



## WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

<https://woden-valley.uca.org.au/>

Jesus practised radical inclusion!

All are welcome here.

**'Dare to question and to act!'**

**Lent 3 – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

### Living water



*"Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well" – Rob Gallacher*

### WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD

**The gong sounds to settle us for worship**

**Prelude**

**Lighting the community candle**

As light comes from this candle, may the blessing of Jesus Christ come to us and brighten our way. May the word of Christ bring life into the

darkness of this world, and also enlighten us as we gather in worship today and await his coming to make all things new. Amen

### **Acknowledgement of first peoples**

For this Land in which we live, we give thanks! For the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples, who first cared for this site upon which we worship, we give thanks! We honour their sacred stories, their dreamings and their connections with earth, rivers, lakes and oceans. May we work together for the restoration of the land and for reconciliation among all its peoples.

### **A Lenten Call to Worship**

And the table will be wide.

**And the welcome will be wide.**

And the arms will be opened wide to gather us in.

**And our hearts will be opened wide to receive.**

And we will come as children who trust there is enough.

**And we will come unhindered and free.**

And our aching will be met with bread.

**And our sorrow will be met with wine.**

And we will open our hands to the feast without shame.

**And we will turn to each other without fear.**

And we will give up our appetite for despair.

**And we will taste and know delight.**

And we will become bread for a hungry world.

**And we will become drink for those who thirst.**

And the blessed will become the blessing.

**And everywhere will be the feast. Amen**



## **Song: Come and find the quiet centre**

<p>1 Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead, find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed: clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.</p>	<p>2 Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace. God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base, making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun, raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.</p>
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3 In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare.

## **Welcome and introduction**

### **An opening prayer**

Gracious God, we thank you for bringing us together today and surrounding us in the fellowship of song, prayer and reflection on your word. Where there is anxiety,

**grant us your calm.**

Where there is doubt,

**grant us your assurance.**

Where there is worry,

**grant us your peace.**

Remove the shackles so that we may hear you, follow you, and go out into the world rejoicing, knowing that you are always with us and will travel with us through all the difficulties and joys of life. **Amen**

### **We pass the peace**

In Christ we are reconciled to God, our parent, to each other, our sisters and brothers, and to the whole creation that nourishes and sustains us.

**We meet in Christ's name and share God's peace.**

The peace of Christ be always with you,  
**and also with you.**

**Hymn: Let us sing to the God of salvation, TiS 52 (psalm 95)**

**WE REFLECT ON THE WORD FOR OUR TIME**

**Exodus 17:1-7 – Water from the Rock**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses said to them, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?’ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried out to the Lord, ‘What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ The Lord said to Moses, ‘Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah (meaning *to test*) and Meribah (meaning *to quarrel*), because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’

**2 Corinthians 3:12-18, The veil of Moses and the freedom of Christ**

(selections, slightly modified, from the Good News version)

Because we have hope in the Spirit of God, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who had to put a veil over his face so that the people of Israel would not see God’s brightness. Their minds, indeed, were closed; and to this day our minds are covered with the same veils if we read only the books of the Old Covenant. The veil is only removed when a person is joined to Christ. Where the Spirit of Christ is present there is freedom. All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.

**John 4:3-30, 39-42 – Jesus and the Woman of Samaria**

Now Jesus left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that 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 him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do

you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him.

[Verses 31-39, concerning Jesus talking with his disciples about food, have been omitted.]

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.’

### **Reflection on the readings**

**A reflection song** to the melody Au Clair de la Lune (*Jesus hands were kind hands*)

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| <p>1 Prophet at a rock-face;<br/>woman at a well.<br/>Moses, facing conflict,<br/>fears of thirst dispel.<br/>Jesus tired and thirsty<br/>asks her for a drink.<br/>Moses staves off trouble.<br/>Jesus makes her think.</p>   | <p>2 Hebrews seeking freedom,<br/>grumble on the way.<br/>Moses faces quarrels<br/>every single day.<br/>But his God is faithful<br/>as they onward go.<br/>From a barren rock-face,<br/>quenching waters flow.</p> |
| <p>3 Water from a deep well<br/>many lives sustain.<br/>But those who drink from it<br/>always thirst again.<br/>Spring of water gushing,<br/>Jesus freely gives.<br/>Everyone who drinks it<br/>never thirsts, but lives.</p> | <p>4 Let us never grumble<br/>as we travel on,<br/>glad of life's oases<br/>in times past and gone.<br/>As we journey forward,<br/>hope-filled stories tell:<br/>prophet at a rock-face;<br/>woman at a well.</p>   |

## **WE RESPOND TO THE WORD**

### **Offering**

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us gifts to share.  
Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our  
concern for those in need, including all our fellow creatures on your  
planet Earth. **Amen**

### **Lighting the care candle**

As we light this candle, we ask God to set our hearts on fire with love for  
our neighbours and the world, so that all may experience the wonder of  
God's care. Amen

**Prayers of the people**, followed by a version of the Lord's Prayer prepared for  
for the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Water Network)

**O God, our father and mother,  
from, through and to whom all life flows,  
Your name is holy for you water every creature with life.  
May the 'waters rolling in justice' come down among us  
and dwell as in your presence.  
Give us water sufficient for our living,  
and help us to share water and other resources with those who are dying  
of thirst.**

**Forgive us our insincerity, insensitivity and irresponsibility  
in saving and preserving water, and for our abuse of creation.**

**And teach us to forgive one another.**

**Lead us not into the temptation of accumulation,  
greed and power over water,**

**and deliver us from avaricious life styles.**

**For your word is like water cleansing us from evil,  
your reign is righteousness flowing like an ever-flowing stream**

**dismantling the powers and principalities**

**from generation to generation,**

**from history to history, for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## **WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD**

**Hymn: Touch the earth lightly, TiS 668**

### **Commissioning**

We go into the world confident in the knowledge of

- the rich love of God who feeds and clothes us, and leads us to living waters when we travel through arid times;
- and of the redeeming love of Jesus the Christ whose word is a spring of water gushing up to eternal life;
- and of the Spirit who richly sustains the earth with renewing rains that so that we may take hold of the fullness of life.

### **Extinguishing the Christ candle**

And as we extinguish the candle we know that the light of the risen Christ continues to glow through the living of our lives. **Amen**

### **Postlude**

#### **This week at Woden Valley Uniting Church**

Notices; celebrations; tea and coffee

**Acknowledgement:** LicenSing Online licence #609357; frontis painting, the late Revd Rob Galacher (no copyright restrictions apply); *And the table is wide*, © Jan Richardson, janrichardson.com; Come and find the quiet centre, © Shirley E Murray; some reflection thoughts drawn from Church of Scotland weekly notes for 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2026; the Lord's Prayer from *Prayers related to SDG6, World Council of Churches*, <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/prayers-related-to-sdg6-water-and-sanitation>



Split Rock of Horeb in modern Saudi Arabia

The Split Rock of Horeb in modern Saudi Arabia is popularly venerated by some Jews and Christians as the rock struck by Moses in Exodus 17. However, Horeb is a long way from Mt Sinai where Massah and Meribah are assumed to have been located. Nevertheless, it could have been the image upon which early versions of the text were based.



Well in the crypt of the Church of St Photini located near Nablus in Palestine

This well is popularly venerated as Jacob's Well where Jesus is reported to have met with the Samaritan woman (subsequently canonised as St Photina) in John 4. The well was identified by early Christian pilgrims in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and a church built over it with protection from the Roman emperor. That church was destroyed by Saladin in 1187, but the well survived. In 1860 the Greek Orthodox Church obtained the site and the current church, named for the woman, built in 1893.