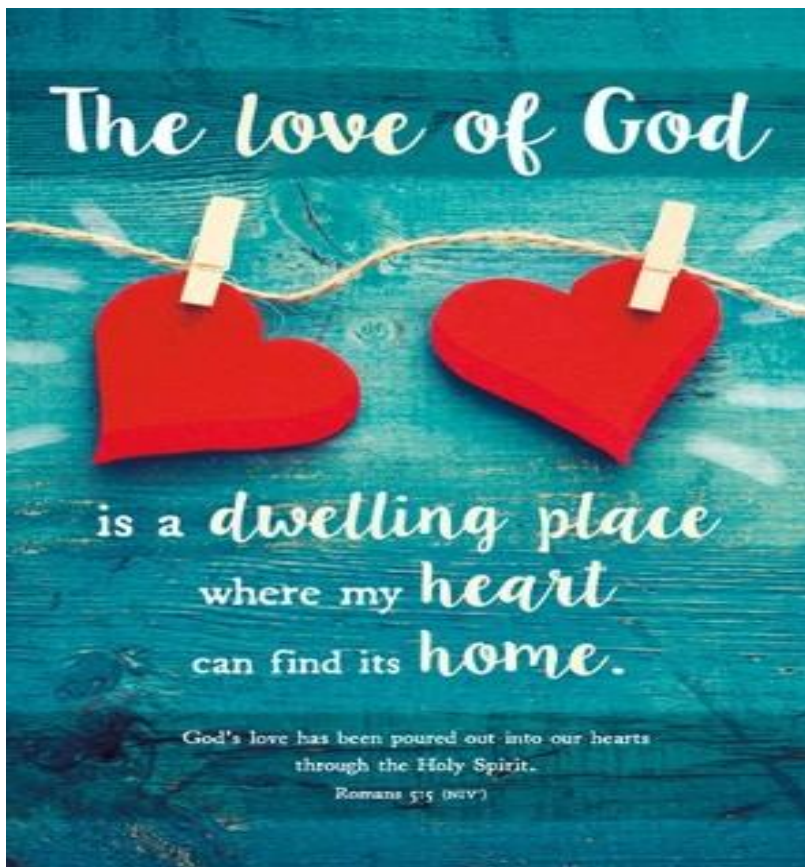


The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Third Sunday in Lent
March 12, 2023



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers
Presiding Minister
Organist
Lector
Parish Administrator
Custodian

All People
The Rev. Bradley Ross
Aaron Carter-Enyi, CAGO
Allan Treichel
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Third Sunday in Lent

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.

Prelude

Welcome & Greetings

*Confession and Forgiveness

As we take time to recognize our shortcomings before God, we forever cling to the grace and mercy that will always triumph in blessing us with hope and new life.

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

Amen!

Let us acknowledge before God and one another
our dependence on God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

we confess to you our faults.

Too often we neglect and do not trust your loving 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 new life. Amen.

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 power of the Holy Spirit! **Amen!**

*Gathering Hymn *Glorious Things of You are Spoken*

ELW #647

*Greeting

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

*Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, the never-ending fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our hopelessness. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Exodus 17:1-7

Because the thirsty Israelites quarreled with Moses and put God to the test, Moses cried out in desperation to God. God commanded Moses to strike the rock to provide water for the people. The doubt-filled question—"Is the LORD among us or not?"—received a very positive answer.

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?”

Word of God, word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

Psalm

Psalm 95

The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below:



Antiphon: Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. (Ps. 95:1)

¹Come, let us sing | to the LORD;

let us shout for joy to the rock of | our salvation.

²**Let us come before God’s presence | with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the | LORD with psalms.**

³For you, LORD, | are a great God,
and a great ruler a- | bove all gods.

⁴**In your hand are the caverns | of the earth;
the heights of the hills are | also yours.**

⁵The sea is yours, | for you made it,
and your hands have molded | the dry land.

⁶**Come, let us worship | and bow down,
let us kneel before the | LORD our maker. *Antiphon***

⁷For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God’s pasture and the sheep | of God’s hand.

