

WATER



Paul Jeffrey ACT/CWS

Worship with the World: WATER

Introduction: Church World Service supports impoverished peoples' aspirations for a better life in over 80 countries. The deepest hopes of those women and men find powerful expression in their prayers for justice, peace, community. *Worship with the World* gathers a sampling of their voices that we might join with them in prayerful communion and common commitment. Use/adapt the prayers, bulletin insert, and suggested service for your personal reflection, meetings, or congregational worship.

WATER: All life springs from water. Too much or too little can bring catastrophe. It is a fundamental need of all people, yet 1 of every 6 people lacks access to safe drinking water. Two million people — most of them children — die each year from waterborne disease. Thus, water-related projects and policies are fundamental concerns in CWS efforts to build healthy, sustainable communities. Water is also, of course, a profound symbol within our scriptural and liturgical traditions.

*When the poor and needy seek water,
I will open rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
and the dry land springs of water.*

Isaiah 41:17-18



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Water for All!

O God, pour out on us the water of life that we may quench our thirst and draw strength from you. Help us to stand alongside those who struggle daily for clean water so that all may be refreshed and renewed by your love.

Great Britain

I pray for the ones who help me. I pray that the word of God will spread and live long. I pray for rain and food, because there are so many people who have neither. I pray for more justice and peace in this world.

Mana is a 58-year-old Ethiopian with Hansen's disease (Leprosy)

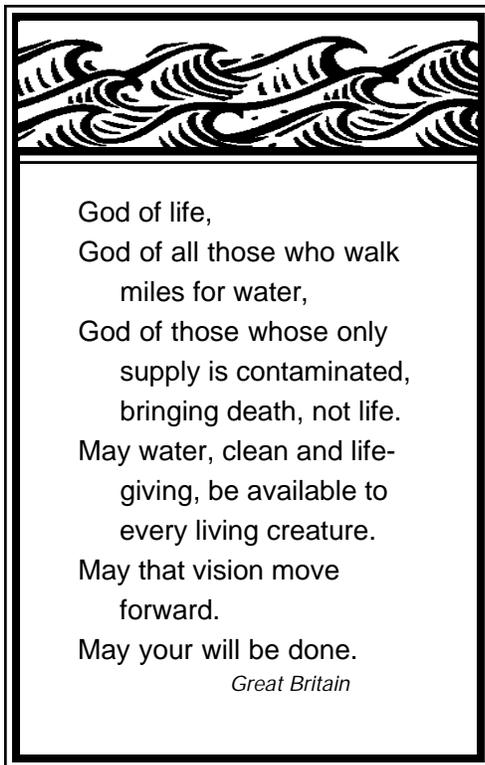
The poor of the world are thirsty
for justice and for peace;
their journey is unending
till hate and oppression cease.
The Lord of Heaven is thirsty
for justice and for peace;
His battle is unending
till hate and oppression cease.

Pastoral Team of Bambamarca, Peru

You who turn storms into gentle winds,
and troubled seas into tranquil waters,
You who make yams grow
and bananas blossom,

Wash our people with justice;
teach us with righteousness;
speak to us daily;
strengthen us to serve you.

Papua New Guinea



Leader: Rejoice in the Lord,
For he has refreshed the parched earth.
All: **We praise you, O God.**

Leader: Rejoice for the rain that falls by night,
and soaks at once into the dry ground,
causing half-dried-up roots to swell,
and the deep cracks in the earth to close.
All: **We praise you, O God.**

Leader: Rejoice for the great drops that fall at midday;
rejoice in the small streams,
singing on their way
from the hills down into the valleys,
to make the rivers swell
and fill the reservoirs
and supply the cities
and irrigation channels with water.
All: **We praise you, O God.**

Leader: For the ground,
for rain, for seeds and tools,
for strength in arms and backs,
for the will to work
and for creative minds.
All: **We praise you, O God.**

Africa

Let Justice Flow Like Water Amos 5:24

A worship service for World Water Day (Mar. 22) or other appropriate occasions.

SONG: *By the Waters of Babylon*

PRAYER:

Leader (*pouring water from a pitcher into a bowl*)

Holy Spirit, Life-giver, who moved over the waters in the creation, who led your people through the waters of the Red Sea to liberation, and who comforted your exiled people by the waters of Babylon, draw us together as we gather in your name.

All: Creator God, we thank you for your love in all creation, especially for your gift of water to sustain, refresh, and cleanse all life. We ask your blessing on this gathering. As we come together from many places and mingle the waters of our experience and faith, may we find sustenance, insight, and refreshment for the task of repairing our world. Amen.

READINGS

When the poor and needy seek water, I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.
Isaiah 41:17-18

By the rivers in Fortaleza, we sat down and cried for the cholera victims.

In those who lived there we saw sadness and we didn't know what to say.

People who lived there did not have songs on their lips.

They wanted joy but, with neither water nor health there was no way to be joyful.

How could we sing praise to the Lord in the midst of such suffering?

If we forget you, may we go thirsty.

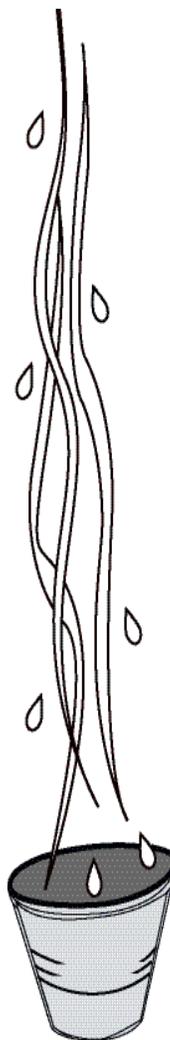
May our lips be dry if we forget you, if we don't bring back water, health, and joy.

