



Venice
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
God is still speaking,

TURN AROUND AND SEE GOD

How Stories Help Save Us



The Well is Deep
The Well is Deep

Third Sunday in Lent
March 8, 2026

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Third Sunday in Lent
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Singing Prelude *I love to Tell the Story* Hankey/Fischer

**I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.**

**I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.**

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space. I am Pastor Barb, and Ginnie Behan will be our liturgist. Sue Jack, Harold Steindam, Wendy Seeley, Wally Davis, Walt Jeffreys will be assisting with our reading today. As always, many thanks to all our staff and volunteers who make sharing this time together possible.

We are also joined today by Dr. Richard Balkin, a retired educator and performer, who, like many musicians, is still educating and still performing! Some of you heard him play here on Ash Wednesday. We are happy to welcome him back to play two selections and to accompany the choir on today's anthem. Welcome, Richard."

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by Pat and Gary Fischer in Loving Memory of Pat's Mother, Norma Dunlap, and by Barb Quinn in Celebration of having Richard Balkin share his talents with us today.

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to

share, please make sure that you let the office know, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an exciting new gift for you, these gorgeous blue stainless steel water bottles.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,
as Venice United Church of Christ,
we empower and invite everyone
to join us in this divine place
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,
no matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
and no one is turned away.

There are a few special announcements this morning.

For over twenty years Venice United Church of Christ has supported the people of Immokolee — first, the migrant farmworkers and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Then, since 2019, the Fair Housing Alliance, which is building apartment housing for low-income folks in Immokalee. Today, "The Immokolee Committee is delighted to host, once again, our good friends from the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance, Inc. - Alan Peenick and Tammy Richelieu. They will be offering our Moment for Mission this morning during worship, and will share

more about Immokolee's progress and goals during our fellowship hour. Many thanks to our Immokolee group, and Welcome, Alan and Tammy!"

I also have an update from the Crop Walk that happened two weeks ago. Congratulations and a big thank you to everyone that walked, contributed and contacted people. While the overall Venice CROP Walk results have not been completed to date. Our VUCC CROP Walk Champions raised \$15,217! This includes all cash, checks and business donations as of this date, and is \$775 more than 2025.

Mark your calendars for the 2027 Venice CROP Walk, February 28, 2027. Thank you again for all of your efforts and generosity. Your work supports CROP programs that create better food security around the world. — Ross Ament & Vicky Ferguson

There is a lot going on this week — The Game Group is meeting at 3pm on Tuesday, New Member Sunday is coming up, and on March 17, CFL is hosting a St Patrick's Day Soup Luncheon. for more information on any of the groups or activities that bring us together as the body of Christ, please see the Connect, check them out and sign up in the calendar portion of the app, or see the information table in Naar Hall.

And now, we come to worship our extravagantly generous, steadfastly loving God. May our worship align us again with God's holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

We Approach God's Presence

Bringing in the Light of Christ

Just As I Am

Elliott/Bradbury

Richard Balkin, Violinist

Responsive Call to Worship¹

Into the stream of those who have labored before us,

Spirit, let us flow.

Into the river that rolls down with justice,

Spirit, let us step.

Into the well that is deeper than our divisions,

Spirit, let us draw.

In this moment, in every moment, we come to worship and to ask:

Give us living water, so we will never be thirsty again.

***Hymn** *God of Grace and God of Glory vs 1,3,5 ...*

**God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power.**

**Crown your ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.**

**Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.**

**Cure our children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control.**

**Shame our reckless, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.**

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,

¹ "Ripe for Harvesting": Service Prayers for Lent 3A was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adapted.

**make our broken spirits whole,
make our broken spirits whole.**

**Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore.**

**Let the search for your salvation
be our glory evermore.**

**Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.**

God of Grace and God of Glory

436

Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930; alt.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that
5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;
Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—
your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,
they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,
we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.
in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.
serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, a prophetic preacher and writer, taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1915 to 1946. This hymn was written for the opening service and dedication of Riverside Church, New York City, which he served for twenty years.

Tune: CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.
CCLI License # 11176734 John Hughes, c. 1907

***Prayer for Transformation and New Life²**

Let us pray:

Word and Story of God, present from beginning to end and right here with us now,

When You met the Samaritan woman at the well,
Your appearance as a Nazarene meant that
long histories and deep lineages
of animosity and pain and oppression
swirled under your feet.

