



Seeking: Will You Give Me A Drink?

Gathering

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle. This week, it would be appropriate to find a **purple cloth** or scarf to signify that we are in a time of preparation. Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.



Gathering

Today is the third week in our preparations for Easter, and the question we are asking is: Will you give me a drink?

It is the question Jesus asks of a Samaritan woman when they meet at a well.

It is one of the questions the woman ends up asking of Jesus.

How often do we ask God to quench our thirst?

Are we ready to offer life-sustaining water to the world around us?

Light Candle

We light the candle - focussing our attention, allowing ourselves to be drawn to its flame. We look to Jesus, the light of the world, a light that shines even in the darkest of times offering hope and healing.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Ancient of Days, breathed life into this Land and her Peoples.

From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders, past and present and emerging, and we pray for the future of their communities.

May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler, This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here

Call to Worship

We gather together—

the seekers, the dreamers, the shooting-star wishers, in hopes of seeing God.

We gather together—

the curious, the hungry, the loving, the lonely, in hopes of finding peace.

We gather together—

those who are thirsty and those with water to spare, in hopes of finding justice.

So come to the well,

come to the table.

Come, let us worship God.

Words for Worship, Seeking, Sanctified Art

Prayer

In the driest desert, O God, you provided a rock that held a fountain for those who thirst.
Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love.

In a place of quarrelling, you provide an answer that holds life for those who hope.
Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love.

In a place of wonder, you provided living water, for those who met there.
Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love. Amen.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for 12 March 2023, p.48

Sing - Come All You People (Seasons 1-8) / Come Let Us Sing (SiS 488)

Psalm 95, the psalm for today, encourages us:

- ¹ O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*
- ² Let us come into [God's] presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to [God] with songs of praise!*
- ³ For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.*

So we are going to sing 2 songs - one that simply encourages us to come and praise our Maker. And the second song might either twig the depths of your memory or be completely new but it is based on the rest of Psalm 95.

Come all you people, come and praise your maker,
Come all you people, come and praise your maker,
Come all you people, come and praise your maker,
Come now and worship the Lord.

© Alexander Gondo. 1995 WGRG, Iona Community

The language of the second one is a bit gendered but I hope it lifts your spirits, or, if you don't know it, the images will!

Come let us sing for joy to the Lord.
(4 times)

Chorus:
*Come let us sing for joy to the Lord.
Let us shout aloud to the rock of our
salvation.*

(repeat)

Let us come before him with thanksgiving,
and extol him with music and song.
For the Lord our Lord is the great God,
the great King above all Gods. (chorus)

Let us bow before him in our worship.
Let us kneel before God, our great King.
For he is our God, and we are his people,
that's why we shout and sing. (chorus)

*Brent Chambers
© 1985 Scripture in Song*

Prayer of Confession - intro

In a moment, we will hear the story of the Samaritan woman. It's a well-known story of a woman who, in the heat of the day, meets Jesus at a well and he asks her for a drink.

Every time I read this story, I cannot help but ask myself—when was the last time I drew water for someone? When was the last time I drew water for myself?

So with this same open curiosity, we come to the prayer of confession, trusting that even if we forget our bucket, God will still meet us at the well.

Friends, with that grace in mind, let us pray:

Prayer

Holy God, we have been on every side of this story.

We have been the one who is thirsty and in need of compassion, and we have been the one with a bucket and a deep well. So today we wonder: how often have we missed the opportunity to share water with our neighbours? How often have we forgotten that we have a bucket and the power to bring change? How often have we simply decided that justice and compassion were not worth the work? Forgive our fragile hearts and remind us that it was you who sat at that well in Samaria in the heat of the day. It was you. It is still you. With hope we pray, amen.

Words of Assurance

Family of faith, as hard as it is to imagine:

we could lose the bucket,

we could hoard the water for ourselves,

we could pretend we do not see all who are thirsty, and we would still belong to God.

This is the good news of the gospel:

God's grace is deeper than any well.

We are seen, loved, and forgiven.

May this realisation change and inspire us. Amen.

Sanctified Art, Words for Worship

Sing - Wellsprings (All Together Whatever 435)

We sing a song that acknowledges that some days are just hard but we find the nourishment we need in Jesus...

*Like the woman of old, each day
we go to the wellsprings of life
to find Jesus there.*

Some days the well seems dry.
We can't reach the water – it's too hard.
Some days our legs won't take us,
our hearts are aching, crying.
Like the woman of old...

Some days our minds are reeling.
There's too much happening –
we need to stop.
Some days our souls are parched,
we need the water – so thirsty.
Like the woman of old...

