

**Epiphany Lutheran Church - Interim Pastor Peter Lisinski (647-395-7649)**

**3<sup>RD</sup> Sunday in Lent**

**ELW Service of the Word**

**Sunday, March 8, 2026**

**Introduction to the day**

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.

**THE FIRST WORD – John 15:16**

Jesus said to his disciples, "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,"

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Wednesday, March 11:** World Day of Prayer Service 7p.m. at St. Joseph's Parish, 200 Morish Road

**Thursday, March 12:** Council Meeting via zoom 7 p.m.

**Sunday, March 15:** Service of the Word 12:00 noon

**GATHERING**

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

**GATHERING SONG *Word of God, Come Down on Earth (ELW 510)***

1 Word of God, come down on earth,  
living rain from heav'n descending;  
touch our hearts and bring to birth  
faith and hope and love unending.  
Word almighty, we revere you;  
Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

2 Word eternal, throned on high,  
Word that brought to life creation,  
Word that came from heav'n to die,  
crucified for our salvation,  
saving Word, the world restoring,  
speak to us, your love outpouring.

3 Word that speaks God's tender love,  
one with God beyond all telling,  
Word that sends us from above

God the Spirit, with us dwelling,  
Word of truth, to all truth lead us;  
Word of life, with one bread feed us.

### **AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Amen**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, whenever we worship – in the public assembly of the church, or in the prayerful solitude of private devotion – we are one communion of saints, united by the sacrament of baptism, which incorporates us into the risen life of God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our crucified Saviour and Lord.

**By water and God's word we are reborn children of God, heirs of God's salvation, now and forever.**

Let us affirm the apostolic faith, once delivered to the saints in times past, now entrusted to future saints by the church's ministry of worship and mission proclaiming the good news of God's salvation. Sisters and brothers in Christ:

Do you renounce the cosmic forces of sin and evil that oppose God?

**We renounce them.**

Do you renounce their temptations of fear, hatred and hostility which distort God's word, divide the world, despoil creation, and disfigure the divine image within all people?

**We renounce them.**

Do you renounce self-centred pursuit of power, privilege and pleasure that lead us astray from the promises of God's providence?

**We renounce them.**

Baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we are marked by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, grafted into the true life-giving vine of God's covenant love, and made inheritors of God's salvation together with all God's saints.

**God has named us; Christ has redeemed us; God's Holy Spirit dwells within us, today and always.**

### **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**

Let us pray.

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: **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.*

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?”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: **Psalm 95**

Come, let us sing to the Lord;

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

<sup>2</sup>**Let us come before God’s presence with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to the Lord with psalms.**

<sup>3</sup>For you, Lord, are a great God,  
and a great ruler above all gods.

<sup>4</sup>**In your hand are the caverns of the earth;  
the heights of the hills are also yours.**

<sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, for you made it,  
and your hands have molded the dry land.

<sup>6</sup>**Come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord our maker.**

<sup>7</sup>For 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!

<sup>8</sup>**“Harden not your hearts,  
as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert.**

<sup>9</sup>There your ancestors tested me,  
they put me to the test, though they had seen my works.

<sup>10</sup>**Forty years I loathed that generation, saying,  
‘The heart of this people goes astray; they do not know my ways.’**

<sup>11</sup>Indeed I swore in my anger,  
‘They shall never come to my rest.’”

SECOND READING: **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.*

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

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

**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW page 205)



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

**DRAMATIC GOSPEL READING – JOHN 4:5-32**

*The whole congregation reads C*

*Paulette Correia reads L*

*Men read M*

The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the fourth chapter.

**C:**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar. Jacob's well was there and, tired out by the journey, Jesus sat down by the well. It was about noon. His disciples had gone into town to buy food. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said to him,

**L: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"**

"If you knew the gift of God and who it is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

**L: "Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep. Where do you get the living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well?"**

"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water I give will never be thirsty. The water I give will become in them a fountain of living water, springing up to eternal life."

**L: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never again thirst, or have to come here to draw water."**

"Go, call your husband, and come back."

**L: "I have no husband."**

"You are right in saying you have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

**L: "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."**

"Believe me, the hour is coming when people will worship neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth, for God seeks such worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth."

**L: "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."**

"I am he, the one who is speaking with you."

Just then the disciples returned. They were astonished that Jesus was speaking with a woman. Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

**L: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?"**

They left the city and were on their way to meet Jesus. Meanwhile, the disciples had been urging him,

**M: "Rabbi, eat something."**

"I have food that you do not know about."

**M: "Surely no else has brought him something to eat."**

"My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to complete God's work."