Deep and ancient divisions trained your two peoples
to see each other only as “enemy.”

But in your Divine dance of
testing and trust-building,
openness and truth-telling,
vulnerability and transparency,
something new came into being between you.

**In this moment,
as we seek transformation and new life,
as we practice repentance and turning around,
invite us to enter this dance and see how honesty and humility
can bridge what separates us from each other
and from You.**

Heal us from the ways we deny our kinship and
disregard the dignity and belovedness of each and all of us.

Turn us around, Holy One. Amen

² **“Ripe for Harvesting”**: **Service Prayers for Lent 3A** was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adapted

***Words of Grace³**

Hear the Good News:

Praise God who forgives us and frees us;
 inviting us, as siblings in Christ, to dance...
 making our lives liturgies of Spirit and truth.

Amen.

***Response**

Fill My Cup, Lord

Blanchard

**Like the woman at the well I was seeking
 for things that could not satisfy;
 and then I heard my Savior speaking;
“Draw from my well that never shall run dry.”**

**Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord!
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul.
Bread of Heaven, feed me ‘til I want no more;
fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!**

³ **“Ripe for Harvesting”**: **Service Prayers for Lent 3A** was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adapted

Fill My Cup, Lord

1. Like the wom-an at the well I was seek - ing for things that
could not sat - is - fy; and then I heard my Sav - ior speak - ing: "Draw
from my well that nev - er shall run dry."
Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it
up, Lord! Come and quench this thirst - ing of my soul; Bread of Heav - en,
feed me 'til I want no more—fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, while the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

WORDS and MUSIC: Richard Blanchard, 1959

CCLI License #11176734

FILL MY CUP
Irr.

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We Encounter God in the Word

Contemporary Lesson *Between the Listening and the Telling* Mark Yaconelli

Hear these words of contemplation:

Every act of love brings hope. Every act of love ushers the new world into the present. Every act of love bridges alienation, brings comfort to our fears, makes space for hope. We need stories to help us recall the things we've all forgotten: That we are intimately interrelated. That our home is in one another. That peace is found within one another.

We live in a world that is alive and generous and in need of care. Strangely, paradoxically, it is in serving and singing and telling our stories to one another that we discover the homecoming we've all been longing for has been here, among and within us, all along.⁴

God is Still Speaking. Thanks be to God!

Anthem

Gentle Voice

...

Richard Balkin, Violin

⁴ pg 179-180

Narrator ⁵⁻⁶ “Soon ...[Jesus] came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷⁻⁸ (The disciples had gone into the town to buy food, but Jesus remained at the well.)While he was there, a Samaritan woman came to draw water.

Samaritan woman approaches.

Jesus: “Will you give me a drink?”

Woman: ⁹ “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”

Narrator: [For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.]

Jesus: ¹⁰ “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.”

Woman: ¹¹⁻¹² “Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

Jesus: ¹³⁻¹⁴ “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but 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.”

Woman: ¹⁵ “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus: ¹⁶ “Go, call your husband and come back.”

Woman: ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ “I have no husband.”

Jesus: “You are right when you say you have no husband. 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.”

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

Jesus: ²¹⁻²⁴ “Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 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. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

Woman: ²⁵ “I know that Messiah” (Narrator interrupts)

Narrator: [called Christ]

Woman: “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

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

Narrator: ²⁷⁻²⁸ 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?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,

Woman: ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”

Narrator: ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. [As they were making their way toward the well,] the disciples urged:

Disciples: ³¹ “Rabbi, eat something.”

Jesus: ³² “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

Disciples (*to each other, ad lib*): ³³ “Could someone have brought him food?”

Jesus: ³⁴⁻³⁸ “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and

to finish his work. 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. 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. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 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 labor."

Narrator: ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony,

Woman: "He told me everything I ever did."

Narrator: ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

Townfolk: ⁴² "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 Savior of the world.""

The Word of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray:

For the words of challenge,
for the words of blessing,
for the spirit of wisdom moving in our midst,
we give you honor and thanks and praise. Amen

“You have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep”

Not too long ago, a small story made national news. In the aftermath of a natural disaster, volunteers from all over the country poured into damaged communities. Among them were two men who ended up working side by side for several days clearing debris and delivering water.

They discovered, almost immediately, that they had very little in common. They voted differently. They watched different news channels. They had very different opinions about almost everything.

