aren't figured out – in fact it's all a bit of a mess really. Though you may not have God figured out, you have His gift....you believe and have a relationship with Christ. He'll always supply exactly what you need at the right time with living water and daily bread. The Church [not just here, but the Body of Christ all over the globe] and her mission have a lot to learn from this Samaritan woman. May we all be so effervescent on Living Waters that we go out and tell what God has done.
It's that simple. A bucket going down in a well in Samaria.
It's trusting that old, old story That in Jesus all is made well and new again.
It's about living and showing and explaining what God keeps on doing in your life.
Outreach and mission isn't meant to build up our egos-- but build bridges for your faith to meet people and needs where they're at in the daily grind.
Jesus has transformed the Samaritan woman, and He continually transforms you.
Life is never the same for you.
All are invited to drink from His living water until every person from every nation drinks from the rivers of life in the New Heaven and New earth, at the great Marriage feast of Jesus in His never-ending Kingdom.
Amen.