

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Written Worship
Sunday 12th March 2023
Lent 3



Introit – 703 As the Deer pants

Martin Nystrom 1956 -

Robin Mark 2011 Citrail

<https://youtu.be/FBppKZ0eJlQ>



RCL (Adapted)

Welcome

May the worship bless you.

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place.
 We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.

Call to Worship

Let us worship God in Spirit and Truth

For God is Spirit

Let us allow Jesus to connect with us at our point of need.

For God is Spirit

Let us respond to God with our spirit.

For God is Spirit

Prayers of adoration and invocation

Loving God, your Spirit transforms us,
 As you satisfy our thirst and grow your living waters within us,
 so, we may worship you in Spirit and truth.

Jesus our Lord, you bring conversion,
 when you connect with our point of need.

Our thirst and hunger are satisfied,
 when living waters become a spring within us

when our hunger to know God is fulfilled by the Spirit leading us to
bear spiritual fruit and harvest it in others.

Spirit, come dwell in us and satisfy our thirst,
Lead us forward in wisdom so we are known,
so, we can plant seeds and harvest for the Lord.
Help us reach out to others and connect with their point of need,
and help their thirst be satisfied.

Prayer of Confession

Come before the Lord in reverence and silence with all that's on your heart asking for wholeness,
transformation, and forgiveness.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"

THANKS BE TO GOD

211 Jesus Lover of my Soul

Words Charles Wesley Music Joseph Parry
Fernando Ortega 2012 from on Beginnings 2004 RPI (Scott Bacher)
<https://youtu.be/NsXcCdWjmsg>

John 4:5-42 (Bible Gateway NRSV update)

⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ 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.) ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, ^[b] you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, ^[c] give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" ¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, ^[d] I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you ^[e] say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you ^[f] will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You ^[g] worship what you ^[h] do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in

spirit and truth.”²⁵ 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.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I am he,^[i] the one who is speaking to you.”²⁷ 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?”²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah,^[i] can he?”³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.”³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?”³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.³⁵ 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.³⁶ The reaper is already receiving^[k] wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.³⁷ For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.”⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word.⁴² 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 Saviour of the world.”

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

Young at Heart – Children’s Meditation

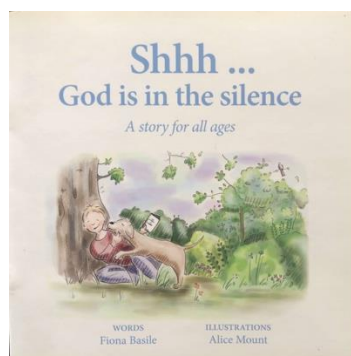
God is in the Silence

Find a quiet place where no one will disturb you and be still.
Be silent and still for as long as you can (about ten minutes)

God is in the silence. When you’re still before God you may become aware of God’s love for you. Even if you don’t feel as if anything is happening, God is there, and we have so many passages from the bible that remind us God is in the sound of sheer silence. Silence allows God’s presence to make us whole and holy and fill us with peace and joy.

Often, we in the west fear silence because whatever we keep hidden from ourselves surfaces. But this is the way God heals us and we can trust ourselves to God and allow the Spirit to make us whole.

For those who struggle and need support, talk things through with someone you trust and share what’s troubling you or seek professional support.



693 Come as you are That’s how I want you.

Song Deirdrie Browne Paul Gurr 2014 (Willemina)

<https://youtu.be/b0cbQS55RTM>

Sermon – Rev Tina

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

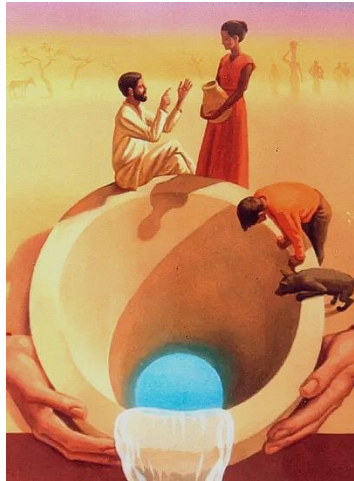


Image RCL

This Sunday we hear the story of the Samaritan woman at the well, a woman who lives within a patriarchal society. We may wonder why she goes to a well at the hottest time of the day when no one else ventures outside. Perhaps she is unwelcome when everyone else goes in the cool of the early morning. Like Nicodemus, the Jewish leader and Pharisee who came at night not wanting to be seen, she comes at midday not wanting to be seen. Like Nicodemus she also struggles to understand Jesus' teachings about the Spirit.

Jesus pushes through cultural and religious barriers to speak with her. For Jews and Samaritans despised one another and she was a woman.

He says: Give me water. She questions him. How can you a Jew ask me to give you water?