At first, their conversations were short and guarded. But there they were, hauling bottled water together in the heat, knocking on doors, checking on residents, lifting fallen branches from driveways.

Eventually one of them said, “You know, we probably disagree about most things.”

The other laughed and said, “Yeah... but right now, people just need water.”

And for the rest of the week, that was enough.

They kept working together.

Because sometimes the need in front of us is deeper than the differences between us. The well, as it turns out, is deep.

That is where today's gospel story begins.

Jesus is in enemy territory.

After celebrating Passover in Jerusalem and having a midnight conversation with Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, Jesus went out into the wilderness of Judea with his disciples to teach, heal, and baptize before heading north again towards Galilee.

As the ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus would note, there were other routes. But the most direct road passed through Samaria.

But oh, the Samaritans.

The Samaritans kept insisting on worshipping God on the holy mountaintop at Mt Gerizim where they believed God had tabernacled among them, thus building first one shrine and then another.

The Samaritans kept insisting that they were the true remnant of God's people.

The Samaritans, those foreigners, kept insisting on naming Jacob and Joseph as their ancestors.

But the Jews knew that God was obviously dwelling in the temple in Jerusalem, so the Samaritans were wrong.

The Jews knew that the Assyrians 700 some odd years before had captured everyone in the land of Samaria and shipped them off, only to resettle the land with foreigners who introduced idols.

The Jews knew that the Samaritans weren't really descendants of Jacob and Joseph, because their foreign blood had contaminated the tribal lineages of the few who had escaped Assyrian capture so many generations before.

And, to ensure that such sacrilege was appropriately punished, the Jews destroyed the shrine on Mt Gerizim just over one hundred years before Jesus sat down at a well.

Yet still, the heresy persisted. The blasphemy persisted. The animosity continued.

And Jesus, traveling with his disciples from Jerusalem to Galilee by way of Samaria, was in enemy territory.

And in the heat of the noon day sun, he stops at a well just outside a town called Sychar, while the disciples go in search for food. And while he rests there a woman, no, not just any woman, but a Samaritan woman from the town, comes to the well to draw water. And in the brightest light of the noon day sun, Jesus speaks to her: "Give me a drink."

Now, Jewish men did not initiate conversation with unknown women, and Jewish certainly teachers did not speak publicly with women. After all, the sages said, "He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the

law and at the last will inherit Gehenna.”⁵

And of course, Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans.

So the Samaritan woman’s surprise that he spoke to her is an understatement. Yet there, in the light of the sun, a conversation begins.

It starts with the simple hospitality of a cup of water.

Then it moves to the possibility of a stream that never runs dry.

Then to the revelation of living water that nourishes both body and soul.

And with every step into that conversation, something opens.

Her mind opens

Her spirit opens.

Her understanding deepens.

This man, who was once a stranger, becomes something more.

He offers living water from a source that wells even deeper than her ancestor’s well.

This stranger,

This prophet,

The One who tells her everything she had ever done.

The Messiah?

“I am,” Jesus says.

She drinks him in.

⁵ Gail R. O’Day. “The Gospel of John” *New Interpreter’s Bible*. Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1995. pg 565.

And then she Turns Again and Sees God. She leaves her water bottle behind. She runs back into town. And she tells everyone: “Come and see.” “Come and see the One who told me everything I have ever done.” Come and see the Messiah!”

This woman, this Samaritan, who in the light of the noon day sun Turned, and Saw God standing right in front of her, runs to bring people to see the Word of God.

And because of her witness, the village invites their Messiah and his disciples to stay. And many, in meeting the “I am” in their midst, join in her witness.

At first, they came simply because of her words of invitation, her words of awe.

But then something deeper happens.

They listen

They meet him

They drink for themselves of the living water of God.

They have met the Divine among them and heard his voice for themselves. And they say:

“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 Savior of the world.”

Jesus was in enemy territory.

The two peoples despised and distrusted each other. They were

divided by race, religion, and gender. And yet, in the light of the sun, a conversation began. A story was told. And it all began with a simple request: “Will you give me a drink?”

It didn’t begin with an argument.

It didn’t begin with a lecture.

It began with a simple request for a drink for water.

Jesus was in enemy territory, but he met a Samaritan woman at the well, and together they built a bridge between their peoples.

