



seeking:

*Will you give
me a drink?*

March 12, 2023 + Third Sunday in Lent

*An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read aloud responses found in **bold**.*

We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!

we GATHER here

*As we center ourselves for worship, we hear this organ arrangement of a familiar tune during our **Prelude**, and we will hear a piano arrangement of the same tune during our **Offering** time.*

*As we spend today's service focusing on getting a drink of living water, we sing this **Gathering Hymn** filled with many things that we thirst and long for. Then, we hear the same invitation given to the woman at the well: "Come to the water of Life."*

Prelude — "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Setting by Paul Manz
Sophie Martinez, organ

***Welcome and Words of Gathering**

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. Amen.

***Gathering Hymn** — no. 955, from *All Creation Sings* "Come to the Water of Life"
See back page

***Confession and Forgiveness**

In today's service 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:

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 neighbors? 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.

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. In Jesus' name ✝, we are forgiven. This is the good news of the gospel:

God's grace is deeper than any well. We are seen, loved, and forgiven.

May this realization change and inspire us. Amen.

***Prayer of the Day**

May God be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

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.**

we LISTEN and RESPOND

A Reading from the book of Exodus — 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 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?" 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 quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Hear these words of old **as we seek to know God today.**

Psalm 95 — p. 300, front of hymnal

"Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord"

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Romans — Romans 5:1-11

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.

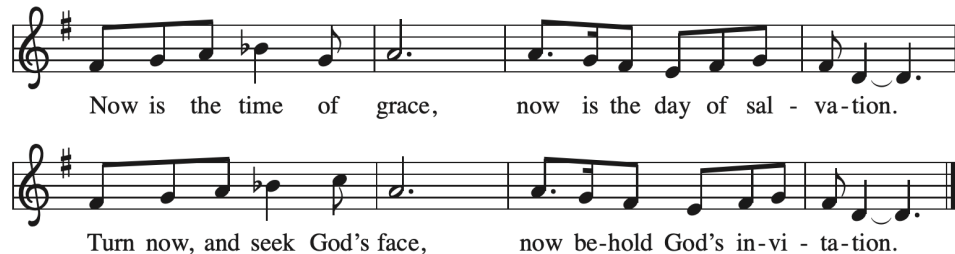
For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually

This morning, we will sing this setting of Psalm 95 from the Morning Prayer service found in the front of the hymnal.

dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. 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. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Hear these words of old **as we seek to know God today.**

***Gospel Acclamation** — no. 918 from *All Creation Sings*



Now is the time of grace, now is the day of sal - va - tion.

Turn now, and seek God's face, now be-hold God's in - vi - ta - tion.

***Gospel** — John 4:5-42

The Gospel of John, the 4th chapter.

Glory to you, O God.

[Jesus] 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 worshiped 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 worshipers 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."

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?" 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.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has

brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 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. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. 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.”

The Gospel of Jesus.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Chris Culuris

The woman at the well believed in Jesus, the Living Water and told her friends and family. How might we “care for God’s community” and recognize that “there are no strangers” as we share this Living Water with all people we encounter?

***Hymn** — *from A Sanctified Art*

“We All Come Thirsty”

***Affirmation of Faith**

P: You are invited to share in this litany of 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.

***Prayers of Intercession**

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

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

We pray for the universe. All creation teems with life, from the depths of the earth and seas to the skies above, and this life is under threat due to human greed. Fill us with awe and reverence for the diversity and preservation of life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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, **receive our prayer.**

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. Give them your living water always. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for the lives of all your saints. Their hope in you sustained lives of faith and service. Encourage us with the hope they shared in you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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. **Amen.**

In the text of this hymn (no. 807), God is described as a "Fount of Every Blessing." What other "water names" for God can you think of? This could be considered a hymn of praise; the author is filled with joy for God's mercy and presence.

Offering

Music During Offering

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Setting by Lorie Line
Ben Malm, piano

***Offering Prayer**

A: God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

we SHARE the meal

***The Great Thanksgiving** — pg. 161, *front of hymnal*

***Sanctus** — pg. 162, *front of hymnal*

***Words of Institution and Prayers**

P: God of the lost and the found, surely it is right for us to give our thanks and praise; for day after day we look for you, and day after day we find you: in the laughter of children, in the sun rising over the horizon, in the flowers of spring.

Our seeking does not go unanswered, and for that we are grateful.
So first and foremost, we come to you in prayer to say thank you, for when we're seeking beauty, you give us mountains and freckles, green eyes and brown eyes. When we're looking for reason to hope, you give us rainbows after the storm, and candles flickering in the window. When we're seeking peace, you give us three part harmony and the sound of the rain.
And when we're seeking justice, your life reminds us that everyone is welcome at your Table, and none shall be turned away.

For all these reminders we are deeply grateful.
And yet, gracious God, our seeking does not stop.
For even though your fingerprints are all over this world, we are not yet at your promised day.