Judge, Lord, our elites, for their neglect and greed have long mistreated us.

But remember Fortaleza, your children in Ceara that suffer from thirst and cholera; don't let the earth go dry.

An adaption of Psalm 137, by Napoleao Marcos Mendes of Fortaleza, the state capital of Ceara in Brazil.

Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?
Matthew 25:37



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REFLECTION: After a brief period of quiet, discuss in groups of two or three what struck you the most about these readings. How might you respond to the needs identified? What do you thirst for?

LITANY OF INTENTIONS: Those gathered take time to express the needs and concerns that are on their hearts.

LEADER: Gracious God, hear our prayers. Hear the cries of all who thirst this day — for safe water, for safe haven, for health, for justice, for peace. Give us the courage to respond to your call.

ALL: Too many have died of starvation, too many are distressed for lack of pure water. We should work together, nation and nation, to ensure that each individual and every family have enough food to sustain health, have access to pure water to ensure wholesome living. There is a right to health and life, since God created the world with the capacity to meet human needs. May we work together with God's guidance that the hungry may be fed and all people celebrate abundant life. Amen.

John Johansen-Berg, Great Britain

SONG: *Cuando El Pobre (When the Poor Ones)*

***Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, Come, buy and eat!***

Isaiah 55:1

WATER IN SCRIPTURE

From the waters of the deep referenced in Genesis to the "river of the water of life" in Revelation, water plays a prominent role in our scriptural and liturgical tradition. Arising from a semi-arid part of the world, the Bible exhibits a keen understanding of how essential water is to life and the dire consequences that arise when water is scarce.

Suggested alternative passages for reflection:

Gen. 1:1-10	Creation of land and seas
Ex.14:21-29	Parting the Red Sea
Ex. 17:3-7	Water from the rock
Ps. 107:35-41	He turns deserts into pools
Pr. 25:21	Give water to your enemies
Is. 21:14	Bring water to the thirsty
Is. 35:6-7	Waters shall break forth in the desert
Is. 55:1	Everyone who thirsts, come
Matt. 25:31-45	I was thirsty and you gave me drink
John 4:7-15	Woman at the well
Rev. 22:1-2	The river of the water of life

SONGS

These songs might be substituted for the ones suggested in the worship service:

*All Things Bright and Beautiful
For the Healing of the Nations
I am the Light of the World
In Christ There is No East or West
I've got Peace Like a River
Let Justice Flow Like Streams
O For a World
The Water is Wide
Wade in the Water
We Shall Gather at the River*



Teresa Dafana

Fountains of Hope

In **Zimbabwe**, Teresa Dafana, (pictured at left) is unique. She is the only woman in her country licensed to use explosives. Trained by Church World Service partner Christian Care, she directs a well-digging crew of five men to create reliable sources of safe water for remote rural villages. Married and mother of two children, she has no trouble directing her five-man crew. She loves her work because, she says, "I'm providing my people with safe water."

Villagers in Prey Char, **Cambodia**, used to closely guard a small, muddy pond — their only source of water. During the dry season it dried up, livestock died, and children got crippling diarrhea. In 1998, CWS worked with the local community to develop a well. CWS provided most of the materials, the community provided the labor. Prey Char now enjoys a regular source of safe water and the children are pleased!

For all people, water is the source of life. Our scriptural tradition reminds us that providing water to those who thirst is one of the most fundamental expressions of compassion. Through wells, irrigation and sanitation projects, and training programs, CWS is bringing safe water and new hope to a thirsting world.

For more information contact your CWS regional office at 1-888-297-2767.



----- Duplicatable for bulletins if desired -----

Water is Life!

Water! Water! Water is life!
Children need water.
Mothers need water.

Elders need water.
Sick people need water.
Water! Water! Water is life!

*Onen George William, Bishop
Angelo Negri Primary School, Uganda*



Water Facts

- 0 1 of every 6 people in the world lacks access to safe drinking water.
- 0 Twice as many lack access to improved sanitation.
- 0 80 countries, home to 40% of the world's population, are encountering serious water shortages.
- 0 In the 1990s the number of children killed by diarrhea — the result of unsafe water and sanitation — exceeded the number of people killed in armed conflicts since the Second World War.
- 0 One toilet flush in the U.S. uses as much water as the average person in a developing country uses for a whole day's drinking, cooking, washing, and cleaning.
- 0 With your help, wells drilled by Church World Service are providing fresh water and a fresh start to villages around the world.



Sometimes I will go without food so my grandchildren will have water. The Government should understand this — water comes before food. Soon we will have to drink air.

*Hawa Amadu,
Ghana*



Erube Lojasi, Malawi

I go to collect water four times a day, in a 20-litre clay jar. It's hard work! I've never been to school as I have to help my mother with her washing work so we can earn enough money. Our house doesn't have a bathroom. If I could alter my life, I would really like to go to school and have more clothes.

*Elma Kassa,
13-year-old girl, Ethiopia*

You Can Make a Difference

Support the work of CWS by calling 800-297-1516 or call your CWS Regional Office to learn about CROP WALKS and our TOOLS OF HOPE & BLANKET Program at 888-297-2767.

Speak Out on Behalf of People Thirsting for Justice by joining the CWS SPEAK OUT online network. In September of 2000, 189 countries committed themselves to the Millennium Development Goals — a set of benchmarks for combating poverty by the year 2015, including cutting in half the number of people living without safe water. This is a realizable goal, if enough people say they care. Join us at our website: www.churchworldservice.org.

*Water is life
and because we have no water,
life is miserable.*

Kenya

SOURCES

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Church World Service is a cooperative ministry of 36 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations, providing sustainable self-help development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance in more than 80 countries.