



Worship Sheet 8th March 2026

Call to worship

God of the Spring Season,
we are at the third Sunday of Lent.

Today, we remember the woman at the well,
who drank deep of the Living Waters;
no longer thirsting, but made right with God.

We seek that same Living Water,
which we find in Jesus Christ
and he draws us ever closer.

Hymn – 371 Come down O love divine

1. Come down, O Love divine,
Seek Thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
and kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

2. O let it freely burn
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming:
And let Thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path
illuming.

3. Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become my inner clothing,
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with
loathing.

4. And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

Bianco da Siena; Translator: Richard Frederick Littledale (1867)

Prayers of Praise and Confession

Praise

*From Psalm 95:1-7 (NIV). This can be prayed with another, following the bits in light and **bold** type.*

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our
salvation.

**Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.**

For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth,

and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
for he is our God**

and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care. **Amen**

Confession

Living God,

we acknowledge the times in our lives when we have not been attentive to your will;
when we have not lived up to your loving ways;
when we have failed to act with compassion.

Help us to know better how you wish for our lives to be led;
help us to know better what it is to be a faithful follower of Christ;
help us to know that when we acknowledge our wrongs, we are truly forgiven.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. Amen.

Readings

Romans 5:1-11 (NIV)

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

John 4:5-42 (NIV)

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 noon.

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 livestock?"

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

¹⁵ The 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.”

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

¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ 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.”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, 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 Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.”

Reflection

In the Orthodox Church, they have a tradition of naming the woman at the well Photini, meaning 'enlightened one' or 'luminous one'. She is one of the few characters in John's gospel who truly gets who Jesus is. Many of the named characters don't understand who Jesus is, like Peter, Nicodemus, or Thomas. Even Mary doesn't fully get who he is, as she is told that she must not cling onto him at his resurrection. But the woman at the well, the enlightened one, does get him. What do we gain from this story and what we can learn from it, especially with it being paired with Paul's letter to the Romans talking about "justification"? Let's start with Paul's somewhat complicated argument.

Paul talks about being justified through Jesus Christ, but what does this mean? Paul is saying that, in this, we are made right with God through Jesus Christ. That is, what Jesus Christ did in his life, death and resurrection is set us right with God, that we are forgiven through him. Paul writes to both Jewish and Gentile believers, which is why he uses Adam in his reasoning as well as phrases like, "...Christ died for the ungodly." He also asserts that all were sinners – both Jewish and Gentile. That our sinfulness equalises us, in many ways, because the solution for everyone was in Jesus Christ; we are reconciled (that is, reunited) with God through Jesus Christ. That "...God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit..." So, we have been reunited with God through Jesus Christ, but what has this got to do with Photini, the woman at the well? Is it to do with receiving 'Living Water'?

Jesus Christ is the 'Living Water' that is offered to Photini, which is the "spring of water welling up to eternal life". She understands something of what Paul is on about, perhaps not in the same terms, but she gets it, she knows in herself what Jesus is on about and what is offered to her. She sees that he is the Messiah, the Christ. Therefore, she is enlightened, illuminated by this fact. Jesus Christ offers her 'Living Water', which is the potential to receive eternal life through him. Her soul is satisfied, quenched by the water that is offered. She thirsts no longer, her being longs no more, for she finds that rest, that contentment in Jesus Christ. How are we to respond?

We are to respond like Photini, saying, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." We are to accept the Living Water, to be made right and reunited with God. To draw on the Water that is offered, much like we do at baptism. To be renewed, reborn, restored.

I have written a poem called *Baptismal Waters*, which I invite you to read and think about God as Living Water, offering transformation and renewal. I imagined a stream of water on a hot summer's day. Trees to one side, a field on the other. The grass is yellowing, getting ready to go to seed, and the leaves in the trees are turning that deep green colour. The way I often write poetry is unstructured, using words that feel right for that moment, much like water does as it flows. I hope it helps you meditate on the themes of justification, reconciliation, and the Living Water that the woman at the well drew upon.

Baptismal Waters

Watching that precious brook flow,
ere my eyes is the liquid below
that feeds, conserves and nourishes.
Salvation-melted,
as the saving sap floods the Tree.
Savouring this shore,

surging water passes;
reflecting perfectly,
lucent with light.
Shafts of gleaming pearls, glittering sapphires
puncture the scene.
Sharp bursts of this brilliant
light perforates my gaze:
the reflections of the blaze of day.
My skin becomes a surface for which the water paints its slivers of light –
like thick oils that glide and grace a canvas.

The vitrified surface urges and entices –
my feet quicken in provocation:
plunging into the brook.
The crisp water bites at
my body, as it is inundated by the river.
The cold refreshes me,
once bitter now shifted sweet;
the alluring promises of that
glass surface now satisfies.

Yet it goes beyond,
releasing, liberating, restoring.
The water feels as though it
rushes through my very being –
my frame filled,
brimming with that promised renewal.

I sense company;
one that knows me,
that sophic Being that laid
this river aeons before
and now envelopes me.
It is ahead, advancing on me,
it does not afar nor set me aback,
but beckons – beckons.
The sagacious Presence receives
in utter love;
the same love that illuminates the Living Water.
The same Person who surpasses all and saves all.
Now enrapt and embraced.
I know now what the water tempted me with,
that beauteous encircling that leads me on:
to abide in its promised
lustre, joy and exaltation:
perfect and absolute Being.

Hymn – 663 I the Lord of sea and sky

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will
save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them – whom shall I
send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me;
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne My people's pain.
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My Word to them – whom shall I
send?

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them; My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them – whom shall I
send?

Daniel Schutte. © OCP Publications.

Prayers of Intercession

Passionate and steadfast God,
we bring to you and to each other,
who have been, who are, and who will be,
the things that we have done that are
unloving.

The words we have spoken,
the acts we have taken,
the things we have not done.
We also bring the hurts
that have been placed upon and into us,
the wounds caused by others and by the
world.

We did not allow your goodness to rest
in our soul when we did these things.
We did not love ourselves as you love us.
We did not allow for you to abide in us and we
in you.
We have been harmed by life and others in it.

Our Saviour and our Advocate,
Remain steadfast in your love for us.

We bring to you our own and the world's
arrogance, disbelief, fear, shame;
the things that bring us to act not in love,
but out of despair and presumption.

Our Saviour and our Advocate,
Remain steadfast in your love for us.

We bring our own and the world's
greed, envy, malice and spite;
the things that bring us not to act in love,
but out of despair and presumption.

Our Saviour and our Advocate,
Remain steadfast in your love for us.

We bring our own and the world's
inaction, apathy, dispassion and corruption;
the things that bring us not to act in love,
but out of despair and presumption.

Our Saviour and our Advocate,
Remain steadfast in your love for us. Amen.

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 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn – 440 Amazing Grace

1 Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease:
I shall possess, within the veil,
a life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
the sun forbear to shine;
but God, who called me here below,
will be forever mine.

John Newton (1779)

Blessing

Holy God,
who offers us eternal life through Jesus Christ,
continue to bless us and be with us,
in every part of our lives,
moving with us and guiding every step.

We ask this in the name of
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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