

River of Life Lutheran Church

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Welcome to Worship



Sunday, March 12, 2023 – Third Sunday in Lent

Introduction

In today's gospel the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for water, an image of our thirst for God. Jesus offers living water, a sign of God's grace flowing from the waters of baptism. The early church used this gospel and those of the next two Sundays to deepen baptismal reflection during the final days of preparation before baptism at Easter. As we journey to the resurrection feast, Christ comes among us in word, bath, and meal—offering us the life-giving water of God's mercy and forgiveness.

*Please stand as you are able

We Are Gathered for Worship

Welcome

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

All: And also with you.

Prelude

“Near the Cross”

*Call to Worship *(based on Psalm 95)*

Asst: It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High,

All: to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.

Asst: For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.

All: Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Asst: Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

All: For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Asst: Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

All: Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Asst: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;

All: give thanks to him and praise his name.

*Confession and Forgiveness

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

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

All: Amen.

Pastor: Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God’s mercy.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Pastor: Holy God,

All: we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.

Pastor: Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, † forgives you in Christ’s name, and revives you in the Spirit’s power.

All: Amen.

*Please stand as you are able

1. O Jesus, joy of loving hearts, the fount of life, the light of all:
from ev'ry bliss that earth imparts we turn, unfilled, to hear your call.
2. We taste you, ever-living bread, and long to feast upon you still;
we drink of you, the fountainhead; our thirsting souls from you we fill.
3. For you our restless spirits yearn, where'er our changing lot is cast;
glad, when your smile on us you turn, blest, when by faith we hold you fast.
4. O Jesus, ever with us stay! Make all our moments fair and bright!
Oh, chase the night of sin away! Shed o'er the world your holy light.

***Prayer of the Day**

Asst: Let us pray. Merciful God,

All: the fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

***Sharing of the Peace**

Asst: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

We Hear and Respond to God's Word

First Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

¹From 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. ²The people quarreled 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?” ³But 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?” ⁴So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵The 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. ⁶I 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. ⁷He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-11

¹Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that

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suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ 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.⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.⁹ Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.¹⁰ For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.¹¹ But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel: John 4:5-42

⁵[Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)⁹ 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.)¹⁰ 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."¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ 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."¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband';¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet.²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."²⁵ 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."²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."²⁷ 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?"²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.³¹ Meanwhile the disciples

*Please stand as you are able

were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.”³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?”³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.”³⁵ 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.³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.³⁷ For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.”⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word.⁴² 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 Savior of the world.”

Children’s Chat / Message

Pastor Bill Ottum

*Hymn of the Day

“Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross”

ELW 335

1. **Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;
free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.**

***Refrain:* In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

2. **Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me. *(Refrain)***

3. **Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. *(Refrain)***

4. **Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,
till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river. *(Refrain)***

*Apostle’s Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Please stand as you are able

Prayers of The People

Asst: Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

(A brief silence.)

Asst: We pray for your church. Bless partnerships with other Christians and inter-religious dialogue. Guide the daily work of denominational and congregational leaders. Strengthen our combined witness for the sake of the gospel, that all experience your life-giving love. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Asst: We pray for the universe. All creation teems with life, from the depths of the earth and seas to the skies above. Fill us with awe and reverence for the diversity and preservation of life. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Asst: We pray for the nations of the world. Topple the dividing walls that separate us from our neighbors. Form us into your beloved community where diversity of gender, race, language, ability, and ethnic origin is celebrated and affirmed. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Asst: We pray for those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit. Be present with all who are lonely and give courage to all who are afraid. Comfort those who live with chronic illness or other sickness (*especially...*). Give them your living water always. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Asst: We pray for this congregation, especially those preparing for baptism. Nurture their faith and pour your love into their hearts. Inspire our community by their testimony to God's grace in their lives. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Pastor: Let us now share other concerns on our hearts and minds ... spoken, or in silence.

(Time is taken for prayers to be offered...)

Pastor: We give thanks for the lives of all your saints (*especially Gregory the Great, whom we commemorate today*). Their hope in you sustained lives of faith and service. Encourage us with the hope they shared in you. Merciful God, **All: receive our prayer.**

Pastor: We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

All: Amen.

Offering

We join millions of Christians all over the world in joyfully responding to God's goodness through the giving of our financial resources. Offerings may be brought forward at the time of communion or may be mailed to: River of Life Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 670470, Chugiak, AK 99567.

Offering Prayer

Asst: Let us pray. God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

All: Amen.

*Please stand as you are able

We Come to the Lord's Table

*The Great Thanksgiving / Holy Communion

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: *(the following is spoken...)*

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

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

*Words of Institution *(In the night in which he was betrayed...)*

Pastor: Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory, and we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pastor: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

All: Amen.

*The Lord's Prayer

**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.

Pastor: Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

Distribution: *All who believe in Jesus as their risen Lord and Savior are invited to His Table. The clear liquid is grape juice, the red is wine. Take the bread and wine and consume them after leaving the table.*

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Communion Blessing and Prayer

Pastor: The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

Pastor: Let us pray. Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

All: Amen.

Announcements

We Are Sent Out to Serve

*Benediction / Blessing

Pastor: God, the giver of love, † Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

All: Amen.

*Sending Song

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

ELW 547

1. Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave. The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all. Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

2. With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face— our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring, embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share. Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

*Our Purpose Statement

We are a community of faith, called to Glorify God... Grow in faith and love, and
Go into the world with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

*Dismissal

Asst: Go in peace. Serve in love.

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Are You Washed?”