

# THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*of Wausau, Wisconsin*

Third Sunday in Lent

March 8, 2026

## GATHERING

Text in **bold type** is to be spoken or sung in unison

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### PRELUDE

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

arr. David Cherwien

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, all who thirst—come to the water!

You who long for the water of life—come and drink!

**We will dip our souls in the river of God's goodness;  
we will quench our thirst at God's well of grace.**

God is here among us,  
offering living water to all who would drink!

**We gather with praise and gratitude to God  
who meets us here and invites us to drink our fill.**

### OPENING PRAYER

Fount of Every Blessing, we come to you this morning opening our parched places to receive the springs of living water you offer to us. Meet us in this stillness, O God, so we might listen to you speaking to us, that we might be aware of how well you know us and understand us, how clearly you see us, and how deeply you love us. Hear our gratitude as we sing and praise and pray.

**Amen!**

### OPENING HYMN

*Come, Worship God*

# 386

1 Come, worship God, who is worthy of honor;  
enter God's presence with thanks and a song!  
You are the rock of your people's salvation,  
to whom our jubilant praises belong.

2 Ruled by your might are the heights of the mountains;  
held in your hands are the depths of the earth.  
Yours is the sea, yours the land, for you made them,  
God above all gods, who gave us our birth.

3 We are your people, the sheep of your pasture;  
you are our Maker, and to you we pray.  
Gladly we kneel in obedience before you;  
great is the one whom we worship this day!

4 Now let us listen, for you speak among us;  
open our hearts to receive what you say.  
Peace be to all who remember your goodness,  
trust in your word, and rejoice in your way!

## CALL TO CONFESSION

God meets us where we are and knows us better than we know ourselves. With an outpouring of love and grace, God is ready to hear us and work in us. Let us open our hearts and acknowledge our struggle and sin to God.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Lord, you know who we are. You know our struggle and our need. We thirst for things that will never satisfy us. We commit ourselves to things that do not last. We worship things that will not bring true joy or wholeness. Still, you stand ready to offer us the gifts of unlimited grace, of lasting peace, of eternal hope, of abundant life. Forgive us, O Lord, for looking everywhere but to you to quench our deepest thirst, and fill us to overflowing that we might also bring your life and love to our world. Amen.**

*Please continue in silent reflection and your personal prayer of confession.*

## SUNG RESPONSE

*O Save Me, God, and Hear My Cry*

# 812, v. 1

**O save me, God, and hear my cry; my prayer to you ascends.  
And vindicate me by your might; on you my hope depends.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND THE PEACE OF CHRIST

God does not disappoint us. In Jesus Christ, God's living water gushes through the roof of our hearts in such abundance that we don't have enough buckets to hold it all. Our sins are forgiven; our lives are filling up; and we are sent forth to share.

**Thanks be to God.**

May the peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

## SUNG RESPONSE

*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*

# 618, v. 5

**All glory to our Lord and God, for love so deep, so high, so broad:  
The Trinity whom we adore forever and forever more.**

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

By your Spirit, bless the reading of the scriptures to our hearing, O God, that we may find our place in the story of your people, and our purpose in living your ways of love and grace. **Amen.**

### FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

Exodus 17:1-7, OT p. 64

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. <sup>2</sup>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?" <sup>3</sup>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?"

<sup>4</sup>So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup> He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

ANTHEM

*Great is Thy Faithfulness*

arr. Lloyd Larson

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 4:5-30, 39-42 NT p. 94

<sup>5</sup> So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> 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.) <sup>10</sup> 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.” <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> 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.” <sup>15</sup> 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.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup> 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.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

<sup>27</sup> 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?” <sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” <sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him. . .

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

MESSAGE

*The Woman Who Left Her Jar*

## RESPONSE TO THE WORD

HYMN

*Ho, All Who Thirst*

# 479

Refrain: Ho, all who thirst, come now to the water,  
and all whose souls are parched and weary, come and drink!  
Ho, all who thirst, come now to the water,  
and from your heart will flow a never-failing spring!

1 Why forsake the Lord, the fount of living water,  
choosing broken cups that cannot be filled? (Refrain)

2 For the Lamb will be our shepherd and will guide us  
to the well-springs of the water of life. (Refrain)

3 All who come may take this gift of living water.  
They will thirst no more, for they shall be filled. (Refrain)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

From the Iona Community

**We believe in God whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives, whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth, whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all and whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of freedom.**

**We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire, life-giving breath of the church, spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of all resurrection and of eternal life.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

On this Third Sunday in Lent, we trust the God who meets us in the wilderness with living water. Grateful for grace freely given, let us offer our gifts now, so God's renewing love may flow through us into a thirsty world.

OFFERTORY

*You are invited to use the time of offering to reflect on how you show your gratitude to God, whether through acts of service or through sharing of resources.*

*You may donate in person, through the mail, or give online at [www.firstpreswausau.org](http://www.firstpreswausau.org) or through your Realm login.*

SUNG RESPONSE

*Doxology*

# 606

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Giver of Life, we offer these gifts to you in trust and gratitude. As you refreshed your people in the wilderness, refresh the world through what we give today. Bless these offerings, and bless our lives, that through us you may bring hope, peace, and new life to all we can reach. **Amen.**

## SENDING OUT

HYMN

*O God, Who Gives Us Life*

# 53

1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,  
who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:  
deliver us from fears that kill the life we have from you.  
Help us to know your Spirit still is making all things new.

2 O God, who calls your people out to venture and to dare,  
to plumb the bleak abyss of doubt and find you even there:  
when we despair in wandering through wastes of empty lies,  
refresh us with the living spring of hope that never dies.

3 O God of covenant and law, revealed in cloud and flame,  
your mighty deeds evoke our awe; we dare not speak your name.  
Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your people prove,  
as on our hearts you write anew the covenant of love.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Drawn to the Cross*

Benjamin M. Culli

***Thank you to those who helped us with worship today:***

Rev. Joy Nelson-Jeffers, pastoral associate

Katherine Wright, liturgist

Irene Beethe, guest organist/pianist

Chancel Choir, anthem

Rick Builer, sound and video

Metz Team, hospitality

Pete Hessert, doorkeeper

Mary Anderson, bulletin assembly