

Our Service Together

Lent 3

March 8th 2026



Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's
holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to
you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us
our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his
kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire
with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody Psalm 95 *We say the psalm aloud*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading 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. ²The 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?' 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 quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel 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. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. ⁷A 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.) ⁹The 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.) ¹⁰Jesus 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.' ¹¹The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but 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.' ¹⁵The 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.'

¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' ¹⁷The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' ¹⁹The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' ²¹Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But 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. 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 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 labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

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 for 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 Saviour of the world.'

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

You don't see many village wells, or 'pumps' in operation today – after all we have 'freely running waters' which flow from the tap and sustain us, and keep us clean. But villages used to have such sources of life, for that is what water brings us – life!

For this woman of Samaria, for the whole community, there is the provision of water for life – water for drinking, washing and for the animals. They have their village well, a cistern into which the deep underground spring supplies their needs, and all thanks to Jacob. Jacob, son of Issac, born to Abraham and Sarah – Jacob who would be known as Israel, having had 12 sons. This was no ordinary well or cistern, this well was gifted through Jacob who must have been directed by God where to find water for himself, for his flocks and his whole family. This is good water!

As the conversation opens up between Jesus and the women talk of water casts a question about this provision that the women toils at each day for the sustenance it provides. 'Give me a drink', says Jesus, for he is thirsty. *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? Like those who watch a play by Shakespeare we are supposed to be in on the joke here; silly women, Jesus is not talking about water here, but about faith.*

Faith can be hard work, sustaining – yes, life giving – absolutely, but it can be still water that you have to go to and whilst it comes from deep places, you have to work at it, each and every day. Oh, to have a stream of flowing (living) water, fresh and flowing right through the place where you live, right into you home – no carrying jars, no filling them each day; twice a day. If you knew who was asking you for a drink, you would be asking him for 'living', for 'flowing' water.

Praise God for Jacob, and all the ancestors who walked with God and dug deep to provide for all, both in their time but also for the generations to come, that they may have a sustaining faith. But here, now before this woman is not mere 'prophet', here is no simple water diviner, here is the source – the living water himself; this is the son of God.

I love the hymn, 'and can it be', for it both tells of how Charles Wesley, a devout man of faith, an Anglican priest, son of an Anglican priest, brother to a priest (John Wesley too was ordained) found 'deliverance' from the 'works of daily faith and instead let the flowing waters of faith and life flow through him. For him the 'chins' of religion fell away and 'enlivened' by the Spirit of Christ he went forth and followed. There was nothing 'wrong' with Wesley's religion, there was nothing 'wrong' with the Samaritan women's religion, they sustained, they gave direction through life; but Jesus brings to all the real, flowing, bubbling waters of faith. His yoke is light indeed, His water sustains completely!

Interestingly, the women, rather than simply saying 'I'll take all you have to offer', starts to ask lots of technical questions about buckets and going down into the ground to find the water, and probably had other questions about pumping the water up, and what would he do with all the soil when he digs the well. Sometimes you have to simply trust and let Jesus be Jesus, accept he has completed the hard work of the faith, he dug deep, so deep he descended right to the place of death itself, and then burst forth in life from the very rock itself as the spring, as the fountain of life to quench each and every thirst.

If you thirst for God, come and drink, if you hunger for God, come and by without cost! May it be we let His waters flow, and as we are enlivened may we go into town and tell everyone who we have met and what this Jesus offers to each and all who would come and drink of His life giving waters.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

Lord we look for you, we long for you, our whole being thirsts for you and your love. Lord, open our eyes, awaken us to what is around us and make us aware of your coming to us. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those who nurture the young, those who teach and equip others that they might flourish in their humanity. Give them wisdom to guide, and patience to walk alongside those who learn the way to love and bring peace in the world. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

Lord, as you have given us this world to live in, help us to use its riches and resources with sensitivity. Bless all who work on the land, who supply our food and daily need. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those who lead communities and nations, may they know the path you call all humanity to in Christ; that of peace, of grace, of love and justice. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We give you thanks for our homes and our loved ones; make us sensitive to each other's needs and hopes.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for those displaced from their homes, from their lands through earthquake, flood or war. Bless all who receive them with common humanity that they may find somewhere they can call home; even if for a short time. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those taken ill this day, those involved in accidents or facing operations. Be with those who minister healing this day. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

Lord, you are our helper and you protect us from all evil. We pray for all who face death today; for our loved ones departed, that you will bring them into fullness of joy in your kingdom.
Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Collect

All: Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: 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, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.