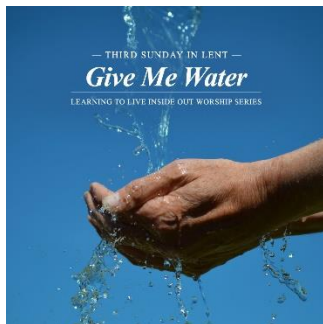


As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.  
May we together experience the presence of God

+++++

## We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord



### Prelude

### Welcome

### Announcements/Joys & Concerns

Water is one of the most critical needs of human existence. It ranks right up there with air.

Some of us have trouble understanding such desperation, given the availability of so many things that can quench our thirst. Those who live in the Great Lake States are looked upon in envy by those in the dry southwestern states.

We are thirsty. And we just might be getting thirstier. The concern you might be feeling right now makes it just a little easier to understand the reaction of the people of Israel in this week's Hebrew passage. Hear the words of our Lord: Exodus 17:1-7

### Water from the Rock

*17 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. 2 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?" 3 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?" 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." 5 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. 6 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. 7 He called the place Massah[a] and Meribah,[b] because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"*

The God of the Hebrew Scriptures expresses a wide range of emotion toward His people. But in this story, there is an amazing tolerance. Normally, it is the people who stand before God. It is a sign of obedience and worship. We are called into God's presence. But in this story, to show him where the water is, God says to Moses, "I will stand before you." An amazing act, a humbling act for Moses, I would think.

Did you ever do a kindness for someone and feel that the individual was not properly grateful? Did it make you less likely to help the next time around? When Jesus says, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), do you think he meant putting up with complaints and overreactions when people’s basic needs aren’t being met? Do you think he meant, “Give drink to the thirsty, regardless of how they respond”?

Our “lesson” from this passage, as usual, has many layers.

First the passage loudly claims God will provide. And God provides, not because of the worthiness of the recipient, but because of the holiness of the giver.

Secondly, as those who are called to represent God, how we respond to human need reflects not just on us, but on the God we proclaim. Our response is not just in the meeting of the need, but in the meeting of the need with grace and with love.

Thirdly, we might see in this passage a subtle reminder of our own human need. We too are thirsty. We forget because we have what it takes to quench our thirst. We forget we are only a few days away from dying of thirst. We forget that God has provided, and it is up to us to be stewards of what God provides. And worst of all, because we can drink, we forget that there are many who daily die of thirst. We forget that we are all one family, as we are thirsty.

We all have our thirsty days. Even Jesus had them. At least if John is right about the story that he tells in our Gospel text for today. But the difference is, for Jesus, a thirsty day was an opportunity rather than a terror. It was a chance to give out of abundance, rather than a panic to fill an emptiness.

The question I heard asked some time ago that still echoes in my soul is this: “Jesus says if we drink of the water he offers us, we will never be thirsty. So, why are we still thirsty?”

Why do we still live in emptiness? Is it because we don’t ask? We think our own buckets are sufficient. Why do we not embrace the life that he offers? It can’t be that simple, can it? Just ask? Just want it, and he will give it? What’s the catch? Maybe we should just give it a try.

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Welcome pilgrims on the way to the cross.

**We are learning to follow Jesus.**

The way is long, and we are thirsty.

**We seek the living waters of Jesus.**

We feel the weight of scarcity warring with hopeful whispers of abundance.

**We need the living waters of Jesus.**

We wonder if God will provide us with what we need, here and now.

**As God gives us the living waters of Jesus, so God calls us to quench the thirst and meet the needs of our neighbors.**

Pilgrims on the way, come let us worship God!

**We come to worship God as we learn to live inside out!**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We are dry, Lord, like the pavement on a sweltering summer day. Our lives are heated, and the streams of our souls sometimes run dry. We catch our tears, but they cannot ease our thirst. We drip in sweat, but this cannot ease the heat. So we beg for only a few drops of refreshing rain to moisten the dryness in our world.

(Time for Silent Confession)

**God's promise is greater than rain or streams. God promises a Savior sent to redeem and fill us with water eternally. [Living] in the will of God, we [live] without thirst anymore. Amen.**

### **\*HYMN OF PRAISE UMH #127**

### **"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"**

*Author: William Williams (1745)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Composer: John Hughes (1907)*

**1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
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 till I want no more;  
feed me till I want no more.**

**2. Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and 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.**

**3. 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.**

## ***We Hear God's Word***

**Gospel Reading..... John 4:5-42**

**New Revised Standard Version**

*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.)(a) 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,(b) 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,(c) 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,(d) I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you(e) 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(f) will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You(g) worship what you(h) 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,(i) 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,(j) 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(k) 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 labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

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 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 Savior of the world.”*

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

### **Children’s Sermon**

#### **FAITH HYMN UMH #89 “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (verses 1-3)**

*Author: Henry Van Dyke (1907, st. 4 alt. 1989)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Composer: Ludwig von Beethoven (1824)*

*Arranger: Edward Hodges (1964)*

**1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,  
opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
drive the dark of doubt away.  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
fill us with the light of day!**

**2. All thy works with joy surround thee,  
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,  
stars and angels sing around thee,  
center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
call us to rejoice in thee.**

**3. Thou art giving and forgiving,  
ever blessing, ever blest,  
wellspring of the joy of living,  
ocean depth of happy rest!  
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,  
all who live in love are thine;  
teach us how to love each other,  
lift us to the joy divine.**

#### **“Message”**

##### **LITANY FOR “HEALING THE WATERS”**

Some waters need healing. Let us name them now and pray, “May all waters be healed.” In the Two-Thirds World hauling water is one of women’s main daily occupations.

**May all waters be healed.**

Many people in large cities worldwide do not drink water out of the faucets because the water is polluted.

**May all waters be healed.**

Many urban areas in the United States are working to clean up their rivers, while others fear that their rivers are drying up.

**May all waters be healed.**

In many parts of rural India women walk many miles in search of water because the rivers are dammed to irrigate commodity crops like sugarcane.

**May all waters be healed.**

Across the world, rains fail and drought prevails followed by rains that arrive in torrents and flood communities with disastrous consequences.

**May all waters be healed.**

May all waters be healed by the One who said, "The water I will give will become in them spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

**God our Creator, heal us that we may heal the waters of our world. Amen.**

In the name of the one who is the living water let us unite in prayer this day, Our Father...

**Offertory (UM Hymnal 95) Doxology**

**(Wykoff only)**

**Offertory Prayer**

*God, our provider, in Christ you give us a spring of pure water that overflows to eternal life. Your love and hope fill our hearts, so we want to worship you in Spirit and truth. Open our eyes to see the places in this neighborhood where our church's ministries could reach new people. Direct our gifts and offerings for your purposes, so that our community will become like a field ripe for harvest. We ask this through Christ, our risen Lord. Amen. (John 4:5-42)*

**Departing Hymn UMH #629 "You Satisfy the Hungry Heart" (verse 2)**

*Author: Omer Westendorf (1977)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Copyright: © 1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

*Composer: Robert E. Kreutz (1977)*

**Refrain:**

**You satisfy the hungry heart  
With gift of finest wheat;  
Come give to us, O saving Lord,  
The bread of life to eat.**

**Verse 2 :**

**With joyful lips we sing to you  
Our praise and gratitude,  
That you should count us worthy, Lord,  
To share this heav'nly food.**

**Refrain:**

**Benediction**

As you leave today, may you be blessed with thirst that produces compassion, with living waters that restore your soul, and with a heart flowing with the healing waters that our parched world desperately needs. Amen.

**\*POSTLUDE**