Some days there's no escape
life's routine and madness.
Some days we don't want to go –
we can't see the rhyme or reason.
Like the woman of old...

Some days we're resurrected,
we feel new life – inside us.
Some days our faith moves mountains,
we feel life's glory – earth and heaven.
Like the woman of old...

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Listening for God's Voice

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?'

Reading: John 4:5-42

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.) 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.'

¹⁶ Jesus 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. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' ²⁵The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' ²⁶Jesus 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?' ²⁸Then 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?' ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' ³²But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' ³³So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' ³⁴Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵Do 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. ³⁶The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." ³⁸I 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.'

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Reflection

God of conversation,
We come to you today thirsty -
 thirsty for hope,
 thirsty for good news,
 thirsty for a glimpse of you.
So today we pray,
move in these words like a current.
Give us the courage to wade into your story with open eyes and open hearts.
Give us the courage to drink this moment in.
We are listening.
We are grateful.
Amen.

Will you give me a drink?
In the wilderness, this is the question the people ask of Moses and of their God.
In Samaria, it is a question asked by Jesus of the woman he encounters at the well.

In the wilderness, the people of God cry out to God - "we are thirsty".
Well, actually, they grumble at Moses and demand that he gives them something to drink (17:2). This little vignette is often used in leadership courses to illustrate the reality that groups of people, no matter how well cared for, will often find something to complain about and something of how a leader might respond. The Hebrew people already had manna and quails every day to sustain their appetites (16:11-31) - now they complain about a lack of water. Moses is a bit despairing of their grumbling and cries out to God who instructs him to strike a rock with his staff to begin a flow of water (17:6).

Alongside the story from Exodus 17 is placed the events in John 4.
Jesus and his disciples are travelling through Samaria, considered foreigners to the people of Israel, and certainly there was a degree of antipathy between the people of Samaria and the Jews. The gospel account includes a statement to the effect that Jews and Samaritans did not share well (4:9) although it is not clear whether that comment may have been a later inclusion in the text.

And it is important that we notice something else about this gospel account.
And that is the contrast to the conversation Jesus had in the previous chapter that we looked at last week - the conversation with Nicodemus (John 3).
Nicodemus is a Jewish leader who come to Jesus by night. The way the story is told there is an inference that as a Jewish leader, Nicodemus should be learned, he should know and he should understand who Jesus is - but he doesn't - at least, not initially.

The Samaritan woman, on the other hand, apart from being nameless (one of many nameless women in the gospel accounts), she comes to Jesus in the middle of the day and while we can speculate about her status in her community meaning that she wasn't able or preferred to come after the other women of the village had come in the early morning, that point is that she is here in broad daylight. She is a foreigner and a woman, and she names the inappropriateness of Jesus asking her for a drink (4:9). But the greatest contrast is that this foreign, unnamed woman, gets who Jesus is - or at least gets enough to want to ask the question: "He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (4:29)

These two readings speak to us of the God who sustains us, who sustains all of life - both physically and spiritually: the provider of water to quench our human thirst, and the giver of Living Water to sustain and nurture our spirit. And in many ways, we readily place ourselves in the shoes of the woman who longs for her thirsting heart to be quenched.

But what about Jesus here?

Jesus risks everything by speaking with this woman - "crossing cultural, religious, and social lines", demonstrating his willingness to be vulnerable (Rev Danielle Shroyer, *Commentary, Sanctified Art*), reminding us that we all need each other.

Jesus risks being vulnerable in his need for a rest and a drink. He has no bucket (4:11) and needs a drink! So he asks for help.

How often do you and I think we need to manage on our own, or think that whatever we need is too trivial or that the people around us have more important things to worry about and so we simply don't ask. We don't ask for help and so no-one even realises we are struggling. Maybe that story from Exodus 17 also reminds us that even when we resort to grumbling, the grace of God is to respond to our need.

And this foreign, possibly outcast, woman risks asking Jesus for what he offers (4:15) - "living water", the water of life, a stream that gushes into a life lived in the knowledge and presence of God, a life that knows the love and grace of God, life abundant.

So today I want to invite you to consider a few more questions:

What are you thirsting for?

What do the people around you thirst for?

And can we be courageous enough to ask for help, to name the stuff we long for or thirst after?

And can we be gracious enough to respond with words and actions that are life-giving and sustaining?

As we gather around Christ's table this morning, God meets us here - offering bread and juice to nourish hungry hearts and thirsty souls. Will you meet Christ here?