Oh, that today you would | hear God’s voice!

⁸**“Harden | not your hearts,
as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah | in the desert.**

⁹There your ancestors | tested me,
they put me to the test, though they had | seen my works.

¹⁰**Forty years I loathed that gener- | ation, saying,
‘The heart of this people goes astray; they do not | know my ways.’**

¹¹Indeed I swore | in my anger,
‘They shall never come | to my rest.’” *Antiphon*

Second Lesson

Romans 5:1-11

Though we often hear that God helps those who help themselves, here Paul tells us that through Jesus’ death God helps utterly helpless sinners. Since we who had been enemies are reconciled to God in the cross, we now live in hope for our final salvation.

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 suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and 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.

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

Word of God, word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

*Gospel Acclamation *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery*

ELW# 334



1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
death we are re - born; though you die in all of
his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
rise with ev - 'ry morn.

Lent 3

Living Water of salvation,
be the fountain of each soul;
springing up in new creation,
flow in us and make us whole.

(last line sung twice)

*Gospel

John 4:5-42

Jesus defies convention to engage a Samaritan woman in conversation. Her testimony, in turn, leads many others to faith.

The Gospel according to John, the 4th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

⁵[Jesus] 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 worshiped 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 worshipers 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.”

²⁷Just 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.

³¹Meanwhile 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 labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

³⁹Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They 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.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord! **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Healer of Our Every Ill*

ELW# 612

*Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
God’s 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 of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

Universal God, bless all 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, **receive our prayer.**

Wondrous God, your entire 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, **receive our prayer.**

God of all the nations, 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.**

Gracious God, we lift up 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.**

God of hope, continue to strengthen our Covenant family. Nurture our faith and pour your love into our hearts. Inspire our congregation to be a heartfelt testimony to your relentless grace in our lives. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the lives of all your saints, including our beloved Alex Hohenstein. We praise you for their hope in you that sustained lives of faith and service. Encourage us with the wonder they shared in you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

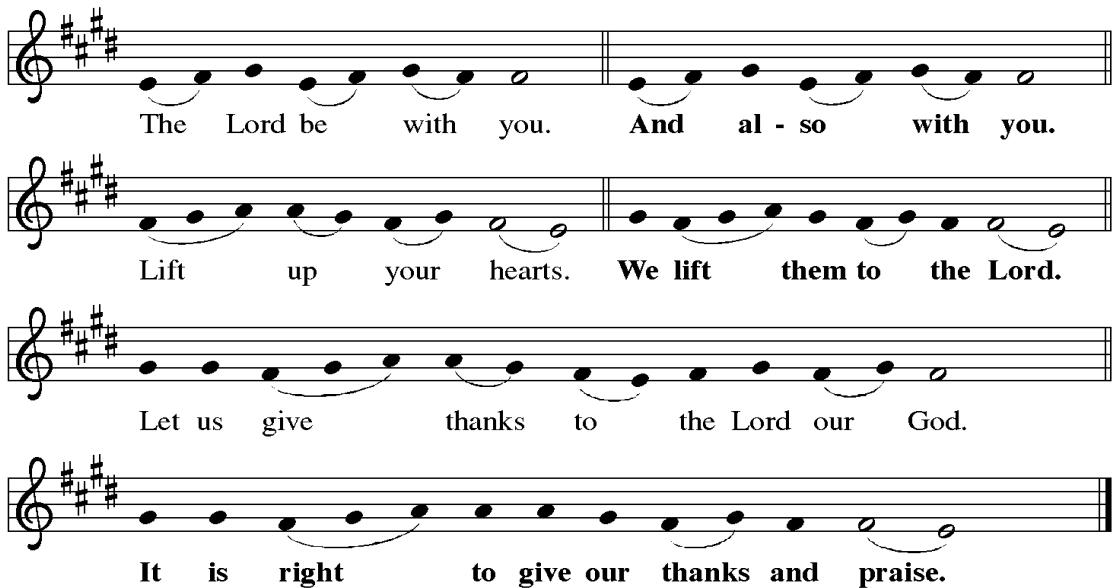
We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen!**

*Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

Music Interlude

*Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**


Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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, loving and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to renew their hearts
and prepare with joy for the victory of the tomb,
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:




Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs
we bless and magnify you!

