



St James's Piccadilly Eco Church liturgy, Sunday 28th June 2020: The Water of Life



"Water is marvellously expressive stuff, full of deep meaning to all humankind, perhaps the most beautifully symbolic stuff of all. The water of life, the water of baptism, the water that cleanses and heals, the water that breaks down and destroys, the water that lifts us and floats us when we come aground, the water that churns and pounds us out of our complacency and into awareness; the water of swamps and sloughs and soggy despond; the roiling sea-ice powerfully sculpting a coast; soft groundwater, tenderly upwelling to green a barren landscape; the singing chuckle of a creek, the roar of a fall, the calm assurance of a great river, the crash of a sea swell, the quiet privacy of fog, rain washing or slashing or down pouring or falling gentle as a leaf; the soft healing, or bitter springing, or joyful welling of salt tears. . . . God be praised for the gift of water." Molly Wolf in *Hiding in Plain Sight*

The water cycle

The water cycle describes the pilgrimage of water as water molecules make their way from the Earth's surface to the atmosphere and back again. This gigantic system, powered by energy from the Sun, is a continuous exchange of moisture between the oceans, the atmosphere, and the land. Water on Earth is constantly moving. It is recycled over and over again. This delicate balance between evaporation and precipitation is the primary cycle through which climate change is felt. As our climate changes, droughts, floods, melting glaciers, sea-level rise and storms intensify or alter, often with severe consequences. And the quality of water in the environment changes. Only 3% of the planet's water is freshwater, and of this, two-thirds is captured in glaciers and polar ice. In the current climate predictions, safeguarding the water we have in the supplies we need for a global population set to reach 10 billion by 2050 will be a challenging task.



Bible passage: John 4 vv 7 to 15: Jesus at Jacob's Well

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ 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.) ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ 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."

Contemplation – please find yourself a glass of water

Consider the water before you.... Visualise where it came from, how it got to be in your glass And where it will go to.... Think how it may once have been high above you in a cloud or at your feet in a plant; part of a crashing wave or in a tiny stream or stored underground deep beneath the surface.... And after leaving you it will make its way back into the world and be taken up by fish or a swan or a bullrush and then make its way into a cloud or into the wild and restless ocean.

Regathering

If you would like to, please share in a few words any particular feeling, thought or response you have had.

The Rain Stick by Seamus Heaney

Up-end the stick and what happens next
Is a music that you never would have known
To listen for. In a cactus stalk

Downpour, sluice-rush, spillage and backwash
Come flowing through. You stand there like a pipe
Being played by water, you shake it again lightly

And diminuendo runs through all its scales
Like a gutter stopping trickling. And now here comes
A sprinkle of drops out of the freshened leaves,

Then subtle little wets off grass and daisies;
The glitter-drizzle, almost-breaths of air.
Up-end the stick again. What happens next

Is undiminished for having happened once,
Twice, ten, and thousand times before.
Who cares if all the music that transpires

Is the fall of grit or dry seeds through a cactus?
You are like a rich man entering heaven
Through the ear of a raindrop. Listen now again



Prayer: River of Mercy — by Mary Ford-Grabowasky in
WomanPrayers

"Living Water,
River of Mercy,
Source of Life,
in whom we live
and move
and have our being,
who quenches our thirst,
refreshes our weariness,
bathes
and washes
and cleanses
our wounds,
be for us always
a fountain of life,
and for all the world
a river of hope
springing up in the midst
of the deserts of despair.
Honour and blessing
glory and praise
to You forever."

Amen