He is weak and thirsty, and she seems strong.

It is not until Jesus meets her at her point of need that things happen. He knows she has had five husbands and is living with a man. He knows her pain.

Being known opens her heart to the gospel, where Jesus plants a seed of wonder that allows the Spirit to enter her heart. She is no longer thirsting for ordinary water. She desires living water and leaves behind her water jar and rushes back to her village.



The disciples arrive and see Jesus alone with her and they judge her and rebuke Jesus. He responds by pointing out that the woman, an outsider, a despised Samaritan, and sinner, will harvest souls for the kingdom. There is no evidence Nicodemus led people to Christianity and the disciples, so far, have not taken part in the harvest of souls for the kingdom.

The woman reaches her village, and the villagers see the transformation within her and come to believe in Jesus because of her testimony. She must have experienced a dramatic conversion. Because of her the villagers seek Jesus, they spend time with him and come to believe in him.

People often come to faith in Christ when disciples meet them at their point of need, when someone takes the time to listen, care and accept them. When people feel valued, comforted, and loved, they are more likely to open their heart to the gospel and the Spirit.

The image of the well is powerful in this story. The gospel invites us to ponder and wonder about living water and how it becomes springs of living water within us.

The painting above shows a child and his dog looking down at the water, perhaps feeling thirsty. Jesus stands beside the woman and shows her something greater, a journey of self-discovery which leads to her conversion and the gift of the Spirit.

Spend a moment contemplating the image of the well.

What the world needs today is something profound to contemplate, which brings about worship of God in spirit and truth. We hunger for spiritual food and thirst for living water. Jesus teaches us where to find it and how to embrace it.

We often search for spiritual icons and mystics to point the way to how we can gain self-knowledge and experience conversion and transformation.

Evelyn Underhill, a mystic, was called a doctor of the church in the UK in the early 1930's. She had a profound understanding about how the Spirit dwells within us. She knew growth was slow, where living water becomes like a spring within us and wrote about it in her book called: *Mysticism*.

She used everyday images to portray our growth. Her first image was of a well. The woman at the well would have found it hard work to draw water. This symbolises our understanding of the Spirit is at its very beginning. There is a lot of struggling and deep work of transformation and conversion happening.

As time goes by, it becomes easier to understand as our wisdom develops and grows. Evelyn uses the image of a water wheel used by mills in the early 1930's to illustrate how it becomes easier to access the Spirit and be aware of the presence of the Spirit within us and what it means to worship God in Spirit and truth.

Sometimes in our life, whether it's an instant conversion like Paul's and the Samaritan woman, or for most of us, the slow work of the Spirit, we come to know the Spirit as a spring of living water bubbling up within us, where we no longer thirst. We feel deep satisfaction and joy.

The living waters within us have become the centre of our life and draw us into a closer relationship with God and ourselves. We experience union with God and become embodied spirit and truth, in our heart and actions.

I have known men and women of prayer and felt God's presence within them. Twenty years ago, I was with a friend at a fete at Xavier College and there was a Jesuit talking with students. He had come from India and spent his life ministering to people with leprosy. My friend and I both felt this presence, a strong sense of God, which we couldn't put into words, but we knew he was close to God. Perhaps like buildings people embody God's presence where we know they have spent a lot of time with God. It feels like buildings where people have prayed in them for centuries.

I remember Dorothy Aumann, a woman of prayer who lived into her eighties. She was an elder in the church all her life. After she died a possum cloak was found among her possessions. Perhaps she was an Aboriginal elder. Her prayers were published in a small book and have been spiritual food for many people over the years.

Margret Williams, a member of our church has had a book of poems published, called poems of the Spirit. This is one of her poems called: *New Born*.

I am the temple
of the Holy Spirit!
!!
He came and filled me,
he gave me himself,
he showed me Jesus,
my Jesus, my Lord.
Now we, together,
will do my Lord's work.

Oh, Joy –
No more trying.
That burden is gone.
Now it is trusting,
and resting in him.

For I am the temple
of Christ's Holy Spirit!
!!



Jesus invited the woman on a journey of self-discovery and invites us on the same journey, a journey where we travel deep within ourselves to find the well with living waters.

The gospel reveals the link between self-knowledge and knowledge of God, reminding us both are part of the journey and are intertwined. The courage of the woman to embrace both inspires us to seek God's Spirit so we can experience springs of living water within our soul.

May the courage of the woman to return to her community where the presence of God's Spirit within her overflows into her community and offers life and conversion to others, inspire us to do the same.

Let us pray.

Lord may your springs of living water overflow within us and bring life to our community. May our courage increase so we grow in self-knowledge and awareness of you, amen.



