

With Lives Wide Open To The Living Water Of Christ

An Evening Liturgy for Lent 3

You will need a small jug of water and a glass

Opening sentences

God's deep heart of life
is like a well of infinite love.
It flows towards all creation
in living waters of grace

Praise be to God

Christ sits beside our life
inviting us to open ourselves,
body, mind, heart and soul
to the flowing newness of eternal life.

Praise be to God

Let us rejoice in hope

Prayer of invocation

**Be known to us in this place
and wherever we pause to be near you, O Christ.
Take us by surprise if we cannot believe that you would visit us.
Meet us wherever you will so that we may receive
the wonder of your living water for this day
and all that lies ahead tomorrow and beyond.
This we pray in your name.
Amen.**

Prayer of confession

O God, forgive us if we underestimate your love.
When we confine it to certain people and places,
and when we fail to recognise it in our own midst,
shock us out of our assumptions and narrow views of you,
we pray.

Silent reflection

If we cannot imagine that you would ask us for water
to refresh your life in the world, Jesus Christ,
open our eyes to the places where you sit and wait.

Silent reflection

When we reap without sowing
and feel no gratitude for those who have gone before,
or sow your seeds of life
and become discouraged when we cannot see the harvest,
remind us of your free gifts for our life
and forgive us for our lack of generosity, O Christ.

**For we are your very human people
and we need your grace.**

Amen



Words of assurance

The living water from the life of God flows over all people in love.
It pours forth when we have not deserved it,
it sprinkles in coolness over the heat of our anxieties
and calms our troubled hearts.
We are forgiven as a free gift of grace.

Thanks be to God.

Reading

John 4:6-12

Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. ⁹ The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" ¹⁰ Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." ¹¹ "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" ¹² And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

Reflection

Response to the word

Here is the water which reminds us of Christ's offer to us all.

If you have a jug of water please hold it up

In this moment, I invite you to pause in your life
and ask yourself whether you are prepared to receive
the living water which Christ offers to you
for the refreshing of your life.
In the silence, feel the parts of your life which are dry
or dying for want of a loving nurture.

A silence is kept

As I pour this water into this bowl,
hold your life open to receive the renewing of God.

The water is poured into a bowl and you may fill your glass with some water; a brief silence is kept... then we take a drink from the glass

Bless and keep us, O God,
for our lives are barren without you.

Amen

Prayer of intercession

Flow the living waters of your creative life
around us, among us and within us, O God
Help us to draw from your gift
and to make a faithful commitment to share it with others,

filling up the empty cups around us
with overflowing rivers which carry with them
the waters of change towards the world which you planned.
Give us a new vision of a world
in which people trust the kindness of others,
in which leaders are not corrupted by power,
in which violence does not prevail.

Silent reflection

Be near to us, Jesus Christ.

**Flow your living water over us, O God,
that our hearts and hands may be made clean,
and that our lives may arise in freshness
to inspire all around us with hope that things can be changed.**

Hold close to you these people and situations for which we
now pray:

We offer our prayers

Guide them close to the wells of your nourishment, O God,
and the springs of living water
which will life up their lives in energy and courage.

**These prayers we pray in your name, O Christ.
Amen**

Commissioning

Let us go to walk the way of faith
and discover the Christ waiting for us there with the water of life.

Benediction

And may the wells of God's life be found beside the road,
Christ Jesus meet us in unexpected places
and the Spirit be with us on every hill and in every valley.

Amen

This service is taken from Liturgies for High Days by Dorothy McRae-McMahon © SPCK