Now, we have been talking this month about the fourth pillar of Joy — that of Reframing. There are multiple methods of reframing that that the Greater Good Science Center offers, but the method that really shows up in today’s passage is that of building bridges. In our story this morning, we can identify six techniques that Jesus was modeling as he sat next to Jacob’s well:

1. Find shared identities
2. Understand Values
3. Put people before politics
4. Listen with compassion
5. Perspective taking and giving
6. Try Self-Distancing⁶

1. Find Shared identities. From a cup of cool water to the revelation of the Word of God, Jesus began with what they had in common — their thirst. They shared a common ancestor, a common history, a holy thirst.

⁶ Greater Good Science Center. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_techniques_to_help_you_bridge_differences accessed 3-7-2026

2. **Understand Values.** He understood what she valued, her worship of God,
3. **Put people before politics.** and he prioritized her, her life, her questions, over the politics of the day.
4. **He listened with compassion.** He started with a request she could have ignored. But in his seeing her, she was able to see and respond to him.
5. **Perspective taking and giving.** And their conversation about living water opened a door to a question that she had probably been waiting to ask her whole life: Where are we supposed to worship God? And he answers by telling her that it is not where we worship, but how we worship — in Spirit and in Truth.
6. **Try Self-Distancing.** He saw her for who she was, and invited her to see the world through God’s eyes. And as she turned and saw God, she couldn’t keep from running to share the good news with the whole village.

And as the conversation deepens, something else happens. Trust begins to form. Curiosity begins to open. Jesus crosses boundaries and bridges differences.

He does not do it with an argument.
He does not begin with a lecture.
He does not begin with condemnation.
He begins with something disarmingly simple.

“Give me a drink.”

In other words, let’s begin here. Let’s begin with something human. Let’s begin with something we share.

And by the time the conversation ends, she is no longer drawing water from the well. Filled with living water, she has left her jar behind and is running towards the village. She is inviting everyone to come and see.

Because sometimes one honest conversation can begin to lower the bucket into a very deep well. And when that bucket reaches living water, we are able to turn again, and see God.

So what does that mean for us?

It means that this afternoon, tomorrow morning, when we go out to lunch or back to our workplaces, when we meet with our neighbors, our families, our communities, we will encounter people who may as well be living in enemy territory.

Someone whose opinion frustrates us. Someone whose story we do not fully understand. Someone whose life experience is different than our own. And the easiest thing to do is to build a wall and stand on our side and shout across it.

But Jesus shows us another way. When we are thirsty, we all must come to the well. And while we are there, take time to sit down, and begin the conversation. Listen. Find something you share. Ask a question. Offer kindness. You do not have to solve every disagreement. You do not have to win every argument. Sometimes you simply have to lower the bucket.

Because the well is deep.

Deeper than our assumptions.

Deeper than our divisions,
Deeper than our fears.

And deeper still is the the living water that Christ offers.

And if we are willing to draw from it,
If we, like the Samaritan woman, are willing to share it,
Then the same thing that happened in that Samaritan village
might begin to happen in our world.

People who once stood apart might begin to see one another.
Neighbors might become companions.
Strangers might become witnesses.
And little by little, bucket by bucket, grace by grace,
The deep wells between us may begin to fill with living water.

So as we prepare to go out into the week, I urge you to draw
from the depth of Christ's well of living water. Don't stay on the
surface of our us vs. them world.

Instead, be the one who asks for a drink.
Be the one who listens, looking past the labels we would slap on
each other, and
Be the one who leaves the jar behind — drop your defenses so
that you can run towards others with God's Good news.

The well is deep, but the Living Water from the Well that Christ
offers is deeper still. Amen

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Joys

We are celebrating a gift of music to the VUCC Choral Library. Pat and Gary Fischer donated Sunday's anthem, Gentle Voice, in loving memory of Pat's mother, Norma Dunlap, a longtime alto in the choir.

What a wonderful world with God in it. English butter toffee, sisters, our volunteers, healthy family, being here, for moms, this church, phone calls with loved ones, friends, lovely holidays, beautiful weather, getting up each morning, grateful to learn about life from my grandma, fellowship, thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be, waking up to spouses and loved ones, for heartfelt messages of joy, belief in God, for everyone gathered in our sacred space this morning

Music, kindness, our volunteers who do so much, my healthy family, to be alive, those who light up our lives, love, my belief in God, wonderful friends, visiting family far away and the joy of coming home, grateful for learning to live a life of joy, coffee and baked goods, playing golf, a place to live, good health, everyone who is here today, the awe of each new day.

