



**OUR
GREATEST
NEEDS**

Water for the Thirsty

The Third Sunday in Lent

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

March 12, 2023

SERIES THEME: OUR GREATEST NEEDS

What do you really need right now? To answer that question, one must first define what a “need” is. We understand that a “need” is greater than a “want.” If you lack something you want, life goes on just fine. If you lack something you need, that presents a problem. Thus, to correctly answer that question, “What do you really need right now,” ultimately one must understand their greatest problems. Mankind’s greatest problems are universal. We all live under the curse of sin. That sin makes us utterly helpless in our natural state. Natural man is confused, unable to make sense of life. Left in sin, man is doomed to death, and not just physical death. After one’s heart stops comes another type of death that is infinitely worse, an eternal nightmare. Lent is the season of the Church Year where we wrestle with our greatest needs. Lent also demonstrates that in Christ, all our greatest needs are met. Here is what the Spirit makes clear this season. If you lack Christ, you have nothing. If you have Christ, you have everything you truly need.

THEME OF THE DAY: WATER FOR THE THIRSTY

A person can survive between one and two months without food. But a person can survive only two to three days without water. Water is one of our greatest needs. Research shows that even slight dehydration will adversely affect your mood, memory, and motor coordination. Become seriously dehydrated, and life ends quickly. This helps us understand what Scripture means when it says things like, “My soul thirsts for God” (Psalm 42:2). If one is separated from God, he is adversely affected. If he remains separated from God, he will die an agonizing eternal death. Not all admit it; yet it remains true for all. Everyone has a deep spiritual thirst. In our heart of hearts, we all long for everlasting life. Unbelievers try to satisfy that deep thirst with worldly things, a strategy doomed for failure. Believers look to the One who has promised, “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.” Jesus meets our greatest needs. He alone possesses the water that satisfies those who are spiritually parched. He alone grants eternal life.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Karma Ridpath

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 526 What Wondrous Love Is This

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Exodus 17:1–7

The children of Israel wanted to stone Moses because they were thirsty. So God, in his grace, gave these undeserving people water from a stone.

Water From the Rock

¹ The entire Israelite community set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin as the Lord had commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why are you quarreling with me? Why are you testing the Lord?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, so they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you ever bring us up out of Egypt to let us, our children, and our livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

⁵ The Lord said to Moses, "Go in front of the people, and take the elders of Israel with you. Also take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Watch me. I will stand there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. You are to strike the rock. Water will come out of it, and the people will drink." Moses did that in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He named the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled, and because they tested the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Romans 5:1–8

We were like people dying of thirst who were powerless to help themselves. But God's love has been poured into our hearts like living water.

Peace and Hope

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice confidently on the basis of our hope for the glory of God.

³ Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patient endurance, ⁴ and patient endurance produces tested character, and tested character produces hope. ⁵ And hope will not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us. ⁶ For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him. ⁸ But God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

¹¹ "Sir," she said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this living water? ¹² You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his animals."

¹³ Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty ever again. Rather, the water I will give him will become in him a spring of water, bubbling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ "Sir, give me this water," the woman said to him, "so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus told her, "Go, call your husband, and come back here."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," the woman answered.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say, 'I have no husband.' ¹⁸ In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews insist that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But a time is coming and now is here when the real worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for those are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (the one called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I, the one speaking to you, am he."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 703 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 533 Jesus, Lover of My Soul

sts. 1-2

THE SACRAMENT

Stand

Preface

CW 165

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san - na, ho -

san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he,
 bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