You led your people Israel through the desert,
and provided them water from the rock.
We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert,
pouring out his life for the world.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection,
we await your fulfilled salvation for all this thirsty world.

Holy Spirit, pour out your strength on this holy food,
and on all gathered for this feast throughout the world:
wash away our sin,
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen!**

**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 Communion

Receive the gift of Christ for us all: life in abundance!
Thanks be to God!

Communion

Music Interlude

Prayer after Communion

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 respond in the world with your boundless love.
Amen!

*Blessing

God, the giver of love,
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth
bless you in this Lenten journey and forevermore!
Amen!

*Sending Hymn *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

ELW #807

*Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve in love!
Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Christina Copeland, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Jane Gradert, Dylan King, Elaine Knerem, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Welker, Maud Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family.

General Fund receipts for week ending 3/5/2023: \$2035.75

Lenten SOUP Suppers

For all Wednesdays in March, at 6pm, you are invited to join us for soup suppers concluding with a short service, both downstairs in our fellowship hall. The worship will be based on a midweek Lent series of “Making Change,” as a reminder of all the changes made in our lives (some beyond our control), the constant not only remains God, but God’s steadfast love and grace. So, you are invited to join us for soup as well as the ultimate soul-soothing Gospel!

Lectionary Blog: [Strange] Waters of Life



Because my wife and I were on international insurance that didn’t want to pay the high costs of health care in the United States on an ongoing basis, we had to leave the country shortly after our eldest son was born or forfeit the insurance benefit for his birth and aftercare. The easiest and quickest way to do this was to go to Niagara Falls, Canada, where we could figure out our next steps. So we packed up our 10-day-old in a borrowed car and headed north.

As long as we were in Niagara Falls, we decided to see the falls themselves. Sarah and I loved it, but for our newborn, it was a loud, wet, uncomfortable experience. Still, I'll never forget holding my baby in the tunnel underneath the falls. He and I weren't accustomed to each other yet, and we were embarking on a whole new journey together. Somehow our first adventure together—leaving one place and traveling to another, surrounded by water—has become the pattern for much of our life together. This week's lectionary texts tell stories of strange/holy experiences with water that showcase God's presence with people

In Exodus 17 we have the first of a couple of stories about provision of water from a rock in the wilderness. In this story, the people grumbled against Moses as they wandered through the wilderness. In fairness to the Israelites, the text explicitly says they didn't have water to drink. I would have grumbled, too, just as my children now grumble when I take them on a long road trip and forget to bring snacks and drinks. Moses became frustrated and passed the people's complaint on to God. Unlike Moses, however, God didn't seem to get upset and just set about providing water for the people. While God could have opened a well then and there, God instead told Moses to appear before all the people and strike a rock that would gush forth water and quench their thirst.

The similar provision of water in Numbers 20 gave rise to the early interpretive movement that saw the rocks in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 as the same that rolled along with the people to provide water everywhere they lacked it. The tradition of a mobile watering station was so well known that Paul referenced it for a mixed Gentile and Jewish audience in Corinth, saying, "And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock *which followed them*; and the rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). Paul says the rock followed them and was God's presence in Christ. The accompanying rock answered the people's question of "Is the Lord among us or not?" in the affirmative (Exodus 17:7).

God was present to provide water, but even more, to provide God's own presence. Years later Jesus intentionally went to the well of Sychar to provoke an interaction with a Samaritan woman. Interestingly, this story seems to have been related to John by a Samaritan source. There is no Jewish tradition of Jacob having dug a well in the vicinity. The Samaritan woman regarded herself and her people as the true heirs of their father Jacob (John 4:12). Indeed, she referenced her ancestors to say that they worshiped on

Mount Gerizim. Fights between Jews and Samaritans continue to this day, but a traditional site of worship of the God of Israel seems to have existed at Mount Gerizim at an early date, long before the fragmenting of the United Kingdom of Israel (Joshua 24:1, 26-27).