So in addition to our gratitude, we also pray today for conviction.
Do not let us get comfortable with half-hearted seeking.
Do not let us grow numb to the suffering of this world.
Make us relentless in our pursuit of justice—
relentless in our consoling of the grieving,
in our welcoming of the stranger, and in the feeding of the hungry.
Like a dog with a scent, may we walk toward your kingdom,
never giving up, never wandering off the path.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

And as we see and as we seek, pour out your Spirit on this ordinary bread and cup.
May this meal be the nourishment we need to continue seeking you in the world.

Until your promised day, we will pray. Until your promised day, we will seek, saying:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

***Invitation to the Table**

P: Friends, if your seeking has led you here,
if your weary heart followed breadcrumbs all the way to this sanctuary,
then I have good news: you do not have to seek anymore.

This table is God's Table.
So if you came here looking for justice,
then rest in the comfort that all will be fed here.
If you came seeking beauty,
then let your spirit marvel at the beauty of a community coming together.
If you came seeking a brush with the Divine,

then know that God is present in this ordinary meal.
So kick off your walking shoes. Let your weary heart stop the search.
We are standing on holy ground. This is God's Table.
All are invited. Come.

We will observe continuous communion this morning. This hymn is a very familiar text but a less familiar tune; the introduction will go through the entire melody. Pay special attention to the second stanza as we sing of quenched thirst, revived soul, and life in Jesus.

Distribution of Communion

Lamb of God — pg. 164, front of hymnal

Hymn — no. 332

“I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say”

Prayer After Communion

P: God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full—full of hope, full of promise, full of what could be. For we not only found glimpses of you at this Table, but we caught a glimpse of the way things could be: in a meal where all are welcomed and all are fed. Is there anything holier than that? Thank you for nourishing our curiosity alongside our spirit and our conviction. May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, amen.

we DEPART to serve the world

In our Sending Hymn, images of water infuse with references to the tree, a very important Lenten symbol as Holy Week approaches. How have you been revived by “word and water” today?

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — no. 447

“O Blessed Spring”

Stanza 1: All Stanza 2: Low Voices

Stanza 3: All Stanza 4: High Voices Stanza 5: All

*Blessing & Dismissal

P: 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.
A: In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. **Amen.**

***Postlude** — “Fugue in A minor” (BWV 559)

Johann Sebastian Bach
Sophie Martinez, organ

Acknowledgements

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Worship Assistants

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 Director of Music: Emily Bruflatt
 Assisting Minister: Grace Timm
 Audio/Video: Brett Peterson, Jacob Little

Greeter: Audrey Menning
 Reader: John Holte
 Ushers: Cindy Nadeau, Tom Thorkelson,
 John Nadeau
 Musicians: Sophie Martinez, GAC Music
 Scholar; Ben Malm, piano

Communion Preparers: Julie Johnson, Michelle Doose
 Communion Servers: John Malm, Sharon Domeier, Cindy Nadeau
 Bread Bakers: Diane Stewart
 Acolytes:

Announcements

- Fellowship refreshments will be served by the Life-Long Learning Committee after worship today. Thank you!
- You are invited to join us following worship today as we continue our series on *Making Sense of Luther*. We will meet in the Dining Hall.
- The deadline to order flowers for Easter is **today**. Special pink forms are available in the Gathering Space.
- “Painting with Bob Ross” is today from 4:30-5:30pm in the Dining Hall . Contact Calleigh if you want to register yet this morning at 507-779-6866.
- Join us for Soup Supper on March 15 from 5:30-6:30pm in the Dining Hall. Worship service will follow at 7pm.
- March Food Drive for the SPAFS runs through April 2. Donations can be put in the grocery cart in the gathering space. Sunday, March 26, is the “Pack the Pews” event when we will fill the back pews with our donations.
- ISIAH and its sister organization Faith in Minnesota is planning a “Day at the Capitol” on 3/22. A bus will transport folks from the St. Peter/Mankato area. You will be able to speak with our local legislators. Contact Ellen Conover for more information about this event: markellenconover@gmail.com / 507-317-0358.

Prayers

- We pray for the family and friends of Sandra Brovold who died on Feb. 19th.
- We pray for the family of Harriet Bunge who died on February 19.
- We pray for Margie Nelsen, Pr. Bill’s wife, who died on Feb. 22nd. A memorial service will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Peter, on Saturday, March 25 at 11:00 a.m.; visitation at the church will be on Friday, March 24, 4-7pm.
- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Allen Storkson, Gene Roemhildt, Karen Smithers, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Rita Ogren and Dorothy Lutz.

Gathering Hymn — no. 955, from *All Creation Sings

“Come to the Water of Life”



1 All who are thirst - y for mer - cy, all who are thirst - y for
 2 All who are thirst - y for heal - ing, all who are thirst - y for
 3 All who are thirst - y for beau - ty, all who are thirst - y for
 4 All who are thirst - y for jus - tice, all who are thirst - y for



love; all who are thirst - y for love, for mer - cy,
 touch; all who are thirst - y for touch, for heal - ing,
 truth; all who are thirst - y for truth, for beau - ty,
 peace; all who are thirst - y for peace, for jus - tice,



come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
 come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
 come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
 come: come to the Wa - ter of life.