

# Restore us, O God! We thirst.

LENT 3

## Scripture

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

## Focus statement

Our bodies know the desperate need for water: we cannot survive without it. Likewise, our deepest selves are parched and yearn to be drenched in God's love. God, who is Love, quenches our thirst so that we can live into the fullness of life.

## Lenten ritual (part A)

Fill the vase on the worship table with water as the call to worship is read. You may choose to fill the entire vase this week, or add to it for the next three subsequent Sundays (Lent 3, 4, and 5). Following the sermon, invite the congregation to come forward and receive a drink of water (prepare water cups ahead of time).

## Song suggestions

### THEME SONG:

**STJ 29** You Are All We Have

**HWB 12** Come, Let Us All Unite to Sing

**HWB 372** O Healing River

**HWB 474** I Hunger and I Thirst

**HWB 495** O Let All Who Thirst

**HWB 514** Lord, I Am Fondly, Earnestly Longing

**HWB 598** A Wonderful Savior Is Jesus

**STJ 44** The Love of God

**STJ 49** Rain Down

**STS 64** There Is a Well / Un pozo hay

"All Who Are Thirsty" by Brenton Brown and Glenn Robertson

"As the Deer" by Martin J. Nystrom

"One Thing Remains" by Brian Johnson, Christa Black, and Jeremy Riddle

## Call to worship

Leader: In a dry and weary land,

**All: restore us, O God.**

Leader: Parched and depleted,

**All: restore us, O God.**

Leader: Longing for your living water,

**All: restore us, O God.**

Leader: We thirst. Receive our worship as a sign of our yearning for you.

## Offering prayer

With all that we have and all that we are, we honor you. Restore us, O God, to live in freedom and trust.

## Confession and words of assurance

Leader: O God, *you* are the living Water. You restore us to life.  
We confess that in the desert moments of our lives we forget your faithfulness.  
Our bodies grow tired; our hearts dry up.  
Our minds become clouded and we do not remember that you are our deliverer.

**People: When we see the dryness behind and before us,  
we quarrel among ourselves and burden one another.  
We cry out: “Is the Lord even among us?”**

Leader: Forgive us, O Lord,  
for in the harshness of life’s desert journey  
we quickly focus on ourselves.  
We forget that you have been,  
you are,  
and you will forever be our deliverer.

**People: Restore in us a remembering spirit,  
that we may hope in you again.  
Renew our hearts, O Lord.  
Make us generous in our praise,  
that we may worship you anew!**  
*(Pause for silent confession)*

Leader: God, our living Water,

**All: restore us.**

Leader: Let all who thirst, come. Come and drink from the living Water. Let all who have nothing, come to the Lord. Come—without money or price. Come and draw freely from the well of our Lord, which will never run dry.

## Sermon seeds

Thirst and water: human need and God’s provisions. The invitation of the Lenten season is to recognize our deep personal and communal needs, and God’s power to restore us. All the texts for this Sunday speak to these themes.

Rather than simply read the story, *inhabit* the thirst of the community camping in the desert, unsure of their next source of water. In their time of desperate thirst and vulnerability, it is hard to believe that God is with them. But in the familiar pattern, God patiently gives them what they need. More than that, God is keeping the promise to sustain and care for them. This is a story of grace.

Likewise,  *dwell* in the thirst of the Samaritan woman. What insecurities parch her? What does she have to protect? How have her life and energies been compromised? What happens to her defenses at Jesus’ request for a drink and his willingness to talk with her? As he breaks the cultural rules, the way is broken open for God’s way of love that excludes no one. Her hope grows, and this conversation becomes like a drenching rain for her parched soul. So satisfying is this interaction that she tells everyone she knows, and they come to meet Jesus for themselves.

Where is your thirst leading this Lent? What is your community thirsting for? Depleted, withered cells and souls cry for water. God hears our deepest cries. God’s quenching Love brings us life.

## Lenten ritual (part B): Come and drink

As the people come forward, offer these words: “Come and drink from this free living Water. God quenches all our thirsts.”

## Benediction

Revived by God’s thirst-quenching love, go from this place to live the good news of Love in the world.