

NANCY QUINNELL 28TH FEBRUARY 2021 at 10:30 CHRIST CHURCH/WAC

2ND LENT - "LET THE WATERS BE SEPARATED"

From "SAYING YES TO LIFE" by RUTH VALERIO

Call to Worship - Lent is a time of challenge, urging us to confess our faults, but also a time of hope, bring the promise of forgiveness. The choices we make are not always easy, and the right way is not always as clear as we would like, but if we seek God's guidance help is at hand to choose wisely.

HYMN StF 24 Come now is the time to worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1jB0IDWEHI>

Come, now is the time to worship. Come, now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship. Come, just as you are before your God, come.
One day every tongue will confess you are God, one day every knee will bow.
Still, the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now.

Come, now is the time to worship. Come now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship. Come, just as you are before your God, come.
One day every tongue.....
Come, now is the time to worship.....

Brian Doerksen

LET US PRAY

Almighty God, our creator and Redeemer, we praise you for all your wonderful works, for the beauty and bounty of the world around us, for everything you have given us to so richly enjoy.

We bless you for our own creation as men, women and children made in your own image, with minds to know you, hearts to love you, and wills to obey you.

Accept, O God, this our praise and thanksgiving, and to your name be honour and glory for ever.

Amen

O God, whose love has been shown to us in the birth of Jesus our Saviour in his death and resurrection, help us to find time to let your love speak to us that we might respond to it in trust and adoration.

(In this moment of quiet may we bring to you all that we have said and done that goes against the way that you have taught us to live)

We are sorry Lord, open our hearts to receive your grace and pardon, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your Name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
Now and for ever. Amen

CHILDREN'S ADDRESS

Using my toy Black Cat and my wild Tiger: these have been arguing about who is the best; I had to remind them that in God's sight we are all special. Jesus said that we should love God and also our neighbour.

Prayer by James and Children's hymn: Thank You Lord

Thank you Lord (Thank you Lord)
For this day (For this day)
For your love (For your love)
In all we do.

Thank you now (Thank you now)
For our school (For our school)
For our friends (For our friends)
All we can do.

*We want to say thank you for this day,
We want to say thank you Lord always.
We want to say thank you God, in everything,
'Cause all you give is good!*

Thank you Lord (Thank you Lord)
For our homes (For our homes)
For our food (For our food)
All that you give!
Thank you now (Thank you now)
We can laugh (We can laugh)
We can sing (We can sing)
Learn as we live.

*We want to say thank you for this day,
We want to say thank you Lord always.
We want to say thank you God, in everything,
'Cause all you give is good!*

Thank you Lord (Thank you Lord)
For this world (For this world)
All you've made (All you've made)
All that you do!
Thank you now (Thank you now)
For my life (For my life)
For your care (For your care)
All that is you.

*We want to say thank you for this day,
We want to say thank you Lord always.
We want to say thank you God, in everything,
'Cause all you give is good!*

*We want to say thank you for this day,
We want to say thank you Lord always.
We want to say thank you God, in everything,
'Cause all you give is good! (x3)*

Young people will leave us now - May God go with you and keep you safe.

READING: READING GENESIS 1 V 6-8

⁶ And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

READING: PSALM 65

For the director of music. A psalm of David. A song.

- ¹ Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion;
to you our vows will be fulfilled.
- ² You who answer prayer,
to you all people will come.
- ³ When we were overwhelmed by sins,
you forgave our transgressions.
- ⁴ Blessed are those you choose
and bring near to live in your courts!
We are filled with the good things of your house,
of your holy temple.
- ⁵ You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds,
God our Savior,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas,
- ⁶ who formed the mountains by your power,
having armed yourself with strength,
- ⁷ who stilled the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.
- ⁸ The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.
- ⁹ You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.
- ¹⁰ You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
- ¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
- ¹² The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
- ¹³ The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

READING: REVELATION 22 V 1 & 2

- ¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

SERMON

Our first reading from Genesis 1 continues the story of Creation that Revd. James started in the 1st week of Lent, with "Let there be light", and we continue with "Let the waters be separated". God speaks and calls into being 'a vault between the waters to separate water from water'. This vault, also translated as expanse, is the creation of the sky and sees God bringing control and order to the swirling chaotic mass of deep waters mentioned in verse 2. The process of separating out continues as the watery chaos that overflows the earth is tamed and divided to create space between the waters of the ground and water that emanates from the sky. This brings space to inhabit and air to breathe. Alongside light, water is an essential element to life.

Water is a powerful symbol throughout the Bible, reflecting the fact that the Bible was written by people who, as we are now, aware of how precious water is and the threat of it running out; particularly poignant when scientists warn of the risks and threats posed by climate change. This made them, and us, appreciate that water is a gift from God.

His provision for His creation: To quote Ruth Valerio - Jewish thinking says that God specifically put his people in a land with no major rivers to help them remember that God was the ultimate provider of all their needs. Water is the key theme in Psalm 65; a song of praise to God. Prayer, atonement, reconciliation, the harvest was abundant; prayer had been answered: deliverance, domination and revelation shown by the awesome deeds by which God showed Himself to be our Saviour, worthy of worldwide trust. Care, lavishness and provision at the end of the year, when Assyrian occupation of the land made agriculture impossible, whereby God's care in the streams of His heavenly rivers holding water in store for the earth. This seems fanciful but the reality is that earthly growth is always the product of heavenly forces, not human cleverness. The whole earth praises God, lost in awe at the amazing things He does and the earth is filled with songs of joy and central to that is the role of rain, as the Psalm tells us.

