

**Service for Caversham Park URC on Sunday 12 March 2023**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent, year A**

*The Font is taken from the cupboard, removed from its box and placed under the table.*

**Preparing to hear God's Word**

***Preachers - no text***

**Call to Worship**

Welcome to Caversham Park United Reformed Church, you who are here, and you who are far off. To you who are here with us, good to see you. To you watching online, it's great to have you with us. Do please get in touch so that we know who you are and can get to know you better.

**Lighting of Candles**

We light these candles to show the presence of Jesus here with us, and to pray for people who are particularly on our hearts. Would anyone like to come forward and light a candle.

**From Psalm 95:**

- (1) O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
- (2) Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
- (3) For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

***Preachers with text***

The Lord is here.

**His spirit is with us.**

Jesus Christ came that we might have life  
**and have it in all its fullness.**

***EW Music***

Hymn                      Come down, O Love divine

***Preachers with text***

Prayers of Approach, Adoration and Confession

**Lord God, your commitment to us is clear:  
We see it in the life of Jesus.  
Your commitment to us is complete:  
We see it is the crucifixion of Jesus.**

**Our commitment to you is often mixed:  
What do we want for ourselves?  
What shall we give to you?  
With what measure of love shall we serve you?**

**Help us now, in this time of Lent,  
To walk with Jesus on his Calvary journey,  
That our commitment may be clear**

**And our love complete.**

*Duncan*

*URC Worship Book, Advent to Pentecost, page 33*

*Tuck*

***Preachers - no text***

**Assurance of Pardon**

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance,  
that Christ Jesus came in to the world to save sinners.  
1 Timothy 21:15

Let us all acknowledge this in our hearts and believe in Christ.  
In his name, I declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins,  
and declare you to be released of them on earth,  
and in heaven, in eternity.

**Amen**

John Calvin

URC Worshio Book, Encircled by Prayer, p49

**Hearing God's Word**

**Theme Introduction**

Today is the third Sunday of Lent. As the readings have a lot to do with water, we will think about water, and also about baptism. And the Gospel also leads us to think about how Jesus is there for all people, women and men, young and old, Christian and non-Christian.

**Collect for the Day**

Almighty God,  
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

***Lectern with text***

Reading from Scripture Exodus 17:1-7

***EW Music***

Hymn The King of love my shepherd is

***Lectern with text***

Reading from Scripture John 4:5-42 Margaret

***EW Music***

Hymn Glorious things of thee are spoken

***Preachers - no text***

Sermon

*During the sermon, the Font is placed on the table and used as an illustration.*

**Responding to God's Word**

***EW Music***

Hymn Father, hear the prayer we offer

***Preachers with text***

An Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who redeemed the world?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

**I believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The response to *Lord, by your living water* is ***Refresh us and wash us clean.***

Lord, we thank you that when your people were tired, thirsty and rebellious, you gave them water in the desert. We pray for ourselves as your people in Caversham Park, sometimes eager to do your will, but sometimes tired or unwilling. Help us as you helped your people of old.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, when your Son Jesus was thirsty, he was willing to ask a stranger for help. Give us the humility to seek help from others when we need it.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, Jesus said: "The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." Give us this water now and always, and lead us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, strengthen your church here and bless us all, that we may be a spring of living water for all around us and all who hear our witness.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, there are many people throughout the world who cannot rely on clean and abundant water, and many who are threatened by floods. Relieve those who are suffering from drought, and protect all the people, animals and plants who are at risk from climate change. Make us ready to change our own lives so as to live in harmony with your creation.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, people are forced to flee from persecution by crossing the sea in small boats. Help us to provide safe routes for them to reach this country, and to give a generous welcome to all in need.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we pray for countries that are divided by conflicts over access to rivers or over the use of the sea. Give their leaders the wisdom to reach fair agreements.

Lord, by your living water  
**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we give thanks for the recent treaty on the use of the high seas, offering the hope of protection for some zones from excessive fishing and exploitation. May the treaty be ratified by all countries and implemented fully.

Lord, by your living water

**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we pray for all who cannot afford to pay for water, energy, food and other essentials. Make us generous in supporting those in need.

Lord, by your living water

**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we pray for our society, our community, our families and friends. Give us clean hands to treat each other honestly, and make us good neighbours to all.

Lord, by your living water

**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we pray for everyone we know who is ill or suffering in body, mind or spirit. Cleanse them from all their sufferings and give them the healing water of life.

Lord, by your living water

**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Lord, we remember all those we love who have died. Give us with them a plentiful spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

Lord, by your living water

**Refresh us and wash us clean.**

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray...

***Preachers - no text***

The Offering

Father, you have poured your gifts on us like streams of living water. We offer these gifts to you, together with the money given through the bank and our gifts of time and thought. Use them, Lord, to advance your Kingdom here and everywhere. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

***EW Music***

Hymn

Guide me, O thou great redeemer

***Preachers - no text***

The Blessing

Christ give us grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him;  
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and for ever.

**Amen.**