



Sunday 21st March Water – Finding Refreshment



Welcome

Greeting

Leader We come from scattered lives to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us.

Silence is kept.

As God's people we have gathered:

All let us worship him together.

Hymn O for a thousand tongues to sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of His grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
new life the dead receive,
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ:
ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, ye lame, for joy.

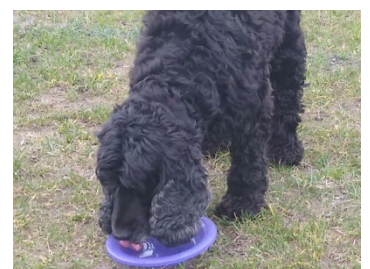
My gracious Master, and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad,
the honours of Thy name.

*Words by Charles Wesley
Music by Thomas Jarman*

Opening activity Refreshing water videos

Confession

Leader We are often slow to follow
the example of Christ.



Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader We often fail to be known as Christ's disciples.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader We often fail to walk the way of the cross.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution (*we are reminded that God forgives all who repent*)

Leader May the God of love bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins, and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Collect (*Prayer for the day*)

Leader Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Everyday Faith *Allen Taylor, St Peter's*

Song **Every move I make**

Na-- na-- na na na na (x4)

Every move I make, I make in You

You make me move, Jesus

Every breath I take,

I breathe in You

Every step I take, I take in You

You are my way, Jesus

Every breath I take,

I breathe in You

Na-- na-- na na na na (x4)

Waves of mercy, waves of grace

Everywhere I look I see Your face

Your love has captured me

Oh my God, this love how can it be

Bible readings

Isaiah 44:1-5 – Caroline Harvey, St Peter's

"But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I
have chosen.



²This is what the Lord says- he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. ³For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. ⁵One will say, 'I belong to the Lord'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and will take the name Israel.

John 4:5-18,28-30 – Video

⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus 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."

¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied. ¹⁸Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Sermon – Rachel Johnson – Living Water

Have you ever been on a long, hot journey and run out of water? Can you remember what it felt like? Our anonymous Samaritan woman knows the feeling. Trudging along on sweaty, sticky, swollen feet, her tongue sticking to the roof of her mouth, throat so dry she can't even remember the taste of cool water, the feel of it on her face, the pleasure of washing off the dust clinging to her skin – the dust of five - what? Five husbands who died, five periods of mourning? Or five husbands who divorced her when her charms wore off? The dust of the whispers: "What did she do to them?" "No smoke without fire." "Wouldn't trust her around *my* husband." The dust of her fear and exhaustion and desperation, weighing her down, drying up what little hope remained. So she seeks refreshment in a stagnant

puddle, in the protection of another man. Until the heat of the sun becomes more bearable than the heat of the gossip, and so she heads out at midday to fetch water to quench the thirst that never quite leaves her.

The well should be free of people now but there's a man sitting on it, a Jewish man. Here in Samaria. Why would he have chosen to travel this way, into a nation of unclean half-breeds? No matter, she carries on walking to the well, knowing that he'll move away – a man doesn't talk to a woman in public, a Jew doesn't talk to a Samaritan, he'll move away. Except he doesn't move away. And he doesn't stay silent. "Give me a drink," he says. "Give me a drink?" How can **he** ask **her** for a drink from her unclean bucket? Perhaps it's a clue that this man who upends social conventions is going to turn her life upside down. Perhaps this is the first step to restoring her self-worth – asking her to meet his need for refreshment. But he has something she needs too.

"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."

Living water – just the sound of the words is refreshing. A God-given spring, bubbling and gushing and overflowing, the way it is before it's boxed in by man-made wells, light playing on the surface of the water, children laughing and splashing, dangling their feet in its coolness. A stream rippling over stones, bringing life to the poplar trees on its banks, inviting you to stop and rest in its tranquillity, to take a break from the toil of the day, to stoop down and quench your thirst.

"Sir, how can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well?"

"If you drink the water I give you you'll never be thirsty again, in fact I will make in you a spring of water, bringing you eternal life."

Never thirsty again. Wouldn't that be incredible? To be spared this daily trudge to collect water, to be spared having to measure every drop. Water, water, everywhere and plenty for her to drink. What a precious gift – offered to *her*. He, Jesus, knows who she is, he knows what she's done and yet he thinks she's worthy of such a gift.

"Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

A miraculous supply of water – it's not unheard of. She might think back to Moses, who led God's grumbling people through the desert and struck the rock at Horeb to get water for them to drink. She might remember Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from the temple and bringing new life to the dead sea. Or she might recall Isaiah prophesying, *"I will pour water on the thirsty land...I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants."* And now Jesus *is* pouring out the living water of the Holy Spirit, inviting her to step out of her daily toil and sit for a time and be refreshed.

As they talk together, his words are like a fresh shower of rain, the kind of rain that smells of fresh grass and fertile soil, the kind of rain that makes you lift your face and catch the drops on your tongue, the kind of rain you want to dance in, the kind of rain that revives your body and soul just as it revives the dry ground. Why drink from the stagnant ponds of wealth or achievement or unhealthy relationships when you can drink the living water of

divine love, divine hope, divine strength and purpose. Living water that satisfies your soul and allows you to flourish even to eternal life.