Come to the living water- Water is mentioned in 722 verses in the Bible, in the New Testament we see that Jesus is Lord over wind and waves. The disciples are caught on Lake Galilee in a storm –Mark 4 v35-41 - of course they obey Him; he is the one who created them, whose Spirit was over the waters of chaos! Even when we feel that we are drowning in the depths, God's Holy Spirit is with us in our struggles to bring us hope. The first time we encounter Jesus and water is when He is being baptised in the river Jordan by John – Mark 1 v 9-11- the same river the Israelites crossed to their Promised Land, a sign that god's promises are being fulfilled; of course Jesus goes on to baptise with something more than just water: The Holy Spirit.

As Jesus tells the Samaritan woman he meets at the well, she who has had to collect her water in the heat of the day because she has been rejected by her village, He is the one who gives living water: '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' - John 4 v 14.

In our last reading, from Revelation 22 verses 1 and 2, the water that flows from Jesus continues into the vision that John has of the renewed heaven and earth: flowing from the throne of God and from the lamb is 'the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal', and it pours down the great street of the Holy City. Water is life and blessing. The living water that Jesus offers brings blessing and refreshment right to the core of our being.

Now let us look at water today, which is the framework of the second part of Ruth Valerio's chapter 'Let the waters be separated'. A lack of access to clean water is one of the biggest challenges facing mankind today in poorer countries. Managing without adequate access to clean water is very tough. Ruth mentions many women in underdeveloped countries are using contaminated water for their family needs e.g., drinking, washing, cleaning, etc. Their children are often sick from the infected water. Organisations such as Tearfund and Christian Aid are trying to tackle these problems. Many villages have not got adequate toilet facilities, many women are harassed when they are watched going to the toilet in public. I am happy to see that your project this year is 'Toilet Twinning'. Ruth draws attention to this in her book.

From our geography lessons we have learnt that the earth's surface is covered with approximately three quarters of water (seawater). However, you may find it surprising that less than 1% is fresh water. We are utterly dependent on it for our survival and it provides the habitat for around 10% of the world's known species. These have seen an 83% decline since 1970 – **stop for a moment and reflect how this relates to faith in a GOD who made this world to be teeming with life!**

Ruth challenges us to think about positive ways we can help. My husband and I are members of the WWF and subscribe each month. In their current issue of Impact, their magazine, they inform us of the latest projects; one them being the work they are doing on the Amazon River in helping to support the wildlife that inhabits the river. Although our monthly contribution may seem small, added to the other members' contributions it is making a huge difference throughout the world.

So, the challenge is how can we help?

- 1) We can pray
- 2) We can give.

- 3) We can take local action, install rainwater butts, clean your car less, use green cleaning products, change the way we shop, e.g., purchasing denim that uses less water in its manufacturing process.
- 4) Reducing our consumption in any way we can to use less water (which can be challenging for us gardeners in a hot dry summer!)

Archbishop Justin, writing in the New York Times, charges the Church to respond, 'As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs – we live them out.' One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours (as in the children's address). Another is that we are charged by our Creator in taking good care of His Creation.

Christ Church and WAC: Resurrection churches, resurrection lives. This the calling that is on us this Lent, as we look at all that God has made and say YES TO LIFE.

Amen

HYMN StF 636 O love that will not let me go <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXaDtaqooos>

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee :
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.</p> | <p>3 O joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee :
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.</p> |
| <p>2 O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee ;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.</p> | <p>4 O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee :
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.</p> |

George Matheson (1842–1906)

INTERCESSIONS

Lord, in your mercy-HEAR OUR PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith-

We pray for the life of the church, for national leaders, for wisdom and prayerfulness, for honesty and fairness. For churches that are being persecuted in our world, that they may stay strong in your love.

For unity, love and fellowship: strengthen all your Church in the service of Christ. Help those churches that are struggling during this time of Covid 19, to bring about ways of being together.

Lord in your mercy- HEAR OUR PRAYER

We pray for all those countries in our world where there is fighting and unrest

We pray for all those people throughout the world that are ill due to Covid 19

We pray for good government to listen to the wishes of the people, for courage and patience for those negotiating peace

Lord in your mercy – HEAR OUR PRAYER

We pray for the wellbeing of our community, for our schools and teachers, coping with the pandemic

Work places and factory workers

Those in local government, trying to make sense of it all, and keep people safe

Lord in your mercy – HEAR OUR PRAYER

And DEAR Lord we pray for those in our hearts that we bring to you now

SILENCE

Please lay your healing hand upon these people and situations, help to heal the wounds, and bring your peace to them.

Merciful Father- Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Hymn-StF 404 God's Spirit is in my heart <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtKJBX7oHIY>

1 God's spirit is in my heart ;
he has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
what I have to do :

*He sent me to give the good news to the poor,
tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more,
tell blind people that they can see,
and set the down-trodden free,
and go tell everyone
the news that the kingdom of God has come ;
and go tell everyone
the news that God's kingdom has come.*

2 Just as the Father sent me,
so I'm sending you out to be
my witness throughout the world —
the whole of the world :

3 Don't carry a load in your pack ;
you don't need two shirts on your back ;
God's workers can earn their own keep —
can earn their own keep :

4 Don't worry what you have to say ;
don't worry, because on that day
God's spirit will speak in your heart —
will speak in your heart :

v. 1 and refrain Alan T. Dale (1902–1979)

vv. 2-4 Hubert Richards (b. 1921)

PRAYER

Dear Lord, it is exciting to know that you are the very source of life including water. We praise and adore you for the gift of water that sustains all life and constantly reminds us that You are the fountain of living water.

Please guide us on how to protect the water bodies you made for your glory. Amen.

BLESSING

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