

Thirsty for Living Water

It was about noon when Jesus, “tired out by his journey,” sat down at Jacob’s well and said plainly to the Samaritan woman who had come to draw water, “Give me a drink” (John 4:6-7).

The story begins matter-of-factly. It’s harmless enough, right? The sun burns hot, the traveler is thirsty, and there’s a well to which the woman has come for her own household’s needs. John tells us that Jesus’ disciples were in the nearby town buying food, which highlights that Jesus and the woman were alone at the well. Still, simple as it may seem, the exchange between this woman and Jesus pleads for a closer look. There is more than an encounter akin to a modern-day outdoor adventure when the water bottle is empty and we have miles to journey before arriving somewhere to refill it.

Today’s story follows close on the heels of Nicodemus seeking out Jesus under cover of darkness. Like Nicodemus, this woman has questions. She wonders about Jesus’ boldness: he approaches her and speaks to her, violating the cultural norms of the day which put Jewish people and Samaritans at odds with each other. She also verbally disputes with him when Jesus offers a cryptic statement about “living water” (John 4:10).

So, is it the woman’s quick answers and easy banter that pull us into this story? Or is it some developing awareness of the barriers that sometimes prevent us from encountering the one who offers this “spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (John 4:14)?

The flowing stream of acceptance embodied in Jesus quenched the woman’s thirst for being known, seen, and valued. In turn, her effusive joy demonstrates the power of living water for all who long for acceptance. Receiving this story, may we think of the parched places in our communities, our churches, even our own lives, that are thirsting for living water.

Into the Wilderness

By today, the ash-drawn crosses have been washed away, no longer visible. Still, memories of them linger as we continue our Lenten pilgrimage. Perhaps as the service begins we might reach up to trace the now unseen sign of the cross, recalling God’s steadfast love and praying for the still-new days of this Lenten season.

Today we prepare to receive a word that will inspire and equip us for the unfolding journey. Likely we are surprised, then, when the gospel names Jesus famished, already having fasted forty days and forty nights. Although our “forty days” are just beginning, Jesus is nearing the end of his. The Spirit that alighted on him at baptism also has led him into the wilderness. He has been stretched so far, perhaps beyond imagining; this is the cue for temptations to begin.

The tempter starts by goading Jesus with invitations to test his identity as God’s Beloved, challenging Jesus to feed his hunger by turning stones to bread, or to test God’s care for him by hurling himself from the temple pinnacle. Jesus resists, pushing back with scripture. “One does not live by bread alone,” he says (Matt. 4:4), and “Do not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matt. 4:7). A third temptation sounds untenable when the devil promises what is not his to give, namely “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor,” if only Jesus will “fall down and worship” him (Matt. 4:8-9). Jesus, however, does not argue the point; instead he retorts, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him’” (Matt. 4:10).

Lent, for us, is not likely to be anything like the extremes of enduring the Judean desert or sparring one-to-one with the devil following a forty-day fast! But it may be that we will face *our* temptations differently when we remember the resistance that was empowered by Jesus’ Spirit-led, scripture-grounded life.

A Teacher Learns

Who doesn't love a good question? Well-timed, carefully worded inquiries open up worlds beyond what is already familiar and known. Preschoolers model this beautifully when they seek information to help them make sense of the unfamiliar or when they are curious about how something new fits into their worldview. Routinely children ask "Why?" and keep themselves open to embrace possibility instead of certainty. Innovators, too, are celebrated for asking lots of questions. Some people contend that asking questions is the single most important habit for a person to cultivate. Yet, sometimes we fail to ask questions for fear of what others might think.

Nicodemus, a Jewish leader in Jesus' time, seems to have been caught somewhere between curiosity and fear. Although it likely was fear that had him seek out Jesus in the shadows, his propensity to ask questions drives today's story from John.

Having watched and listened, Nicodemus was full of questions for the rabbi Jesus. While he already knew Jesus to be a "teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2), the Pharisee simply could not make sense of it when Jesus spoke of "being born from above" (John 3:3). Jesus replied with a kind of riddle about wind and new birth that surely gave rise to many more questions—both for Nicodemus the teacher and for people of later generations similarly struggling to understand the saving ways of the one who would be crucified and then would rise to new life.

