

# St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Third Sunday in Lent + 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.*

## PRELUDE AND WELCOME

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,  
who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.  
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign,

and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,

and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing  
and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.

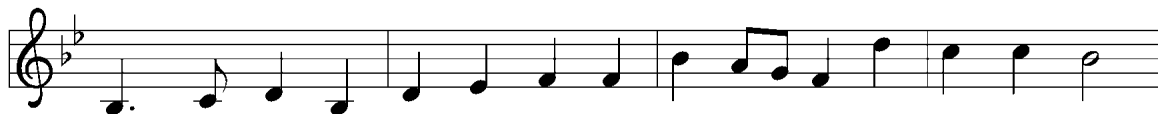
Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG** *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty* (ELW 533)



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,  
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;  
3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;  
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;  
5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.  
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.  
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,  
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine  
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



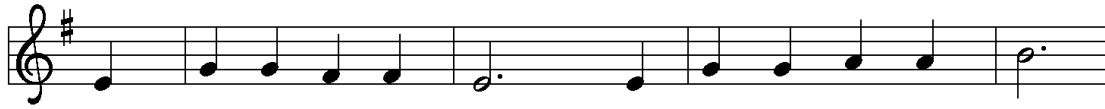
Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!  
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!  
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.  
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com-fort in all strife.  
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

**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.**

## KYRIE



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.  
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.  
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## 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.**

## 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.*

A reading from Exodus.

<sup>1</sup>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

- <sup>1</sup> 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 <sup>1</sup> of God's hand.  
Oh, that today you would <sup>1</sup> hear God's voice!
- <sup>8</sup> **"Harden <sup>1</sup> 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.' "

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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.

## **GOSPEL: John 4:5-42**

*Jesus defies convention to engage a Samaritan woman in conversation. Her testimony, in turn, leads many others to faith.*

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>5</sup> [Jesus] 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>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

<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."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON      *What Questions Do You Want to Ask Jesus? Why?*      Pastor Krombholz

**Your Questions**

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**Why Those Questions?**

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HYMN OF THE DAY *Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty* (ELW 777)



- 1 "Come to me, all pil-grims thirst - y; drink the wa - ter I will give.
- 2 "Come to me, all trav-ers wea - ry; come that I may give you rest.
- 3 "Come to me, be - liev - ers bur - dened; find re - fresh - ment in this place.
- 4 "Come to me, re - pen - tant sin - ners; leave be - hind your guilt and shame.



If you knew what gift I of - fer, you would come to me and live."  
Drink the cup of life I of - fer; at this ta - ble be my guest."  
Come, re - ceive the gift I of - fer, turn to me and seek my face."  
Come and know di - vine com - pas - sion, turn to me, I call your name."

*Refrain*



Je - sus, ev - er - flow - ing foun - tain, give us wa - ter from your well.



In the gra - cious gift you of - fer there is joy no tongue can tell.

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| 5 "Come to me, distressed and needy;<br>I would be your trusted friend.<br>Come and seek the gift I offer,<br>come, your open hands extend." <i>Refrain</i> | 6 "Come to me, abandoned, orphaned;<br>lonely ways no longer roam.<br>Come and take the gift I offer,<br>let me make in you my home." <i>Refrain</i> |
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**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.

O God, when suffering arises, preserve your church. Give to pastors, deacons, bishops, and all servants of your gospel the endurance that produces character and the hope that will never disappoint. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

When the waters run dry, sustain this earth. Send water to places languishing with drought, and bring relief to places damaged by floods. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

When quarrels ensue, soften our hearts. Quell hostilities between nations and peoples, and reconcile all humans across the lines of race, class, nationality, moral conviction, religion, and all else that divides or oppresses. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

When your people thirst, satisfy their needs. Send water and food to all who need nourishment. Grant welcome to all who are excluded. Show your mercy to any in need, especially those we remember now by speaking their names out loud, in our hearts or by listing them online ... Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

When we gather to worship, send us your Spirit. Renew our hearts through the joyful noise we make and bless the work of our church musicians and musical ensembles, especially Stefeny, Paul and Ginny; our choir and our Glory band. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

O God, when death draws near, we rejoice in the promise of life with you. We remember all who have entered eternal rest, and we pray that you bring us the hope of sharing in your glory. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.


