

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
of Stillwater, Minnesota  
March 8, 2026  
Third Sunday in Lent

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Your presence at worship is important to God and to us! Whether you are a first-time visitor, frequent participant, neighbor, member, or friend, please take a moment as you prepare for worship to share some information on the "Welcome to Worship" card included with your bulletin. Place it in the offering plate at the time the offering is received.

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.

Many of our worship materials are taken from the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Page numbers are located in the front half of the book, and hymn numbers are located in the back half of the book.

The assembly **speaks** or **sings** the bold responses.

### **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*



Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

Gathering Song

*"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.



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

Merciful God, the fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**



### **WORD**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 64

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.*

*At the conclusion:*

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 121 (paraphrase)

***Come, Let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker.***

***Come, Let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker.***

***For He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,  
And the sheep of His hand, just the sheep of His hand,  
to come and rescue me.***

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.*

*At the conclusion:*

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje

Gospel Acclamation

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,  
 slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Pages 94-95

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 is introduced:*

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the conclusion:*

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**



Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

"Before the Waters Nourished Earth"

1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -  
 2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of  
 3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows  
 4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness

ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the  
 E - den's glo - ry and, griev - ing, holds in  
 par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's  
 still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -

u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.  
 mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.  
 faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.  
 gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.



*After each prayer:  
Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*At the conclusion:*

*Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.*

**Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*All are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.*

**MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

Offering                    "Cares Chorus" (1 Peter 5:7)

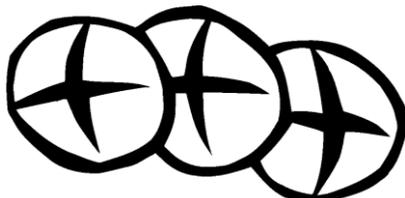
*Our offering is a collection of money for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. Your offering and "Welcome to Worship" card may be placed in the offering plate. The QR code on the right may be used if you wish to give electronically.*



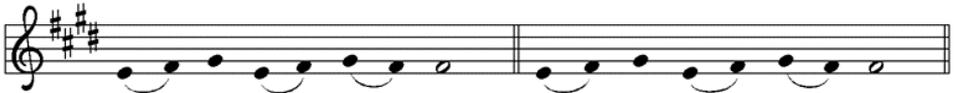
Offering Prayer

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



# Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 . . .

. . . 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.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe . . .

Praise to you . . .

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .

With this bread and cup  
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life . . .

. . . Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread . . .

. . . Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places . . .

. . . blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus  
taught us.

**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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
 us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
 sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

### Communion

*We celebrate at an open communion table. All who hear our Lord's invitation are welcome to participate. Receive the bread first with an open hand and eat immediately, followed by the juice (white) or wine (red). Gluten-free bread is available at the front end of the center aisle. Please indicate to an usher if you need to receive communion from your pew. Children who have received age-appropriate instruction are welcome to commune. If you prefer instead to receive a blessing, please indicate by crossing your arms over your shoulders.*

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:*

*The body of Christ, given for you.*

*The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

*and each person may respond:*

**Amen.**



## Communion Song

*“As the Deer”*

**As the deer panteth for the water  
So my soul longeth after Thee  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee**

*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 Thee*

**You're my friend and You are my brother  
Even though You are a King  
I love You more than any other  
So much more than anything R**

**I want You more than gold or silver  
Only You can satisfy  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
And the apple of my eye R**

## Prayer After Communion

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## Announcements

## Charge and Blessing

Go out into the world in peace;  
have courage;  
hold on to what is good;  
return no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak, and help the suffering;  
honor all people;  
love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

**Amen.**

Sending Song

ELW hymn 337

*“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”*

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **DAILY PRAYER**

### **Peace Among the Nations**



Gracious God, grant peace among nations. Cleanse from our own hearts the seeds of strife: greed and envy, harsh misunderstandings and ill will, fear and desire for revenge. Make us quick to welcome ventures in cooperation among the peoples of the world, so that there may be woven the fabric of a common good too strong to be torn by the evil hands of war. In the time of opportunity, make us be diligent; and in the time of peril, let not our courage fail; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY**

#### **Prayer of the Day**



The prayer of the day is a shortened version of one attributed to the seventh-century Irish monk and missionary Columbanus. Calling God our fountain of living water, it uses language from John 4 to pray for “the beauty of your truth” coming to us through Christ. Columbanus was proud of his Irish identity, and was a strong defender of Irish traditions (just as the Samaritan woman in today's gospel is proud of her Samaritan heritage).

He is also the first Irish person to leave behind a body of literary works.

## LIFE ON EARTH

### Water is Life



Although many in developed countries tend to take clean water for granted, we are told that many local, tribal, and even international conflicts in the future will be over water rights: Who gets to use the available water? We are also told that global warming will melt glaciers and thus raise sea levels, and that in consequence, countless villages and cities situated on the coast lines of the earth will be flooded out. Life on the earth is always about water—too little, too much, too dirty, too expensive—for humans cannot live without water. Every Sunday, the second petition of the intercessions addresses the well-being of the earth which includes its waters, seas, lakes, rivers, streams and wells.

## UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

### March 10

#### **Harriet Tubman, died 1913; Sojourner Truth, died 1883; renewers of society**

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland and remained enslaved until about age thirty when, fearing she would be sold and moved farther south, she escaped with the help of the Underground Railroad. After that, she helped about three hundred others to escape until slavery was abolished. After the Civil War, her home in Auburn, New York, became a center for women's rights and served the aged and poor.

Sojourner Truth, too, was born into slavery, in New York state. Her birth name was Isabella. After slavery was abolished in New York in 1827, she was freed and, while working as a housekeeper, became deeply involved in Christianity. A number of years later, she discerned a call to become a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving. In later life, she also became a popular speaker against slavery and for women's rights.

### March 12

#### **Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, died 604**

Gregory was born into a politically influential family. At one time he held political office and at another time he lived as a monk, all before he was elected to the papacy. Gregory's work was extensive. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. He established a school to train church musicians. Gregorian chant is named in his honor. He wrote a treatise underscoring what is required of a pastor serving a congregation. He sent missionaries to preach to the Anglo-Saxons who had invaded England. And at one time he organized distribution of grain during a shortage of food in Rome.

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

### **One in a Thousand**

Gathering water from the well is something the Samaritan woman did regularly, habitually even, drawing water up in a bucket hundreds, maybe thousands of times over the course of her life. But this time, this one in a thousand times, is different. While she is busy doing the mundane work of life, she is suddenly confronted by the Messiah—there in the flesh, asking her for a drink of water!

These forty days of Lent interrupt our regular routine and our habits, confronting us with the presence of God in Christ on his journey to the cross and, ultimately, the resurrection. This interruption of our own daily work calls us to see this Jesus who reaches out to us, promising “a spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (John 4:14). Through fasting, almsgiving, and prayer, we embrace interruptions in the regular patterns of our lives, sparking curiosity about where and how God is at work in our world, and where we are being called.

This text also shows us that Jesus may be present in unexpected ways in the faces of unexpected people. We may expect to hear the gospel from our pastor, synod bishop, or other church members. But do we have ears to hear the gospel proclaimed in the voice and experience of our neighbors—especially among neighbors too often pushed to the margins of our communities? Are we ready to encounter the signs of the gospel bubbling up outside the walls of our churches?

And like the Samaritan woman, are we ready for that one in a thousand times when the gospel feels so near and so powerful that all we can do is go out and tell everyone we know about this living water? May this Lent interrupt our habits, draw our attention to the unexpected, and send us out to proclaim the love of God to all our neighbors!