In the end, the answer Nicodemus was seeking is found in Jesus himself. And beyond giving us one of the best-known lines in all the Bible (John 3:16), this story shows us the importance—even the necessity—of asking questions in order to mature and grow in our lives of faith. Surely that is good news for us as inquisitive, child-like ones who sometimes wonder, as did Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" (John 3:9).

Ladies of Grace Activities :

March 8th—Green Eggs & Ham brunch!!!! Everyone is welcome!!

May 12th —9:00 AM—Business Meeting. Hostess: Flora Gunderson Lunch: Stefano's

March 19th—9:00 AM--Bible Study. Leader: Pastor Ann Hostess: Charlene Albertson

March 26th—9:00 AM—Prayer Shawl



Notes from the Office:

Church Council Meeting is Saturday March 14th at 10:00 AM.

Our 'Noisy Offering' will be on March 8th.

The sign up sheets for worship servers is in the narthex please take time to sign up for any service you can help serve. Thanks!!!

Newsletter updates due March 23rd.

Lent services will be Wednesday starting with soup suppers at 5:00 PM followed by Worship at 6:00 PM. Everyone is welcome!!! There is a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall for soup and bread!!!

March 8th is Daylight Savings!!!! Don't forget to change your clocks.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Sherry Brooks	8
Ann Schlossnagle	9
Skippy Palmer	10
Gwendolyn Poulos	20
Elwood Borstad	20
Elaine Krueger	24
Ron Morton	25
Dick Delgado	27
Elexis Rivera	27
Rachel Rivera	30
Gundy Gunderson	31

If we missed anyone PLEASE contact the office.

AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY ARE:

Congregation members: **Sherry Brooks, Edna Gross, Gary Albertson, Jeana Lute, Wally Krueger, Tina Krause, Shanna Longoria.**

Family members: **Connie Dawe, Mason Lomelino, Karen Carmichael, Frances Ballard, Darwin Gunderson, Shane Gray, Lydia Gutierrez, Diane Frei, Helen Gray, Barb Lute, Barb Fitzpatrick, Brandie Sherry, Larry Gutierrez, Penny Cook, Rosalinda Rodriguez.**

Congregation friends: **Jason McGinnis, Mason Spradling, Al Lundy, Cheryl Dear, Luanne Ruffle, Judy Schorman, Sandi Jaeger, Emilio Zuniga.**

Those who serve: **Dustin Dunbar, Adam Troy Gutierrez, Pfc Devon Zepeda, Ben McCormick.**



PRAYER CHAIN 2019

Phyllis McKee	425-5776	Elaine Krueger	428-2895
Carol Heesch	564-1031	Betty Longoria	970-2053
Barbara Lomelino	357-1490	Sherry Brooks	797-2615
Jeana Lute	402-720-9431		



IHS

This sacred monogram originally appeared as “IHC,” the first three letters of “IHCOYC,” the Greek word for Jesus. Over time the Greek “C” was replaced by the Latin “S” to become “IHS.” There are many interpretations given to the letters “IHS,” including the Latin “Jesus Hominum Salvator” (Jesus, Savior of Men) and the English “I (Christ) Have Suffered.”

Sunday School—After worship.

Confirmation Class-Will begin again April 15th.



PANTRY NEEDS

- Creamed Soups
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Juice
- Cereal
- Kleenex
- Shampoo



**GRACE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA**

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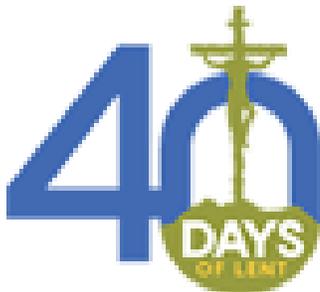
Ann Schlossnagle
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Deadline for the April Newsletter is
Tuesday March 23rd. Please get all
information to the church office,
secretary@gelelca.org, or the office
mailbox.

THANKS

The April Newsletter will be ready
by email Friday March 27th and in
the Narthex Sunday March 29th.

We're on the Web
<http://www.gelelca.org>
We are also on face book!!



