

EVENING PRAYERS
N. Farnham & St. John's (Warsaw) Episcopal Churches
By Telephone "Conferencing" - March 15, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

Opening: Light and Peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed be the Lord who forgives all our sins,
His mercy endures forever.

God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same. . . . Be still, then and know that I am God. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalm 46 portions)

Prayers:

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light: and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night and of the days ahead; for the love of thy Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his Name's sake.
Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

A Reading from the Gospel of John (John 4:5-15a) Read by Courtenay Altaffer

Jesus 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” 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 your 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.”

Brief Reflection (Streaming Thoughts on the Gospel Passage)

It is high noon in Sychar - where the Middle Eastern sun can be merciless – where noon is the toughest part of the day. No one else is coming there – too hot. Only the Samaritan woman . . . and Jesus who seems to be waiting for something.

Did you notice that Jesus starts the conversation - speaking of his need for something to drink? Surprising! Because we don't often think of Jesus as needing something in such a human way as we also need. But water is life, isn't it? And the woman is there because she needs water too.

There are words about she a Samaritan and he a Jew “not sharing things in common” – they usually don't communicate, relate to one another (Jews and Samaritans). But they do share something in common – a human need for water, to sustain life. Because if we don't have water, we die. Do we forget that we do have things in common as between us and the “others” we don't consider associating with because they are “different?” But we do, after all, have things in common. We all have basic needs for the same things that sustain life. What might some of these things be? Ponder this.

Jesus speaks of “living water.” The woman doesn't ask what it is, just wants some. It sounds special. She is curious – where is this living water?

Interesting – Jesus doesn't say he is the living water – but that he has it to give. I wonder where Jesus gets this living water. I wonder what “living water” is – what does it look like?

In the Psalm we just read, the Psalmist talks about “still waters.” Maybe living water is something that flows, that doesn't stay still, in one place, but moves, that flows through channels. Like the water that flows in the deep currents of the river just outside my window.

I wonder if Jesus is trying to tell us that this living water flows through him. I wonder if the Source of this living water is the Divine “Father” from whom all blessings flow? That Jesus, though human, is so connected with the Divine Source that this living water can flow freely into him and then he becomes a Re-source for all who “thirst.” I wonder.

And then the words Jesus speaks about the water that he gives to those that thirst – this water can live and flow in and through them – like a spring offering the water for eternal life. So not only can it flow into us, but become a spring, like a fountain, flowing up and out from us too, re-sourcing not only us, but what’s in our path.

What, we wonder, is this “living water” – this flow that offers life? I wonder if “love” – Divine Love, is this “living water” - the water that can flow in and through us – love flowing into us, given by Jesus, if we are willing to receive the Divine Love that flows from him – love flowing through us, if we open ourselves to be channels for it – love flowing out from us, if we let it, into the world around us? I wonder, I wonder. Maybe we can ponder this possibility, this mysterious flow and what it can do, in the days to come. Maybe open to it – flow with it. Amen

(The Rev. Torrence Harman)

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Prayers of Intercession (with focus on the current health crisis) Read by Michael Sisson

Lord, we come to you this evening with distressed hearts and anxious minds, yet desperately needing to open to and trust in your grace and providence, your healing power and love. Hear us as we pray:

- For all those who need healing in body mind and spirit, especially those who have contracted the virus which is sweeping this world (*Pause*)
- For those who are vulnerable because of already compromised health conditions (*Pause*)
- For all those in the health care professions and care-giving vocations who are tending to those who are sick and in need of medical vigilance (*Pause*)
- For all those in the scientific communities who are diligently researching and attempting to develop effective measures to halt the spread of this virus and to advance strategies, medicines and vaccines to combat it (*Pause*)

- For those in positions of power to locate and allocate resources to meet the challenges that face our towns, cities, states, nation and the world as a result of the current health crisis (*Pause*)
- Lord, give us strength and courage in the days ahead to make personal decisions which take into account our responsibility for the health and safety of all around us (*Pause*)
- Guide us in exploring the internal resources you have placed within us that sustain us in troubled times and help us to remain calm in the face of uncertainty. Help us to be channels of your peace for others who may be living in fear and doubt of the future (*Pause*)
- Help us to gain new insights as to how to live, move and have being when life is disordered and at risk and how to walk the Way of Love through suffering and crisis and find renewed life on the other side of both (*Pause*)
- When this crisis has past and knowing that because we are human we are vulnerable to more in the future, help us to remember how your Love was present and sustained us throughout these difficult days, that we may live our lives forward in awareness of your healing and restorative Presence in and for all of life (*Pause*)

All this we ask, giving thanks for and to the One sent to show us the Way of Love as the Way of Life. Amen

Closing Prayers

Keep watch, dear Lord with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous, and all for your love's sake. Amen

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion on the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen

Guard us waking, O Lord, and guide us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace. Amen

The Blessing

Be at Peace