**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**March 12, 2023 Third Sunday of Lent**

**“Answering the Call”**

**HELLOs,** then the Zoom host mutes everyone. **Suzie De Quattro**

**WELCOME Betty Thompson**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Anniversary recognition - Suzie & Betty
* Thanks to Kathy & Lin Linabery, Deb Ballard, & Norb Bufka, who prepared this morning’s prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson for singing today.
* Thanks to Kathy & Bill Cavanaugh, Maryann Dolan, Lynn Bufka, Peggy Thompson, Debra Street, Donna & Bill Ellerman, & Kathy Heller who will be reading and leading us in prayer.
* We are always looking for new readers and grateful for all readers. If you would like to read on March 26 please contact Richard McGinnis and on Palm Sunday contact Judy Sholes or Maryann Dolan. Leave a message in Chat or email the planners.

**SETTLING IN Deb Ballard**

We are not all in the same place, but we can still be together by sharing a common breath.  So let us begin by slowly taking one collective breath together -  in and out.   Let the Spirit of God settle deeper into you. Let your breath carry away tensions from your body and distractions from your mind.  In and out.

Now Kathy & Bill Cavanaughwill lead us into our prayer together.

**OPENING RITUAL Kathy & Bill Cavanaugh**

God of our deserts, God of our transformation, God of our fruitfulness, God of all who forget You and all who return to You, God of all who hope for new life, we are here to listen to You.

Leader: Beloved Community, Lent calls us to return to Yahweh with all our heart

All: **O God, we hear You calling.**

Leader: Beloved Community, we begin just where we are.

All: **O God, we hear You calling.**

Leader: Holy One, You appeal to us for justice, peace, and communion for all creation!

All: **O God, we hear You calling.**

Leader: “Lent is a call to weep for what we could have been and are not. Lent is the grace to grieve for what we should have done and did not. Lent is the opportunity to change what we ought to change but have not…. Lent is about becoming, doing and changing whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now.”

Let us pause and reflect on what is blocking us, or maybe even protecting us, from being tugged into the unknown magnificence of resurrection.

[*Pause about 15 seconds – about 2 slow deep breaths.]*

Leader: Let us pray together:

All (muted):

**I ask you, my sisters and brothers, to pray for me to our God.**

**Holy One, accept my deep sorrow for ways in which I participate in the brokenness of Your world -- in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do.**

**Thank You for your endless love for me, and for Your forgiveness that comes even before I ask.**

**Help me to forgive myself.**

**Strengthen me to take an active part in bringing Your grace to the world, in the company of all Your children, all the saints, and all the Earth. Amen.**

Leader: Kathy Linabery will now introduce us to today’s theme.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME**  **Kathy Linabery**

One traditional understanding of today's Gospel story is that an 'unnamed' Samaritan woman was transformed by Jesus in an encounter at the well. But there is much more to consider.

First, Jews and Samaritans did not mingle with each other. Also, Jesus, a Jewish man, was not to be alone with a woman in a public place and thus became unclean in this encounter.

Furthermore, women usually gathered at the well in the *morning* to share news and gossip. Since the Samaritan woman was there *alone* *at noon* suggests she was shunned by them.

In conversation, after some literal misunderstanding, her thirst for a deeper meaning in her life is quenched as she grasps Jesus' message. She runs off to tell her fellow villagers she found the Messiah. They come to see for themselves! Just as she thirsted for a deeper meaning in her life, so do we as we reflect on our readings this morning.

Our gathering song tells of other Biblical women who answered God's call.

The Gospel of John 4:5-42 will then be read by Maryann Dolan.

At the end of each reading this morning, we will listen to a sung response by Linda Donaldson. Then Suzie De Quattro will offer questions for your silent reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

Betty: Plays video.

<https://youtu.be/pR6-l5k7bkQ>

**God of the Women**

**God of the women who answered Your call,**

**Trusting Your promises, giving their all.**

**Women like Sarah, and Hannah, and Ruth;**

**Give us their courage to live in Your truth.**

**God of the women who walked Jesus’ way,**

**Giving their resources, learning to pray.**

**Mary, Joanna, Susanna and more;**

**May we give freely as they did before.**

**God the of women who ran from the tomb,**

**Prayed with the others in that upper room.**

**Then felt Your Spirit on Pentecost Day:**

**May we so gladly proclaim You today.**

**Deacon Saint Phoebe ministers all.**

**May we be joyful in answering Your call,**

**Give us the strength of Your Spirit so near,**

**That we may share in Your ministry here.**

**READING 1**  **Maryann Dolan**

**Gospel: John 4:5-42 (some verses left out)**

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar,

near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob’s well was there.

Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.

It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?”

-- For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. –

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God

and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him

and he would have given you living water.”

The woman said to Jesus, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket

and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?

Are you greater than our father Jacob,

who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?”

Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;

but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst;

the water I shall give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to Jesus, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty

or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.

“I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ;

when he comes, he will tell us everything.”

Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one speaking with you.”

The Gospel then tells us that the woman left her bucket and immediately went out to

share the good news that she had met the Messiah.

**Linda Donaldson: If today you hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts.**

*[Slight pause]*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS Suzie De Quattro**

**Imagine yourself as the woman at the well. How would you respond to Jesus?**

**Who in our society is saying, “Give me a drink”? What is your response to this person?**

**Jesus is violating many norms with this conversation. When have you felt dismissed because of social norms? What social norms obscure your own ability to hear someone saying “Give me a drink”?**

**COMMUNAL REFLECTION** (**Betty or other:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide**)**

**Betty:** Next, Lynn Bufka will read to us from a reflection by Sr. Mary M. McGlone.

**READING 2 Lynn Bufka**

Water is a precious commodity in the desert. Sharing water symbolizes hospitality, openness to the stranger and respect for life. In an inside-out image of God, the vulnerable Jesus must ask for life-giving water. He is the one who was thirsty, sitting by a well without a bucket. Then, along comes a feisty Samaritan woman, who is called Photina by the Orthodox church. The Savior of the world makes a request: "Give me a drink."

What happened in the interchange between Jesus and Photina should have been threatening to the guardians of Jewish and Samaritan religion. Photina tried to pit the Jewish and Samaritan approaches to God against one another, but Jesus led her beyond “tribalism.” All that mattered to Jesus was that Photina (and by extension all people) would know God as he did; Jesus thirsted for her to be moved by God's own Spirit and to abide in the truth-generating relationships that flow from that.

As Photina began to comprehend what Jesus was saying, her feistiness turned to curiosity and then to faith. In Jesus’ words she found a truth and love worthy of her and she was impelled to share it.

This Gospel story reminds us that our creator invites humanity into relationship, but never imposes. This paints a picture of God as both vulnerable and thirsty, ever waiting near some well to offer life to those who can listen, wonder and respond. It is a picture of humanity in which real worship and relationship with God do not depend on place or ritual, but on how people become vulnerable to the Spirit's action in their lives.

Today, Photina may appear to us in many guises. We will recognize her by her enthusiastic love and the way she invites us to respond to God's thirst and enjoy living water forever. Like her, all we need do is respond. As a result, the world's thirst will begin to be quenched.

**Linda Donaldson: If today you hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts.**

*[Slight pause]*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS Suzie De Quattro**

**How do you feel about God being vulnerable and seeking a relationship with you?**

**Like Jesus, have you thirsted for another to be moved by God’s own Spirit?**

**In what guise has a Photina come to you, enthusiastically inviting you to living water?**

**COMMUNAL REFLECTION** (**Betty or other:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide**)**

**Betty:** Peggy Thompson will now read from a homily for the Third Sunday of Lent by Fr. Denis J. Hanley.

**READING 3 Peggy Thompson**

Some of us are like Photina.

We are thirsting for something,

something that will satisfy all our longings.

But often we search in the wrong places.

We draw the water from many wells:

the water of praise to quench our thirst for self-esteem;

the water of success to quench our thirst for importance;

the water of pleasure to quench our thirst for joy.

And, yet, we still remain thirsty.

For only God can give us what we are looking for.

God alone can cause a spring to well up inside us

and the water from this spring will sustain us on our journey

to the Promised Land of everlasting life.

**Linda Donaldson: If today you hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts.**

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS Suzie De Quattro**

**How do today’s reflections help you thirst for something more satisfying than material things?**

**What well(s) do you tend to draw water from, even if it does not give lasting satisfaction?**

**COMMUNAL REFLECTION** (**Betty or other:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide**)**

**SHARING Debra Street**

We invite you to share the essence of what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you have reflected upon our reading and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak. We also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening.

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. (Long-ish pause)

Now who would like to start our sharing? Remember to unmute yourself to speak and mute yourself again afterwards.

[Sharing]

(If there is silence more than about 30 seconds before anyone speaks:) Take whatever quiet you need before you speak.

(If there is extended silence during the sharing:) Is there anyone else who would like to share?  (Pause for a slow, deep breath or three.)

(Stop by about 20 minutes after the hour.)

Thank you.  Let us pause for a minute of silence to hold all that has been said, and to notice what is rising in us in response. (Long pause.) We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Holding onto what the Holy One is saying, we turn to God in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY Bill Ellerman**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now. (Pause) Our response today will be: **Holy One, WE THIRST FOR YOU.**

For Solidarity with Sisters for beginning this Sunday morning prayer three years ago and all the people who have planned, lead prayers, and read during these prayers, and finally for all who participate by attending, we pray: **Holy One, WE THIRST FOR YOU**

For victims of violence in war torn countries, violence at home, and violence from shootings, we pray: **Holy One, WE THIRST FOR YOU**

For all of us as we continue the journey of transforming our lives during this holy season of Lent, we pray: **Holy One, WE THIRST FOR YOU**

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

(Shared prayers) **Holy One, WE THIRST FOR YOU.**

O You who love us more than we can imagine, we are grateful for this chance to give You our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We entrust the outcome to You. Blessed be.