MISSION STATEMENT

God's purpose for Grace
Lutheran Church is:
Welcome to Grace,
Welcome the Message.

Principle Values:
Jesus is Lord
Everyone is welcome.
All serve in different
ways.
Seek and share the
message.
God's love is life
changing.

2020 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Schlossnagle, Ann	Pastor	503-707-7406
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Morton, Ron	Vice-President	956-873-1312
Ramsey, Pam	Secretary	956-454-1036
Morton, Bonnie	Treasurer	956-226-7301
Longoria, Mia		956-970-2017
Lomelino, Barb		956-357-1490
Longoria, Betty		956-970-2053
Kester, Debi		956-202-5958



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



SERVICE SCHEDULE

	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29
Ushers	Floyd & Barb Lomelino				
Lector	Ron Oestmann				
Acolyte	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth
Altar Guild	Pam Ramsey				

Paddling through Lent — and life



Lent is a time for restoring balance to our lives. The Eskimos practice balance as they venture into freezing Arctic waters in little boats. If you've ever paddled a kayak, you know how easy they are to tip. Thankfully, kayaks are just as easy to turn back upright.

That isn't a bad image for Lent — or for life as a whole. Whatever spiritual disciplines we adopt, if we succumb to temptation, it's no biggie. One of the lessons of Lent is that, as long as we're traveling light, it takes only a quick twist of the paddle to right us. That paddle twist might take the form of a quick but heartfelt prayer: "Jesus, set me straight again!" Or it might mean some extra time set aside for quiet meditation with God. Don't get worried if your spiritual discipline fails now and then. Just let Jesus help you get upright once more, and keep paddling!

—adapted from Carlos Wilton, in *Homiletics*

Prayer around the world

Travel writer Rick Steves, who's a Christian, believes travel can help us see God. He writes of gaining new insights into prayer from a so-called "whirling dervish" (a sort of Muslim monk) in Turkey. Before demonstrating how he prays, the man explained to Steves: "When we pray, we keep one foot in our community, anchored in our home. The other foot steps around and around, acknowledging the beautiful variety of God's creation ... touching all corners of this great world. I raise one hand up to acknowledge the love of God, and the other hand goes down like the spout of a teapot. As I spin around, my hand above receives the love from our Creator, and my hand below showers it onto all of his creation."

Most of us probably won't add whirling to our prayer practices! And we likely already pray for people near and far. But what if we pictured ourselves both anchored at home and stepping out among God's whole creation? What if we imagined God's love pouring into us, then out of us onto all the world? How might such an approach to prayer influence how we live?

God's wonders

People travel to wonder
at the height of the mountains,
at the huge waves of the seas,
at the long course of the rivers,
at the vast compass of the ocean,
at the circular motion of the stars,
and yet they pass by themselves
without wondering.

—St. Augustine



Don't settle

For most of us, the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it. We will just skim our lives instead of actually living them.

—John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*



PUZZLE PAGE

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 294

Matt.27:33-66

Jesus on the cross

S A V E D E S I A R H A I E B
S N O I R U T N E C P T L T E
P L L U K S K R N P I O I A L
N H G D T D E O E S M M N L I
J H A E A V E A L F P B E I E
E O A R I E R I A E I O N P V
S L A E I E H J D R N L N C E
U Y C L D S E T G H S O R G T
S E A L I W E N A E P U T I E
D H S L S V I E M M C E R S U
L T S I C K E A S I I I S L E
L O O T I S J W F O P R V O E
A L R N P R I I A S Y R A M J
G C C U L N E G O L G O T H A
T O R N E D L C U R T A I N L

ALIVE APPEARED
DIED ARIMATHEA
GALL BELIEVE
HOLY CENTURION
JESUS CLOTH
JEWS CROSS
KING CRUCIFIED
LIFE CURTAIN
LINEN DECEIVER
MARY DISCIPLE
SAVED GOLGOTHA
SEAL JAMES
SKULL JOSEPH
STEAL MAGDALENE
STONE PHARISEES
TOMB PILATE
TORN RAISED
UNTIL SPIRIT
WINE SPONGE

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
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Each day remember this: "I am a child of God.
That is how God sees me in Christ."