Will you allow this simple sharing to strengthen you in offering life to the world.

Let us pray...

God of all life, sometimes we think our voices don't matter. We have important things to say and wonder if anyone will listen. We offer a different perspective from the world and it is rejected. Give us big voices, Holy One. Give us voices that are loud enough to claim that you are the one who provided water in the desert, living water at a well, and that in you we find resurrection and claim it for ourselves. Amen.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for 12 March 2023, p.46

Responding

Listen - Land of The Seeking (Sanctified Art)

This song accompanies us as we look towards the cross - it invites us to inhabit the Land of the Seeking... <https://vimeo.com/800216630>

Prayer for Others

Living God,
we have come to know you in Christ,
who renounced the way of violence,
who spent his life breaking down barriers,
who told us to love not just our neighbours but enemies and strangers and those with
whom we most profoundly disagree.
He came to bring peace on earth,
and still wars are being fought in his name,
and communities divided,
and people excluded from the fellowship of the table that should be open to all.

We are part of whatever it is that keeps
going wrong in this world of ours—and of yours— so that good intentions turn sour,
good people hurt others without meaning to
and lasting peace never quite takes hold.
And so, we cannot pray for others,
or for the healing of our broken world,
without asking first that we might be healed
of our brokenness and set free from the fear that causes hatred and division.
We pray for lands laid waste by conflict,
for families divided and friendships broken,
and for churches squabbling over doctrine
while hungry folk remain unfed,
sick ones untended,
strangers unwelcomed
and sad ones devoid of cheer.

We pray for victims of physical violence and of emotional abuse,
grieving as we do so for the hurts that cause one person to treat another in this way.
We pray without words, because there are no words,
and because you know already what needs to be said,
and what needs to be done to fulfil your purposes of love.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy, hear us and heal us all.
Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 46, Resources for Lent 3, 12 March 2023, p.32

Holy Communion

If you would like to share in Communion and are unable to join with us in-person, please let Rev Kath or Rhonda Back know. We would love to bring Communion to you in your home at a time that suits you.

Offering

As we have received, so we consider our response...

We make space now to think about what we have heard and seen today and consider our response.

As we make our offering - we remember again that this is not just about money - either here in the plate or through a bank transfer - this is also about how we are generous with our time and energy and gifts; and about how we resolve to live differently because we have encountered the living Christ.

And if this is your first time with us or if you are visiting, please don't feel obliged to give. You are our guests, and we want you simply to enjoy the blessings of worshiping together. We are glad you are here!

Let us pray...

Gracious God,

you have given us each a unique set of gifts:

physical health and strength to some; to others wit and cleverness.

Some of us are born leaders;

some prefer to follow;

some of us are good with words;

others speak through our actions.

Help us to use our gifts for good and not for ill.

May we use our strength to help other people, not to hurt them;

our minds to enlighten, not deceive;

our words to serve the truth and not distort it,

to heal and not to harm.

We give back to you the gifts that you have given us.

Help us to use them well. Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 46, Resources for Lent 3, 12 March 2023, p.31

Sending

Sing - Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer (TIS 569)

This song sends us looking to God for guiding, nourishment and strength.

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,

pilgrim through this barren land.

I am weak, but thou art mighty,

hold me with thy powerful hand:

bread of heaven, bread of heaven,

feed me now and evermore,

feed me now and evermore.

When I tread the verge of Jordan

bid my anxious fears subside;

death of death and hell's

destruction,

land me safe on Canaan's side:

songs of praises, songs of praises

I will ever give to thee,

I will ever give to thee.

Open now the crystal fountain

whence the living waters flow:

let the fiery, cloudy pillar

lead me all my journey through:

strong deliverer, strong deliverer,

be thou still my strength and shield,

be thou still my strength and shield.

Words: William Williams

Sending Affirmation

We believe that a glass of water given to us by a stranger can taste like justice.

We believe that honest conversation has the power to change us.

We believe that all God's children have a voice and something to say.

We believe that Jesus loves the outcast, the ignored, the shamed, and the abandoned.

We believe in asking questions.

We believe in curiosity.

We believe in giving people a drink.

May we be brave enough to give people a drink. Amen.

Blessing

As you leave this place,
may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry.

Seek the weary.

Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful.

Seek the faithful.

Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder,
may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God,
who is always seeking us,

go now in peace. Amen.

Liturgy adapted from material from:

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for Lent-Easter 2023

A Sanctified Art: Seeking, www.sanctifiedart.org

Rev Kath Merrifield

12 March 2023