Sunshine, rain, quiet still mornings, family, healthy family, wonderful friends, church friends, fog turned to sunshine, friends and neighbors who are like family, sisters, being able to come to church, my dog, being alive, beautiful weather, lovely holiday, getting up in the morning, health, spouse, place to live, the love between spouses and soulmates, grapes and fellowship, belief in God, being able to express ourselves to God, a van that works,

love, everything, the beauty of the palms, sunrise, banyan trees, diversity of the congregation, God's new morning painting, the awe of the moon shining through the clouds and pointing to the star, music, kindness, learning to walk backwards, sunshine through the window and a peaceful household

Each beautiful new day, slow mornings, gorgeous sunsets, that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy reminds us that we share the same source of our joy, the depth of human creativity and spirit, skilled medical professionals, friendship, safe travels, gathering together to study God's word, rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us as we ask tough questions of God and each other, those who pitch in and help out, birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

Intercessions:

Bob	Noah	Helen
Gail	Bob	Jim
Rosetta	FA	Ami
Nancy	Sheree	Pam
Tiff's family	Jimmy	Christine
Stacy	Adelina*	Nancy
The family and friends of Carol		Barbara T
(John and) Barb	The family and friends of Kristopher	
Rev. Ryan's her family	Mark	Rick
Gay, Vicki, Pam, Jack, Clark, Pastor Attila		

We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes

Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that choose violence and war instead of diplomacy; all essential workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted by **recent** hurricanes, fires, **tornadoes**, and flooding; and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra Leone, **Immokalee Farm Workers**, black and brown fathers and their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's work in dangerous places.

(Second Sunday: sins)

Silent Prayer

Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer⁷

O thirst-quenching God—

You are living water for our parched souls.

Your word satisfies our deepest need; your presence gives hope to the dried-up, the burnt-out, the lifeless and the lost.

So come, Holy Spirit.

Strike the stone of our hearts with a jolt of pure grace, and let new life pour forth. Refresh our spirits with the limitless power of your mercy and love. Empower us to hear the good news—and to believe it and live it.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we sing the prayer that you have taught us:

**Our Father which 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 sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory.
Forever.**

Amen.

Musical Response

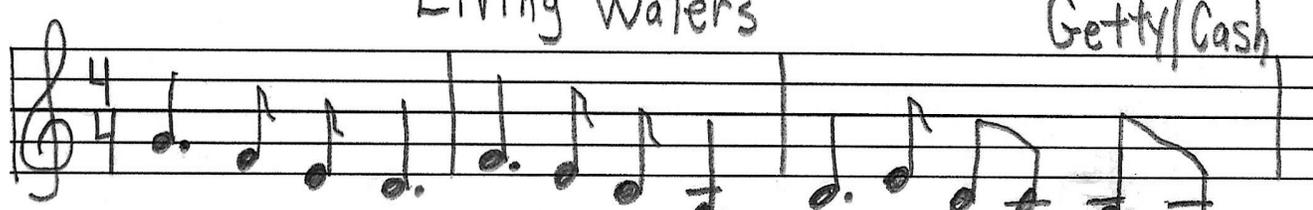
Living Waters

Getty/Cash

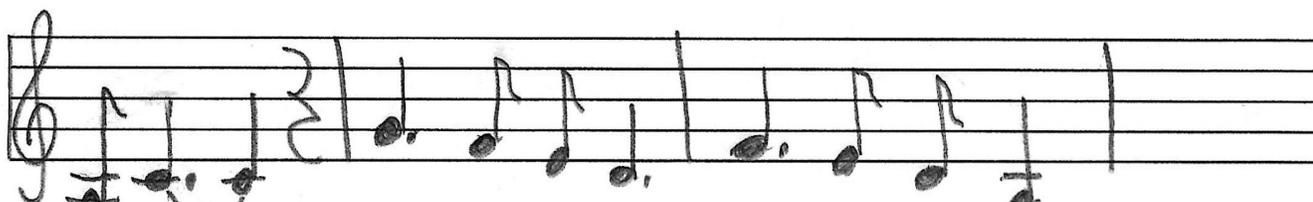
**Are you thirsty? Are you empty?
Come and drink these living waters.
Love, forgiveness, vast and boundless,
Christ, he is our living waters.**

**Praise the Lord of living waters.
Praise the Lord of living waters.**

Living Waters *Getty/Cash*



Are you thirst - y? Are you emp - ty? Come and drink these liv - ing



wat - ers. Love, for - give - ness, vast and bound - less,



Christ, He is our liv - ing wat - ers. 2016 Getty Music Publishing



Praise the Lord of liv - ing wat - ers. CCLI License #11176734

We Share God's Love

Mission Moment Immokolee Alan Penick/Tammy Richelieu

Invitation to Generosity⁸

In today's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, "others have labored and you have entered into their labor." How might God be inviting you to enter into the labor of those who have gone before you in this community of faith? How might our offerings be both gratitude for and participation in the visions of our ancestors and the dreams they couldn't even imagine? Through our offerings, let us enter into their labor.