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
forever and ever. Amen.**

Words of Institution

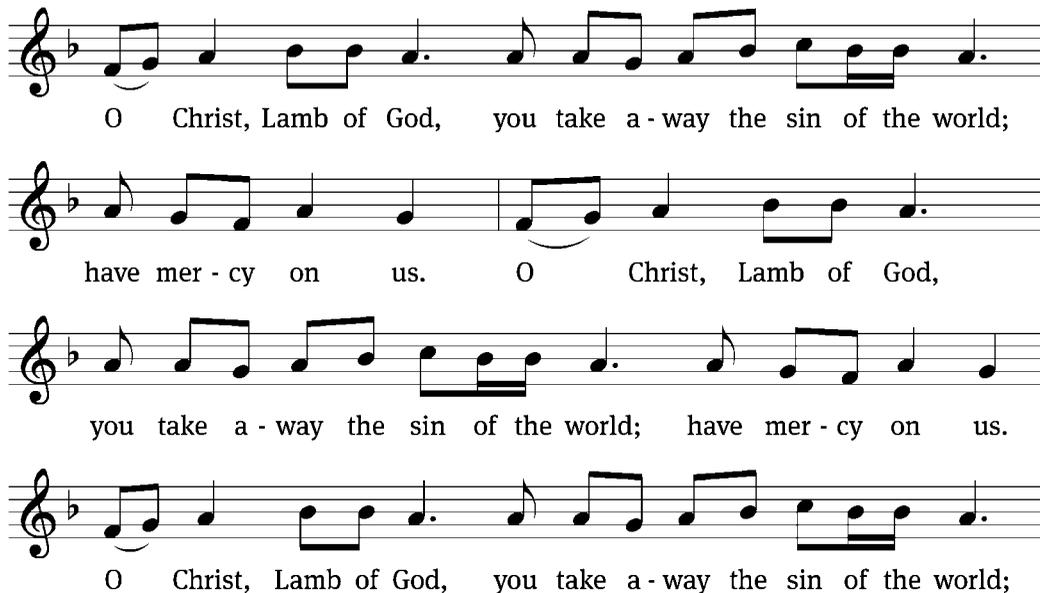
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

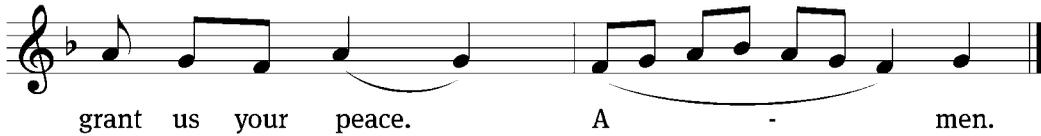
The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169



O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;



Be seated

Distribution

Close Communion *We ask that only those who have previously spoken to our pastor or are members in good standing of this or another WELS or ELS congregation come to Holy Communion today. Our practice of Close Communion (which has been the practice of the Christian Church throughout the ages) is in no way trying to judge anyone's faith. What we are trying to do is follow the Bible's clear teaching (1 Corinthians 11) to first study God's Word together. As we do so, we can share with/review with you what the Lord's Supper is all about. You, then, also have an opportunity to examine what we believe and teach before you come to the Lord's Supper and make a public profession that you agree with what we teach.*

Distribution Hymn: 671 Your Body, Given for Me, O Savior

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 813 He Will Hold Me Fast

Choir verse 1, Congregation Verses 2-3

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Thursday: 6:30 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Welcome to the MLC Alumni Tour!

Thanks for joining us this morning and blessings on your travels to Omaha today!

WELS Regional Youth Night

The next WELS regional Youth night will take place this Sunday from 3:30-5:30 at Mount Olive in Lincoln.

Mid-Week Lent Services

Mid-week Lent services will be on Thursdays at 6:30 PM. There is a sheet at the entry of the church to sign up for the main dish following our mid-week Lenten services.

Care Center Bags

The Care Center Bags from the Grace Ladies will be on the kitchen counter on February 26th. They will be delivered by the Grace Ladies on April 2nd for Easter.

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday worship service will be at Bethel on April 6th at 6:30 PM.

Good Friday worship service will be here at Grace on April 7th at 6:30 PM.

Easter Sunday we will follow our usual Sunday service times at Grace and Bethel.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 15, Sunday School 5, Worship 41 in person, Facebook Reached 112, Audio/YouTube 8. Offerings: Home 2,375.00, WELS 365.00, NELHS 100.00, Trinity 475.00 **To God be the glory!**

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