Living water bubbles and overflows, it can't be contained or restrained or dammed, and so it bubbles and overflows from the woman as she rushes back to share it with her neighbours, inviting them to join her good news. *"Come and see, could this be the Messiah?"*

I wonder what's next for those neighbours? Which of them will come to say, *'I belong to the Lord'*? I wonder what's next for the woman as Jesus continues with his journey? What will she do with this gift of living water? What will *you* do with the gift of living water Jesus offers to you?

Well, first of all, if you haven't asked for it then do! Why wouldn't you want something that refreshes and revives you? And once you've asked for it then enjoy it! Just as Jacob built a well to access the spring more easily, you can build wells to access the living water within you. You 'well' might be reading a psalm or singing a song of praise. It might be enjoying a beautiful sunrise. It might be meditating on a single Bible verse. It might be giving yourself ten minutes respite from the toil of the day, ten minutes to rest in God's presence and refresh your soul just as the Samaritan woman was refreshed by that encounter at Jacob's Well.

Whatever kind of well you build, build lightly so the well doesn't become more important than the water. And visit often, to drink the only thing that can truly satisfy your thirst and bring life to your soul. Living water, bubbling and gushing and overflowing in you and through you, the gift of God for all who ask.

Hymn **As the deer pants for the water**

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after You.

You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
to You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship You.*

You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.

You alone are . . .

You're my friend and You're my brother,
even though You are a king.

I love You more than any other,
so much more than anything.

You alone are . . .

Words and music by Martin Nystrom
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I want You more than gold or silver,
only You can satisfy.

Affirmation of faith *(We stand to declare our faith)*

Leader We say together in faith

All **Holy, holy, holy**
is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.

Leader We believe in God the Father,
who created all things:

All **for by his will they were created**
and have their being.

Leader We believe in God the Son,
who was slain:

All **for with his blood,**
he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.

Leader We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

All **the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'**
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.

Prayers ~ Steve Green, *Placement student*

Let us pray. The response to
Living Water is ***Refresh us again.***



Loving God we give you thanks for all the times that you refreshed our lives by your compassion, mercy and grace - often when we are least deserving. As we have received abundantly from you, help us to drink freely from your kindness and be channels of your love to others we meet this week, so that your love may flow freely out through us by our words and our actions.

Living Water ***Refresh us again.***

We pray for all those who thirst for justice: the wrongly accused and imprisoned, the victims of circumstance, prejudice and discrimination, the victims of poverty and oppression. Lord help us to work to create structures and systems in our society that are fair and compassionate. Lord grant justice and enable us to stand up for all in their time of need.

Living Water ***Refresh us again.***

As we look ahead to Tuesday and the national day of reflection, we stand alongside all the many millions across the world who have lost loved ones in the last year from Covid and Covid related illness. We continue to strive for a just and equal sharing of the vaccine to all peoples in all countries on all continents. Show us how to reach out to other people

in all places with tenderness and care so that a river of hope flow out into every heart and home and community.

Living Water Refresh us again

We pray for those who thirst for peace in the world. We pray for peace in Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and in all other areas of armed conflict. We pray for those living in refugee camps and all those who are displaced because of conflict, disease and poverty. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world who are abused and marginalized particularly in this time of scarcity. We pray that they would be showered with your blessings and drenched in your love. We pray for the Christian community in all the countries where there is intense persecution. May we be faithful in prayer, action and giving.

Living Water Refresh us again.

We pray for our own nation and our national and local leaders that they may have wisdom and govern and lead in accordance with your will. We pray for our government, politicians, councillors and all others in authority over us. We pray that they would act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before you. We pray for our own church and all its leaders at diocesan, deanery and parish level. We pray that we may be soaked in your love and drink freely from your ocean of grace.

Living Water Refresh us again.

We pray for all we know who need your love and refreshment at this time, remembering especially Eileen & Peter Bliss, Patrick Chapman, Enid Hardman, Martin Maguire, John Hunter, Lynda Kirk, Trevor Lloyd, Catherine Mc Cormack, Olive Park, Joy Storkey and our mission partner Malcolm Pritchard. And in a moment's silence we bring others to you that are especially on our heart... Bring healing and peace to them in body, mind and spirit that they may be refreshed in the sure knowledge of your salvation.

Living Water Refresh us again

We conclude our prayers by saying together the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's prayer

Leader As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

**All 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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Notices – see N&N

Hymn **I heard the voice of Jesus say**

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto Me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon My breast':

I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink, and live':

I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright':

I looked to Jesus and I found
in Him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

Words by Horatius Bonar

Closing Prayer

Leader Jesus, Lord of time,
All hold us in your eternity.

Leader Jesus, image of God,
All travel with us the life of faith.

Leader Jesus, friend of sinners,
All heal the brokenness of our world.

Leader Jesus, Lord of tomorrow,
All draw us into your future. Amen.

Blessing

Leader May the Father keep you in all your days.
 May Christ shield you in all your ways.
 May the Spirit bring you healing and peace.
 May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from you
 and pour upon you blessing and light.

All Amen.

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

