

## **Third Sunday in Lent, March 12**

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from Lexham English Bible

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

**The Collect:** Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7**

17 And all the community of the Israelites set out from the desert of Sin for their journeys according to the command of Yahweh, and they camped in Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 And the people quarreled with Moses, and they said, "Give us water so that we can drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Yahweh?" 3 And the people thirsted for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why ever did you bring us up from Egypt to kill me and my sons and my cattle with thirst?"

4 And Moses cried out to Yahweh, saying, "What will I do with this people? A little longer and they will stone me." 5 And Yahweh said to Moses, "Go on before the people and take with you some from the elders of Israel, and the staff with which you struck the Nile take in your hand, and go. 6 Look, I will be standing before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out from it, and the people will drink."

And Moses did so before the eyes of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the Israelites and because of their testing Yahweh by saying, "Is Yahweh in our midst or not?"

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

## **Psalm: Psalm 95**

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; \*

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving \*

and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, \*

and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, \*

and the heights of the hills are his also.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, \*

and his hands have molded the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, \*

and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7 For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. \*

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

8 Harden not your hearts,

as your forebears did in the wilderness, \*

at Meribah, and on that day at Massah,

when they tempted me.

9 They put me to the test, \*

though they had seen my works.

10 Forty years long I detested that generation and said, \*

“This people are wayward in their hearts;

they do not know my ways.”

11 So I swore in my wrath, \*

“They shall not enter into my rest.”

## **Epistle: Romans 5:1-11**

5 Therefore, because we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained access by faith into

this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces patient endurance, 4 and patient endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For while we were still helpless, yet at the proper time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For only rarely will someone die on behalf of a righteous person (for on behalf of a good person possibly someone might even dare to die), 8 but God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Therefore, by much more, because we have been declared righteous now by his blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, by much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. 11 And not only this, but also we are boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

### **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

#### **Gospel: John 4:5-42**

5 Now he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the piece of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 And Jacob's well was there, so Jesus, because he had become tired from the journey, simply sat down at the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me water to drink."  
8 (For his disciples had gone away into the town so that they could buy food.) 9 So the Samaritan woman said to him, "How do you, being a Jew, ask from me water to drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you had known the gift of God and who it is who says to you, 'Give me water to drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep! From where then do you get this living water? 12 You are not greater than our father Jacob,

are you, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, and his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

14 But whoever drinks of this water which I will give to him will never be thirsty for eternity, but the water which I will give to him will become in him a well of water springing up to

eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or come here to draw water!” 16 He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.”

17 The woman answered and said to him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have said rightly, ‘I do not have a husband,’ 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you have now is not your husband; this you have said truthfully!”

19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where it is necessary to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, that an hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But an hour is coming—and now is here—when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for indeed the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. 24 God is spirit, and the ones who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (the one called Christ); “whenever that one comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.

27 And at this point his disciples came, and they were astonished that he was speaking with a woman. However, no one said, “What do you seek?” or “Why are you speaking with her?”

28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into the town and said to the people,

29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Perhaps this one is the Christ?” 30 They went out from the town and were coming to him.

31 In the meanwhile the disciples were asking him, saying, “Rabbi, eat something!” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33 So the disciples began

to say to one another, “No one brought him anything to eat, did they?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is that I do the will of the one who sent me and complete his work. 35 Do

you not say, 'There are yet four months and the harvest comes'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, that they are white for harvest already. 36 The one who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life, in order that the one who sows and the one who reaps can rejoice together. 37 For in this instance the saying is true, 'It is one who sows and another who reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you did not work for; others have worked, and you have entered into their work."

39 Now from that town many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything that I have done." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they began asking him to stay with them. And he stayed there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his word, 42 And they were saying to the woman, "No longer because of what you said do we believe, for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this one is truly the Savior of the world!"

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**On March 17 we celebrate the life of Patrick, Bishop and Missionary of Ireland. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Patrick was born into a Christian family somewhere on the northwest coast of Britain in about 390. His grandfather had been a Christian priest and his father, Calpornius, a deacon. Calpornius was an important official in the late Roman imperial government of Britain. It was not unusual in this post-Constantinian period for such state officials to be in holy orders. When Patrick was about sixteen, he was captured by a band of Irish slave-raiders. He was carried off to Ireland and forced to serve as a shepherd. When he was about twenty-one, he escaped and returned to Britain, where he was educated as a Christian. He tells us that he took holy orders as both presbyter and bishop, although no particular see is known as his at this time. A vision then called him to return to Ireland. This he did about the year 431.

Tradition holds that Patrick landed not far from the place of his earlier captivity, near what is now known as Downpatrick (a "down" or "dun" is a fortified hill, the stronghold of a local Irish king). He then began a remarkable process of missionary conversion throughout the

country that continued until his death, probably in 461. He made his appeal to the local kings and through them to their tribes. Christianizing the old pagan religion as he went, Patrick erected Christian churches over sites already regarded as sacred, had crosses carved on old druidic pillars, and put sacred wells and springs under the protection of Christian saints.

Many legends of Patrick's Irish missionary travels possess substrata of truth, especially those telling of his conversion of the three major Irish High Kings. At Armagh, he is said to have established his principal church. To this day, Armagh is regarded as the primatial see of all Ireland.

Two works are attributed to Patrick: an autobiographical Confession, in which he tells us, among other things, that he was criticized by his contemporaries for lack of learning, and a Letter to Coroticus, a British chieftain. The Lorica or St. Patrick's Breastplate ("I bind unto myself today") is probably not his, but it expresses his faith and zeal.

**Let us pray:** Almighty God, in your providence you chose your servant Patrick to be the apostle of the Irish people, to bring those who were wandering in darkness and error to the true light and knowledge of you: Grant us so to walk in that light that we may come at last to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**