In addition to history, the Samaritan woman also had infrastructure on her side. She told Jesus that the well was deep and that he had no bucket to retrieve any water, living or otherwise. Even today, after centuries of the well filling in with limestone fragments, it remains about 140 feet deep. In the woman's opinion, Jesus, as a Jew, had no claim on the water at the well.

Jesus brushed aside discussions of which mountain might be God's preferred home to insist that the water of the well was nothing compared to the water of life that he offered. The woman seems to have accepted quite quickly that Jesus was the Messiah, who could produce living water. She immediately told her neighbors in Sychar about him. The Samaritans confessed later that they initially believed in Jesus' claims because of the woman, but after listening to him for a couple days, they believed he was the savior of the world because of what they had witnessed firsthand (John 4:39-42).

Jesus journeyed to a somewhat strange and disputed site of water in order to point out that he was and would be with the people—Jewish, Samaritan and Gentile—to provide the living water of his presence for them on their life journeys.

During the Israelite experience of wilderness, and the political-religious wilderness of the first century, God was present to provide water, but even more, to provide God's own presence. God's same presence is here for us today!

This Lectionary Blog, and other resources for the journey of faith, available on LivingLutheran.org.

*Cory Driver is the assistant to the bishop for emerging ministers and ministries for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

The Readings in the Bible

John 4:5-42

The gospel of John presents an interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman and so situates testimony to Christ outside of orthodox Judaism, although at the site of the historically important well of Jacob. Jesus is himself both thirsty and the source of living water, thus both human and divine. Jesus promised to give living water to all who ask and, at the conclusion of the dialogue, claimed for himself the divine name I am. The exchange resulted in these outsiders accepting Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Exodus 17:1-7

According to Israelite memory, before the tribes settled in Canaan, they lived as nomads. From the tenth-century Yahwist tradition comes the narrative of the Lord providing water from the rock for the thirsty nomads. The site is Meribah, which means quarrel. The Lord filled the need of the quarreling people by miraculously providing water.

Romans 5:1-11

The fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans intensifies the language describing the human need for justification. Humans were weak, ungodly, sinners, enemies of God. Only if the absolute need of humans for justification is accepted does the salvation provided by the death of Christ make any sense.

Comments from the Cloud of Witnesses

John's gospel says the Samaritan woman was invited to take all the water she needed. The early centuries of the church, and now we again, have seen in the Samaritan woman an image of us all. We all search in the wrong place for refreshment, lugging home water which gives out or goes bad; we continuously need more water; we are always somewhat thirsty, dirty or raw. We thought to find water there, down at the stream, and were surprised to find it here, directly before us. Turning around—the word is conversion—we find a water source we had not even imagined. Baptism, says the church, is this water source, this fountain of God, this conversation with Christ, this gift of self-knowledge, this sense of mission, this true religious rite, this conversion of life.

—*Gail Ramshaw*

[*Gail Ramshaw, Words Around the Font* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 56.]

The Woman at the Well

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." John 4:10 (NIV)



The puzzle is based on John 4:5-26 (NIV)

1. Find the hidden words. The words have been placed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When you locate a word, draw a circle around it.

A F X V C K G I F T P U S S D
M Z Y M R S C V Y H R I R O Z
V N Q P J B C M E I O W T U E
R B F G Q N F U F R P O N H O
M P M A L I F E E S H M J C K
L F C H M U K Q Q T E A R H G
D S P R I N G H Z Y T N R X O
W E L L L I V I N G D R I N K
I M U M T U I G B D U P E B H
V E R K T M Z Y U V D O T E W
J S S A M A R I T A N N E F A
E S B L E H U S B A N D R P T
S I U D Q A H Y R K T A N K E
U A Q P B O K M O T O N A S R
S H Z U M R Y P H D E Q L Y F

PROPHET
LIVING
THIRSTY

WELL
WATER
LIFE

GIFT
ETERNAL
SPRING

DRINK
JESUS
SAMARITAN

MESSIAH
WOMAN
HUSBAND