Image T. Lyndon

Quiet moment

Hymn 468 We are your People

John Wilson 1905-92

The Riverside Church 2021

<https://youtu.be/AOLAZCI2A1E>

Offering Prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love, made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen.

Prayers of the People – Michael Plumridge

Let us pray.

God who is good to all, whose compassion is over all that you have made, please hear our prayers this morning.

In the World Prayer Cycle for today, we pray for the countries of Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We also pray this morning for the Faroe Islands, which is a self-governing territory of the [Kingdom of Denmark](#). Lord, we give you thanks for the spectacular geographical beauty of the Scandinavian region: forests, lakes, mountains, and glaciers. We give thanks also that these countries have opened their doors to many people who have fled conflicts in other parts of the world. In particular, we give thanks for the people of Sweden who have accepted many thousands of refugees over many years. We thank you also for the Church in the region and we ask you to strengthen all who work for peace and justice in these lands. Lord, we bring before you the poor and marginalized who struggle in these rich countries and we ask that wealth might be distributed equitably. We pray that in industrial and technological developments, consideration may be given to support environmental sustainability.

Lord, we pray for Australia. In a time when many are still rebuilding from the effects of fires and floods; or are recovering from the long-term effects of Covid, we ask for your gentle love and mercy. We pray too for those who face financial uncertainty or even losing their homes due to rising interest rates.

We pray for anyone who is lonely, depressed, sad, indifferent, or anxious about life. Strengthen us all to carry your love into a hurting community.

We thank you for the celebration of women through International Women's Day and we ask that we will continue to work towards true equality. We recognize before you that there is still a gender pay gap and that women still suffer at the hands of intimate partners. Lord bless and strengthen those who work to alleviate domestic violence.

In the Local Prayer Cycle/Presbytery Prayer Cycle we pray today for St Thomas' Catholic Church, Blackburn. Lord bless all who worship there and be with them as they work in your name. We pray for our Uniting Church congregations in Croydon and Croydon North. We pray also for Kingswood College Box Hill. Lord, bless the students, teachers, and administrative staff.

Lord bless us as we continue to serve you as the Whitehorse Uniting Church. We pray for our ministers, Tina, and Peter, and we especially pray for Peter in his recovery from Long Covid.

Grant us strength and wisdom so that we may be always ready to serve you. We pray this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer

Our father who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day 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 ever. Amen

658 I The Lord of Sea and Sky

St Andrews Metropolitan Church, Glasgow

Hymn Channel 2017

<https://youtu.be/mgLwH5RdtPk>

Blessing

May the Blessing of the Holy Trinity of Love be upon you
 the fire of the Spirit to ignite you
 the love of God to encircle you
 and the wisdom of Christ to enliven you
 this day and evermore, amen

755 You shall go out with Joy

Stuart Daurmann 1944, Steffi Geiser Rubin 1950
 St Francis United Church 2022
<https://youtu.be/HHBzoaZ6JGI>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina

Love one another and you will be happy.
 It's as simple and difficult as that.
 There is no other way.



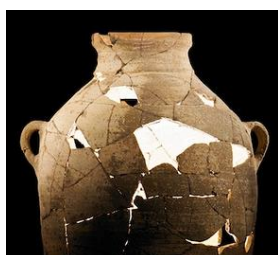
Leunig – used with permission

Ash Wednesday
https://youtu.be/Ng_S6Qv00AU

Lent 1
<https://youtu.be/rypERphCxwg>

Lent 2
<https://youtu.be/GYo5VyNv7fg>

Lent 3
<https://youtu.be/kSzTkQ763Hs>



Lenten commentaries on paintings

We continue with Lenten commentaries on paintings with commentaries for last week and this week, and all others since Ash Wednesday. The Art and Faith Series is from Loyola Press (Catholic Resources). It takes us on a profound journey through reflection on the arts and promises to deepen our faith in Christ. Commentary is by Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, assistant professor of liturgy, catechesis, and evangelization at Loyola University New Orleans. She holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame, a master's degree in liturgy from St. John's University in Collegeville, a master's degree in religion and the arts from Yale Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in theology and education from Boston College. Her unique background in faith and art brings to life a new way of observing Lent and understanding the season on a more personal level.

Music to accompany the commentaries

Oh, the Deep Love of Jesus –
Epic Version Simon Khorolskiy
<https://youtu.be/KLTu1xv2-Us>

and if you haven't watched this YouTube music,
 which is about God's love for us, you may enjoy it here:

How Deep the Father's Love for us – a Capella
<https://youtu.be/03Am8F52x2E>

Stuart Townsend. Sung by Joe Sutton 2022
 Easter Song 2021

CCLI Song # 1558110

© 1995 Thank you Music

(Admin by Integrity music) all rights reserved CCLI (Licence No 1157566)