

**An Order for Worship Online  
The Lord's Day, March 15, 2020  
Being the Third Sunday of Lent**

**Collect for Purity:**

Almighty God,  
unto whom all hearts are open all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hid,  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your Holy Name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**A Hymn of Faith:**

1 My faith looks up to thee,  
thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Savior divine:  
now hear me while I pray,  
take all my guilt away,  
O let me from this day  
be wholly thine.

2 May thy rich grace impart  
strength to my fainting heart,  
my zeal inspire;  
as thou hast died for me,  
O may my love to thee  
pure, warm, and changeless be,  
a living fire.

3 While life's dark maze I tread,  
and griefs around me spread,  
be thou my guide;  
bid darkness turn to day,  
wipe sorrow's tears away,  
nor let me ever stray  
from thee aside.

4 When ends life's transient dream,  
when death's cold, sullen stream  
shall o'er me roll,  
blest Savior, then, in love,  
fear and distrust remove;  
O bear me safe above,  
a ransomed soul.

the Rev. Ray Palmer (1808-1887)

## Searching the Scriptures:

### Exodus 17:1-7

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. 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?”

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?”

So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

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. 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. He called the place Massah<sup>a</sup> and Meribah<sup>b</sup>, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

[a] *Massah* – That is “Test”  
[b] *Meribah* – That is “Quarrel”

## Psalm 63:1-8

O God, you are my God, I seek you,  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I live;  
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.  
My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,[a]  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips  
when I think of you on my bed,  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;  
for you have been my help,  
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.  
My soul clings to you;  
your right hand upholds me.

## John 4:1-26

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” —although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 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.) 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."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 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."

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."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."

The woman answered him, "I have no husband."

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

The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father 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 the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."

Jesus said to her, "I am! The one who is speaking to you!"

*The Word of the Lord.*

*Thanks be to God.*

## Reflecting on the Scriptures:

### “The One Who Is Speaking”

1. Exodus: God sees what we cannot – water in the rock.
  - a. God was going to give the Israelites something to drink. But they couldn’t be patient long enough to find out how faithful God is.
  - b. We’re in a time of waiting... a dessert of sorts... will we wait patiently to see the faithfulness of God... will we remain steady in the peace of Christ, despite our discomfort and uncertainty?
  - c. Reaction versus Response
    - i. We’re experiencing anxiety and annoyance... how should we respond?
    - ii. Funny Facebook scene: the pipes played for the toilet paper....
    - iii. or prayer?
2. Psalm 63:3 “your steadfast love is better than life”
  - a. the knowledge that God exists and that we are loved unconditionally is the greatest treasure which can be discovered by any human being.
  - b. Do you possess this treasure? If you’re not sure let’s find out:
  - c. Quiet your heart and mind --- *silence*
  - d. Now listen to the one who is speaking:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

*John 14:27*

*Silence*

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*Matthew 11:28-30*

*Silence*

He said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. [...] “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

*Luke 12:22-23, 32-34*

*Silence*

### 3. John 4: the Gift of God

- a. Jesus looks at a woman who is uncertain, fearful, somewhat ashamed of her past, desperately hopeful of still finding meaning... and what Jesus *sees* is the Image of God, which she cannot see.
- b. this is true for every human being: Jesus looks at our sin and brokenness, and sees our need....
- c. And by the power of the Spirit, he comes and strikes the rock of our hearts with the staff of his grace.
- d. and as his power fills us, we realize that everything we need we already have...
- e. as the life of the Living Word of Truth gushes forth, everything about us is changed – even our imaginations...
- f. We no longer wonder if we are safe...
- g. We no longer wonder if all will be well...
- h. We no longer wonder how long the churches will be closed...
- i. We no longer wonder about whether God is present in the world...
- j. And in the place of uncertainty, Jesus gives us the gift of peace.
- k. Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* – March 8
  - i. Reflecting on Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ.”
  - ii. “No one is ever united with Jesus Christ until he is willing to relinquish not only sin, but his whole way of looking at things.”

- l. The woman at the well receives the gift of peace through having her perspective completely altered by the Messiah...
- m. She has searched deeply for truth, and He – the Word of Truth – sits there in front of her...
- n. She’s always wondered if she had to be Jewish to be right with God...
- o. Jesus tells her that God’s always been right with her... and all she has to do is love God back...
- p. “The Father seeks such as these...”
- q. these who are uncertain, fearful, somewhat ashamed of their pasts, and desperately hopeful of finding meaning in their lives...
- r. Have you been afraid during this time of uncertainty?
- s. Don’t hide your fear from Jesus, he can see it anyway!
- t. Instead, open your whole life to his grace and be made strong for this time of waiting... this time in which perspective is, after love, the greatest virtue.
- u. there is no biological life without water –
- v. there is no spiritual life without Insight of Jesus, resting in the power of God, the eternal Creator.
- w. We can react and stock-pile chicken soup, it doesn’t mean we won’t get the coronavirus.
- x. We can hoard what rightfully belongs to the poor, it doesn’t mean we won’t get the coronavirus.
- y. We can pray without ceasing; it doesn’t mean we won’t get the coronavirus.
- z. Or we can respond with the gift of God’s peace and the insight which teaches us, in spirit and in truth, that there is “nothing which can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8).

Thanks be to God for the means of grace,  
by which we realize that we have nothing to fear from  
Evil, Sin, and Death.

In life, in death, and in life beyond death,  
Christ is with us: we are not alone.

Amen.

Let us Pray:

LORD God Almighty,  
who created heaven and earth,  
even if we are in danger of dying,  
may we never doubt your power to save;  
for you see the goodness and flourishing life  
that we cannot.

Gracious Jesus, give us eyes to see  
and ears to hear you speaking to us  
in the middle of this chaotic time.  
May your words of welcome fill us  
with an unquenchable hope.

Spirit of Baptism and New Life,  
fill the emptiness of our hearts  
with the fullness of your strength,  
that we might know, beyond any doubt,  
that you are with us,  
and that we are one, together in your love.

Glory be to you, Holy Trinity,  
as it was when the universe was newborn,  
is now, in every place where we are,  
and shall be forever:  
World without end. **Amen.**

## Intercessions in a Time of Waiting:

Show us your mercy, O Lord;

**And grant us your salvation.**

Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

**And let your people sing for joy.**

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

**For only in you can we live in safety.**

Lord, keep this nation under your care;

**And guide us in the paths of wisdom and justice.**

Let your way be known upon earth;

**Your saving health among all nations.**

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

**Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

Create in us clean hearts, O God;

**And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

O God, the Ruler eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done our will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give your thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Words of Comfort and Blessing:

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Romans 15:13*

*AND*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

*II Corinthians 13:14*

Let us bless the LORD.

**Thanks be to God.**