Many Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, so that when they arrived at Jacob's well, they asked Jesus to stay with them; and he stayed with them two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman,

**C: "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this truly is the Saviour of the world."**

The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** *Known By Our Fruits*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *As the Deer Runs to the River (ELW 331)*

## As the Deer Runs to the River



- 1 As the deer runs to the riv - er, parched and wea - ry from the chase,
- 2 When your Is - rael crossed the des - ert where no stream or spring was seen,
- 3 "Come and drink," I - sa - iah sum-moned, "all who for God's mer - cy plead!
- 4 Christ, we come from des - ert plac - es, deep - est thirst un - sat - is - fied.



we have come from hurt and hur - ry, thirst - ing for your heal - ing grace.  
Mo - ses struck the rock, and wa - ter flowed for them, re - fresh - ing, clean.  
God's for - give - ness, like a foun-tain, flows to sat - is - fy your need."  
Lead us to the wa - ters flow - ing from the cross on which you died.



Je - sus, source of liv - ing wa - ter, may we drink of you and live!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923

Music: JULION, David Hurd, b. 1950

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### APOSTLE'S 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**

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

O God, preserve your church. Give all who serve your gospel mission the endurance that produces character and the hope that does not disappoint. Refresh our hearts in worship. Bless our Ministers of Music that we may rejoice in your presence and sing your praises in spirit and in truth. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Renew your creation. When life-giving water is scarce, send replenishing rain. When flood waters overwhelm, send comfort and strength. Renew all your children in our vocation of stewardship, for the benefit of future generations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

When fear and hatred give rise to violence and vengeance, speak your word of repentance and forgiveness. Overcome the hostility between nations and peoples, that all divisions of culture, creed or colour, social class or moral conviction may be reconciled in your love and peace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Grant us grace to welcome all who are oppressed or outcast. Inspire our compassion for all who are hungry or homeless; show your mercy to those who are ill or injured, fearful or grieving, and give faith and courage to those near death.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We remember with thanks all who have lived among us and have entered into eternal rest. Keep us in companionship with them until we join them in sharing your glory. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**Amen.**

**PEACE** (ELW p. 218)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

(Let us share a sign of God's peace)

### **THANKSGIVING**

**OFFERING – *Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult (ELW 696)***

1 Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult  
of our life's wild, restless sea,  
day by day his clear voice sounding,

saying, "Christian, follow me":

2 As of old Saint Andrew heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred,  
leaving all for Jesus' sake.

3 Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us,  
saying, "Christian, love me more."

4 In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
"Christian, love me more than these."

5 Jesus calls us! By your mercy,  
Savior, may we hear your call,  
give our hearts to your obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

#### **OFFERING PRAYER**

God of compassion, by the cross of you Son, you make peace with the world and reconcile all people to yourself. Following his example of prayer and fasting, may take up the cross you call us to bear and serve you, one another, and the world with willing hearts and holy love, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **PENITENTIAL RITE OF CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

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.**

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you take delight.

Thanks be to God, the fountain of living water:

**God's love fills all creation.**

Through the waters of the flood you saved Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. In the Jordan River, Jesus of Nazareth, your chosen

Messiah, was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

Thanks be to God, the fountain of living water:

**God's love fills all creation.**

We praise you for the gift of new life given us in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Renew us in your Holy Spirit, that we may receive your forgiveness and reflect your love in our lives. To you, gracious Father, we give glory and honour, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, yesterday, today and forever.

Thanks be to God, the fountain of living water:

**God's love fills all creation.**

Almighty and everlasting God, you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new hearts, that we, may truly lament our bondage to sin and worthily receive your forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another:

Holy and merciful God,

**We confess to you, to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned of our own will, in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have failed to do. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.**

We confess that we have been blind to human suffering and deaf to your call to serve others as Jesus Christ has served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved God's Holy Spirit. Forgive us, O God: **Your mercy is everlasting.**

We confess our pride and prejudice, hypocrisy and envy, anger and greed, fear and guilt. Forgive us, O God: **Your mercy is everlasting.**

We confess our indifference to injustice, our capacity for violence, our contribution to conflict and complicity in wars declared in our name. Forgive us, O God: **Your mercy is everlasting.**

We confess humanity's failure to be faithful stewards of your good creation, our exploitation of its natural resources, and the suffering inflicted by our neglect and ingratitude. Forgive us, O God: **Your mercy is everlasting.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER** (ELW p. 221)

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.  
Lead us not into temptation;  
save us from the time of trial,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### SENDING

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

### BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever. **Amen.**

### SENDING SONG: *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (ELW 335)*

1 Jesus, keep me near the cross,  
there's a precious fountain;  
free to all, a healing stream  
flows from Calv'ry's mountain.

#### Refrain

**In the cross, in the cross  
be my glory ever;  
till my ransomed soul shall find  
rest beyond the river.**

2 Near the cross, a trembling soul,  
love and mercy found me;  
there the bright and morning star  
sheds its beams around me. **Refrain**

3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God,  
bring its scenes before me;  
help me walk from day to day  
with its shadow o'er me. **Refrain**

4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait,  
hoping, trusting ever,  
till I reach the golden strand  
just beyond the river. **Refrain**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Take up the cross.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **As the Deer Runs to the River**

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