(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)

***Song of Gratitude**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication⁹**

**May these offerings become living water, quenching the
thirst of all that is taking root in love and justice.
May they water the harvest of liberation for us all and
become offerings toward the slow work of healing and
transformation. Amen.**

⁸ "Ripe for Harvesting": Service Prayers for Lent 3A was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adpt

⁹ "Ripe for Harvesting": Service Prayers for Lent 3A was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adpt

We Go to Carry the Light

*Hymn

Rain Down ...

**Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.
Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.**

**Faithful and true is the word of our God.
All of God's works are so worthy of trust.
God's mercy falls on the just and the right;
full of God's love is the earth.**

**Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.
Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.**

**God of creation, we long for your truth;
you are the water of life for our thirst.
Grant that your love and your peace touch our hearts,
all of our hope lies in you.**

**Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.
Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.**

***Blessing and Benediction¹⁰**

The Well is Deep.

We have come to get a drink at the well of living water.

And now, we prepare to go.

To offer someone else a drink.

To listen to each others deep questions and life stories.

To leave our water jars behind and run.

Be a witness. Share the Good News of God With Us.

As you become living water in a thirsty world.

Amen.

***Sending Blessing** *God be With You* Dorsey

**God be with you, God be with you,
God be with you till we meet again.
(repeat)**

***Postlude** *Air from Suite No. 3* Bach

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the
Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

¹⁰ **“Ripe for Harvesting”**: **Service Prayers for Lent 3A** was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-3a-march-8/> adpt

Supporting Our Service Today

Liturgist: Virginia Behan

Welcome Table: Gayle Davis

Greeter: Janet Beardsley

Acolyte: Bella Clapham

Head Usher: Linda Newton

Usher Team: Jim Daugherty,

Kathy Hare, Steve Hemping,

Nancy Knudson, Char Raitt, Dick
Schleicher

Technology Team

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,

Maria Groody, David Jack,

Linda Newton, Wally Davis,

Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated
by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are given

by Pat and Gary Fischer in

Loving Memory of Pat's Mother,

Norma Dunlap, and by Barb

Quinn in Celebration of Having

Richard Balkin share his talents

with us today.

The **Church Sign** was changed by

Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian:

Ellen Schleicher



Senior Minister

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Barb Quinn: *Office Assistant*

Music Staff

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston: *Bella Handbell
Director*

This Week at a Glance

Monday, March 9

SpiritFed at noon

Pack a lunch and join us **on ZOOM** for prayer, study and connecting with each other. It's a come-as-you-are space designed to help us confront the loneliness epidemic while growing closer to God.

Click on the link below to join.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4OarYUtofaom.1>

Meeting ID: 835 7659 4637

Passcode: 913882

6:00 PM Bridge — P

Tuesday, March 10

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

10:00 AM Mission Committee - P

1:00 PM VAGC— CR

2:00 Care Task Team — Parlor

3:00 Game Group — Parlor

6:00 PM Girl Scouts

Wednesday, March 11

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours

10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

11:00 AM RCCSSC —P

3:30 PM Shamrock Ringers

6:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 12

10:00 AAUW — Naar Hall

1:00 PM Worship/CFL — P

4:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:00 Daisies

Friday, March 13

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera

9:00 AM Knit Wits — Parlor

Sunday, March 15

Fourth Sunday in Lent

9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal — S

9:15AM Bell Rehearsal — S

9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour

10:00 AM Worship

Fellowship Time Follows

11:00-11:15 AM Library Time

Coming Events

The church office is open

M-Th, 9-1.

Would you like to donate to VUCC online?

Use this link:

<https://veniceucc.org/give>

Or...Use your Smart Phone

to scan the QR code:

and it will take you

directly to our

donations page.

It is really easy!