**OFFERTORY Donna Ellerman**

Holy One, we bring You ourselves knowing You accept us just as we are and forgive us before we forgive ourselves.

We pause in silence to reflect on our Lenten intention – how did I live it this last week?

(Long pause)

We turn again to You and ask - In what specific way am I hearing Your call to me for this coming week? (Long pause)

Holy One, we offer our whole selves to You, all that we have and all that we are. We pray that You will help us to be bold in our mission and in our witness. May we who have been given so much, give to others in need, support those who suffer or mourn, give peace to those in trouble, work for unity in our world and love our neighbor as Jesus taught us. Blessed Be!

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION Kathy Heller**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that You trust us to be Your body in this world.

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from You,

and as we embrace one another and Your entire creation with merciful love.

We give You thanks for Your presence in and among us.  *[Pause.]*

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet

and said, “… as I have done for you, you should also do.”

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the wine,

gifts of Earth and the work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it.  *[Pause.]*

Let us know God within ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world. [Pause.]

Holy One, we entrust ourselves to You and to one another.

Make us Your bread of abundance.  Make us Your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Blessed be.

To extend our communion Norb Bufka will lead us in the Prayer of Jesus.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS Norb Bufka**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with our family throughout the world:

All (muted):

Our Father, Our Mother, who unite heaven and earth, holy is your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our living bread,

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING Deb Ballard**

May the Holy One bless you and keep you in a loving embrace as you reflect on your call during this season of Lent.

May you not shy from the call nor waver in your answer.

May the Spirit of God consecrate you in faithfulness.

Blessed be.

**CLOSING SONG I HEAR A CALL**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJhTr9l552k&ab\_channel=EmmylouHarris-Top](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJhTr9l552k&ab_channel=EmmylouHarris-Topic)

**I hear a call**

**Now will I answer**

**Forsake my all**

**To serve another**

**Though darkness falls**

**Stay a believer**

**I hear a call**

**Now will I answer**

**I see a light**

**Now will I follow**

**Fill up this life**

**That grows more hollow**

**Make joy reside**

**Where there lives sorrow**

**I see a light**

**Now will I follow**

**I hear a call**

**From out of nowhere**

**And from everywhere I go**

**I hear a call**

**Now will I answer**

**I feel a touch**

**Now will I hold on**

**Be there with love**

**For those with no one**

**With a kindness such**

**It lives though I’m gone**

**I feel a touch**

**Now will I hold on**

**I hear a call**

**From out of nowhere**

**And from everywhere I go**

**I see a light**

**Now will I follow**

**I feel a touch**

**Now will I hold on**

**I hear a call**

**Now will I answer**

**RESOURCES**

Opening Ritual – “Lent is a call…” quote from Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister: <http://rosemarieberger.com/2011/03/15/joan-chittister-lent-is-a-chance-to-grieve/>

Song: God of the Women

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek2y7bRwwzA&t=29s&ab_channel=KarenSchneiderKirner>

Third Sunday of Lent Mary McGlone Reflection and Woman at the Well Image

<https://www.ncronline.org/march-12-2023-third-sunday-lent>

Stream at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=527593379403030&id=100064571174174&set=a.223986166430421&eav=AfYeQbngSX2hlV0F82ONEm99qFxYUEJbi67L_pif0H-wspQeyyFlwsnV6vLrQ61VPL0&paipv=0>

Third Reading Fr. Denis J. Hanley

<https://fatherhanly.com/journey-with-father/3rd-sunday-of-lent-year-a/>

Lake Michigan image

<https://www.facebook.com/M22life/photos/a.1582761498454674/6186334144764030/?type=3&av=100009491667309&eav=Afa8SUGvSzMqBaTRq7w2o2mq_JNaw-M_52aqNBPqEZvJDo72daIBvGCfKR59QHRllgo>

Closing Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJhTr9l552k&ab_channel=EmmylouHarris-Topic>

Psalm 95: If Today You Hear His Voice Bob Hurd

[Psalm 95: If Today You Hear His Voice](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovQEGCBNKjI&ab_channel=BobHurd-Topic)

**For your enjoyment. We did not think it appropriate for prayer:**

**Peter Paul and Mary: Woman at the Well**

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Peter+Paul+and+Mary+Woman+at+the+Welljssholes%40yahoo.com&rlz=1C1SQJL_enUS766US766&oq=Peter+Paul+and+Mary+Woman+at+the+Welljssholes%40yahoo.com&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i58.35071j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:1aa51a11,vid:Szb-tsIqQm8>