**And also with you.**

## OFFERING

*We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this*

community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website [www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html](http://www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html). Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.

### OFFERING SONG *On My Heart Imprint Your Image* (ELW 811)



On my heart im - print your im - age, bless - ed Je - sus, king of grace,  
that life's trou - bles nor its plea - sures ev - er may your work e - raise.  
Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,  
is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, all my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

### OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

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.**

### THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**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.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONFIRMATION & ADULT CATECHISM CLASS After worship (11:15 a.m.)** Our study of the Small Catechism resumes with the Third Chief Part, The Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer of the Christian life and sums up the commandments and the creed in a prayer that is easy to remember. As part of our "Lord, Teach Us to Pray" series in Lent, we will learn how Jesus guides our prayer in faith and hope.

**CHURCH COUNCIL. Monday, March 9, at 7:00 p.m.** The first meeting of our new church council. This meeting is an organizational meeting to elect officers and set priorities for the coming year.

**WALKING AT MENLO MALL. Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the lower-level Nordstrom entrance to the mall. Enjoy fellowship, prayer and a walk around the mall.

**SENIOR LUNCH.** Tuesday, March 10, at 11:30 a.m. Bring your lunch and enjoy the fellowship of friends. This month's topic: 3 things that bring you joy.

**MIDWEEK SOUP, LEARNING AND WORSHIP.** Wednesdays through March 25, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Gather with us for fellowship over a simple soup supper, stay for a time of learning and conversation designed to "teach us to pray," and end the night with a service of Evening Prayer. We will be using the book *What if Jesus Was Serious About Prayer?* By Skye Jethani. To order a copy of the book, please sign up in the lounge.

**HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE.** April 2-April 5. Our journey through Lent takes us to the Great Three Days: a single liturgy over three nights.

Maundy Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m.,

Good Friday, April 3, at 7:00 p.m.

Easter Vigil, April 4, at 7:00 p.m.

**WOMEN'S DAY AWAY.** Saturday, April 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **CrossRoads Retreat Center.** A retreat for all the women of St. Paul's. We will car pool, enjoy a light breakfast and spend the day in a calm atmosphere. Cost is \$10 per person, made payable to St. Paul's. Sign up using the sign up sheet in the lounge.

**GRIEF GROUPS** In our grief we need a place where we can go to talk, cry and even laugh as we remember the loved ones we have lost and consider what it means for us to continue to live. Come and share your grief in fellowship with others on a journey through grief.

**GRIEF SHARE.** Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. **Community Presbyterian Church.** This grief support meets every Tuesday evening and offers an excellent 13-week curriculum designed to guide and support you. Large group, small group and video presentations give a mix of teaching, listening and compassion. Pastor Jim is the lead facilitator for this session.

**GRIEF ... WHAT NOW?** Thursday, March 5, at 7:00 p.m. This small group meets on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. and seeks to hold space for open discussion and group discovery on ways to rediscover who we are after loss.

### **START AND END YOUR DAY IN PRAYER**

**DAILY PRAYER.** Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

**Morning Prayer:** Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook.

**Night Prayer.** End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**Amen**

## SENDING SONG *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me* (ELW 623)



1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;  
2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill thy law's de - mands;  
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; sim - ply to thy cross I cling.  
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,



let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy riv - en side which flowed,  
could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,  
Na - ked, come to thee for dress; help - less, look to thee for grace;  
when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy judg - ment throne,



be of sin the dou - ble cure; cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.  
all for sin could not a - tone; thou must save, and thou a - lone.  
foul, I to the foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.  
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

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