



Wednesday Bible Study with Pastor Hetrick
"All Creation Sings"
Session One- Holy Water
October 14, 2020

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Let us pray: Loving Creator, we give you thanks for your creation and everything that is in it. Teach us to love and care for our communities and neighbors, near and far. Help us to remember you and your gift of water now and always. May we recognize the holiness in all the earth's water and strive for its care and protection. Amen.

The title, of this study, *All Creation Sings*, evokes a theme that permeates the scriptures, especially in the psalms but beginning even with Genesis 1, where the Word that brings creation into being speaks, "Let there be . . .".

Genesis tells us that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas."

And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures," and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas..."

Crashing Waters at Creation



1 Crash - ing wa - ters at cre - a - tion, or - dered by the Spir - it's breath,
2 Part - ing wa - ter stood and trem - bled as the cap - tives passed on through,
3 Cleans - ing wa - ter once at Jor - dan closed a - round the one fore - told,
4 Liv - ing wa - ter, nev - er end - ing, quench the thirst and flood the soul.



first to wit - ness day's be - gin - ning from the bright - ness of night's death.
wash - ing off the chains of bond - age— chan - nel to a life made new.
o - pened to re - veal the glo - ry ev - er new and ev - er old.
Well - spring, source of life e - ter - nal, drench our dry - ness, make us whole.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: STUTTGART, attr. Christian F. Witt, 1660–1716; adapt. Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

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ELW #455

Today we begin by contemplating water. The Psalmist gushes forth in praise, “You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains, the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.” (Psalm 104:10-13)

Water is all around us. Even from space, the Earth is a blue planet- predominantly water. The Bible contains more than 500 references to water and all creation depends upon it. Water is the cradle of life, an expression of God’s grace. What a great blessing clean “simply plain water” is!

Think of great moments of water in the Bible- crossing the Red Sea, the woman at the well, Naaman washing in the Pool of Siloam and being healed are just a few. How is God speaking in these examples?

Think of Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan. “Just as water is the essence of all life, water is also the primary element in the life of a Christian. The sacrament of Baptism marks a sacred source of the spiritual life.” ¹ Martin Luther writes about the holiness of water in our baptism in the Small Catechism.

¹ Patriarch Bartholomew in “Water, Holy Water” available on Lutherans Restoring Creation, <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>

God could have chosen any way to act, but makes this promise to you with amazing, abundant water. Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead, it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word... Where our Lord Christ says in Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

How would your view of baptism change if the water were polluted and dirty or if there were no water available? How does God's word with the water remind you of God's work in the world? As those baptized into new life with Christ, and given a purpose in God's world, how should we see this abundant gift?

Plain old water, connected with God's word and purposes accomplishes a holy purpose.

Yet almost one BILLION people today do not have access to clean drinking water.

Our water resources are being diminished and degraded by some of our industrial and agricultural practices here and around the world, as well as by deforestation, over-consumption, waste and pollution. Both in Scripture and in our world today, water has determined where people settle, and can thrive.

Many of us are blessed to simply turn on the tap and water flows. A simple shower uses five gallons of water for every 2 minutes. Yet at least 36 states are anticipating and experiencing water shortages even under non-drought conditions. Global agriculture uses two quadrillion gallons of rainwater and irrigation water annually. I cannot even wrap my head around that number.

THINK ABOUT IT

+We often overlook the value of water. Water Footprints, like the more common Carbon Footprints, are a new way to be attentive to our use and impact on water supplies. Give it a try at <http://www.waterfootprint.org/> Visit <http://www.elca.org/hunger/water> for more.

We obviously need to eat and drink, but we can make choices to use products that use God's creation more wisely.

+Industrial agriculture with large scale irrigation uses 2-3 times more water than smaller agricultural concerns. Look to local providers and producers as much as possible and to learn to eat "in season." You can even ask your local farmers which crops use less water and learn about their growing process.

+Use less energy. What does that have to do with water? Energy development uses a lot of water. The Coastal Community Collaborative is a group of five Native American and historically African American communities in Louisiana that came together after the Gulf Oil Spill to protect the unique ecosystem of the bayous. Oil drilling and oil spills have damaged the ecosystem these communities rely upon for subsistence lifestyles. One of the largest fisheries in the world is no longer providing for them. Closer to our home, hydraulic fracturing uses enough water annually to fill the New Orleans Superdome 122 times.



In Bristol Bay, Alaska every year like clockwork millions of salmon run from the sea up the rivers to spawn. More than 8000 native peoples and 14,000 commercial fishermen count upon this for their livelihoods and survival. The threat of a huge, open-pit copper and gold mine has loomed over the heart of pristine salmon spawning territory for a decade. As of August, 2020 it is awaiting approval by the US Army Corps of Engineers. It would directly impact the world's greatest sockeye

salmon run, putting in jeopardy thousands of American jobs, a cultural tradition of subsistence dating back 10,000 years, and a robust sport-fishing and tourism economy. Each winter the community cuts a hole in the ice to bless these sacred waters.

+ While household water use is less than 10% of all freshwater used, we can still make an impact locally. Take shorter showers. Only run dishwashers and washers when full. Fix leaky plumbing fixtures like faucets and toilets. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association reports that one in 10 US watersheds is distressed and shortages could begin to affect Cleveland, OH, Miami FL, San Francisco, CA, Dallas, TX and Washington, DC in the next decade. In Africa and Asia women walk an average of 3 miles a day to secure water. Lack of clean water and proper sanitation is the second largest cause of death for children. **What would communities look like without water for washing or sanitation?**

We know that water is central to our existence, our health and our spiritual lives. From Bathtubs to rivers, drinking glasses to waterfall. From baptismal fonts to expansive seas, water is a gift from God. To have a resource so sacred requires us to acknowledge its importance and our responsibility as stewards, care-takers, so those today and those long after us can know this life-giving element.

Confession and Forgiveness

Gracious God, forgive our neglect of what you have entrusted to us as stewards. We confess that we take your gift of water for granted and acknowledge the need for repentance and action. We are reminded of your power and love with every nourishing drink and cleansing bath. Empower us to speak for those without and work to ensure justice and peace for all. Amen.

God, the Lord and giver of Life meets us in the deserts of our lives, in the wilderness within, to give us hope and strength in the waters of new life. Come, people of God, open your lives to receive God's new life and your hearts to sing God's praise.

Amen.

Friends, may we forever exalt God and creation. Go in peace, enjoy God's gift of water and work to preserve this sacred resource for the future.

Let Justice Flow like Streams



- 1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spar - kling wa - ter, pure,
- 2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
- 3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



en - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans - ing, sure.
an ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans - lat - ed in - to deed.
and jus - tice, right, and peace per - vade this world our whole life through.

Text: Jane Parker Huber, b. 1926

Music: ST. THOMAS, Aaron Williams, 1731–1776

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