



**The Third Sunday in Lent
Worship on March 15, 2020**

The Lord be with you.

Today is the third Sunday in Lent, and Sudie and I regret that we're unable to be with you in person. However, we're very glad that you've joined us with this video.

May the Peace of God be with you.

Call to Worship

Come, you who are thirsty –
 here is living water.
Come, you who are weary –
 here is the fount of eternal life.
Let us drink from the well of grace.
 Let us worship the Lord!

Call to Confession

The one who knows our weaknesses and wanderings,
seeks us out to offer the gift of eternal life.
Therefore, with confidence,
let us come before the Savior of the World
and draw living water from the well of grace.

*I invite you to take whatever position of prayer is comfortable for you, as I offer our Prayer of Confession.
Let us pray.*

Prayer of Confession

**Lord – time and again, you defy our expectations.
When you cross barriers of culture and creed,
and look into the eye of a stranger,
we are astonished.
We confess that we are not keen to do the same.
While you teach inclusion, we preserve division;
while you model hospitality, we default to suspicion.**

**Open our eyes to see your mission for what it is –
the healing of the world.**

Hear now the prayers that silence draws from our hearts, oh God. *(silence)* Amen.

Assurance of God's Forgiveness

Friends, Christ assures us:

“Whoever drinks from the water that I give
will never be thirsty.
For the water that I give will become in them
a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

Friends, this living water is for you.
So drink deeply of God's grace,
and trust that your sins are forgiven.
Amen.

Now might be the time for you to hit the Pause button and go to the Internet and Google one of your favorite hymns. Most of the hymns we sing in worship are on the Internet. Just please don't forget to come back to this video. (pause)

The lectionary reading for today comes from the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John. But first, let us pray.

Prayer for Illumination

God of Grace,
Though our community is scattered,
we trust that your Spirit moves
within, among, and around us —
binding us together
and drawing us closer to you.
May that same Spirit
open our hearts and our minds
to your life-giving Word,
that our thirst might be satisfied,
and our souls sustained.
In the Holy name we pray. Amen.

You may remember the story of the Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at the well.

Scripture Reading John 4:5-30

⁵ So he 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?”

Sermon

“Living Water”

You may want to pause the video at this point to reflect on the message, or you may want to play another hymn or a song from Taizé. Simply Google “songs from Taizé.”

Offering

With gratitude for the grace we have received, we offer our time, our talent, and our treasure in service to God. One way we respond to Christ’s call is by giving our financial gifts to further God’s mission in the world. You may make an online offering to support the ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church by clicking “Donate Now” on the home page of our website (www.wpc.org).

Let us go to God in prayer.

Prayers of the People

After speaking with Jesus, the Samaritan woman rushed to declare: “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!” You, O God, know our stories. You know the pain we carry, and the fear that plagues us. You know the rituals that sustain us, and the hopes to which we cling.

And, still, you meet us in the midst of our daily labors to listen to the desires of our hearts and to bring us good news. So we come, Living Lord, to sit a while at Jacob’s Well, to rest in your presence, to draw water that quenches our thirst.

Eternal God, we are overwhelmed by the rapid-fire news on the novel Coronavirus. We are anxious. We are downright scared. Day by day, we are trying to figure out how to be good citizens, good neighbors, good workers, good caretakers, good *disciples* in the midst of this global pandemic. In this season of uncertainty, free us from the impulse to turn inward and attend *only* to our own needs. In these trying times, help us resist the temptation to stoke division and lay blame at the feet of those who are different from us. In the midst of widespread panic, deliver us from paralyzing fear and embolden us to place our trust in you — our Refuge and our Strength.

As we take precautions that keep us separated from one another, we ask that you would bind us together as the Body of Christ and guide us toward new ways of practicing Christian community. Compassionate God, keep us ever-mindful of our neighbors, particularly those who are most vulnerable to this virus and those who will suffer the secondary effects of this crisis. We pray especially for:

those who are sick, and those who are providing care;
those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, and those who are grieving the loss of security;
those who are fearful, because underlying health issues make them especially vulnerable;
those who already struggle with anxiety, for whom times of crisis are particularly overwhelming;
those who are lonely, for whom social distancing only adds to feelings of isolation;
those who feel powerless to keep themselves and their families healthy;
those who have power, and now face hard decisions about keeping communities safe;
those who do not have adequate access to health care, or the benefit of sick leave;
those who will lose much-needed school lunches as districts close;
those whom we carry in our hearts, whose names we lift before you now:

God of Grace, who offers Living Water to quench our thirst, help us always to bear witness to your good news. Even now, *especially* now, may we remember that you send us — the Body of Christ — to echo the Samaritan woman’s words: “Come and see!” Wherever we are, may we point others toward Christ, who is the source of our hope.

It is in Christ’s name that we pray, and that we offer the words he taught us:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Benediction

Let Christ give you a cup of living water, and now may grace, hope, and joy be yours this day. Amen.