

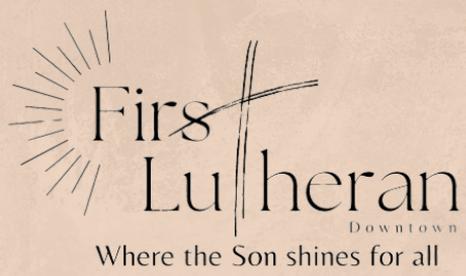


2026

Weekday Devotional Guide

*Journey through Lent with
First Lutheran Church*

Week 3



Weekday Devotional Guide



This Lenten devotional invites you to journey through Lent with people of First Lutheran Church as they reflect on each week's Gospel reading. Five voices share insights Monday through Friday. We invite you to take sabbath on Saturday and worship on Sunday where you will hear Pastor Sami's sermon on the verse for next week.

Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, sacrifice and self-examination. But Lent is also a season of hope – hope in the work God is doing in the world, even in the most challenging times. It can be a season of spiritual renewal and preparation for the death of Jesus Christ. Lent means a lot of things to different people. What does it mean to you?

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the 2026 devotion booklet. I am amazed at the courage, faith and passion of First Lutheran Church. It is very unique to have 30 people willing to be so open and honest about their faith. I cannot thank you enough for sharing. This devotional booklet is truly a gift to everyone who reads it. Thank you so much.

Pastor Sami



Week 3
John 4:5-42



Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42

By Juel Pierce



Jesus and his disciples were going through Samaria, which was not a safe place for Jews even though it was close to the land that Jacob, their ancestor, had given to Joseph after he was restored to his family. It was in the desert, and there was a famous well there. Jesus' disciples left him there to rest while they went to get food for them to eat. While he was waiting for his disciples to return, a woman came from a nearby village to draw water from the well. Since Jesus was thirsty, he asked the woman for a drink of water from the well. She was probably not expecting a man to talk to her, unless he wanted to sleep with her, especially a Jewish man. Why did Jesus ask her for a drink? He wanted to get into a conversation with her. What did he really want to talk with her about? Not a drink of water, but himself—the water of life. And so their conversation began. When the disciples returned, they found him talking with a Samaritan, and she was a woman! They wanted to get on the way, and probably to get him away from her. They knew the rules as well as she did—Jews didn't talk with Samaritans, and men didn't talk with women. (Not so different today—the Jews and the descendants of Samaritans who live in the Gaza strip don't want to talk, only kill each other.) But Jesus wasn't a rule follower—he made his own rules. That's why the disciples were so upset that Jesus was talking with this Samaritan woman. Who are we, according to tradition and "the rules," not supposed to talk with? If we don't talk with them, how will they know the story of Jesus and God's love for all people?

God, whom do I need to talk with this week? Amen.

Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42
By Terry Cotton



1.The Setting: Jesus stops at well in Samaria, (Jews usually avoided) Jews & Samaritans had a deep religious and ethnic hostility. Jesus is tired, thirsty, but quite mortal. **Viewpoint:** Jesus intentionally goes where religious boundaries say he shouldn't

2. Jesus asks for water: She is shocked-he is a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman alone. **Viewpoint:** Jesus breaks barriers gender and moral worth without hesitation.

3.Living Water: Jesus shifts from physical water to "Living Water"-meaning spiritual life that satisfies permanently. The woman thinks literally (actual water) **Viewpoint:** Human needs point to deeper spiritual thirst-only God can satisfy. Her life is exposed but Jesus does not shame her but tells her the truth.

Viewpoint: Jesus offers grace without ignoring the truth. He knows us!

1. Jesus reveals who he is: She mentions the coming Messiah. Jesus says, "**I who speak to you am he.**" 2. The woman becomes a witness, She leaves her water jar (symbolic-of her old focus) and tell her town about Jesus.

Viewpoint: As we encounter Jesus it leads to sharing before all is "figured out."

2. Many believe. The town comes to Jesus. They believe first because of the woman then their own encounter. They call Jesus "**the Savior of the World.**"

Themes of the passage: Jesus crosses all boundaries-Grace and Truth go together-Worship is about Truthfulness, not location-We the People can Become Powerful Witnesses.

Lord Jesus,

At the well you crossed every boundary —
of culture, gender, and shame —
to offer living water.

Cross the barriers within us and between us,
and make us bold to share your grace with all.

Amen.

Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42

Serena Rice, pastor of Abiding Peace
Lutheran Church in Budd Lake, New Jersey.



Given the messianic claim that Jesus makes later in this conversation, we would not expect vulnerability to be his starting point. He is claiming an unprecedented authority. Human institutions and expectations link authority with invulnerability and power. But perhaps it is Jesus' willingness to begin the dialogue with his own need that makes the woman willing to hear him and willing to expose her own vulnerability. First she mirrors his request, asking for the living water he describes. Then, when he tells her to bring her husband to the well, she makes another vulnerable admission that she has no husband. Jesus receives this trust in the same spirit, naming the truth of her complicated history without judgment, merely affirming the truth in what she says.

Jesus engages her vulnerability with affirmation, and this may be what gives her the courage to respond with a request for teaching. She is trusting him to take her question seriously and to treat her as someone who has the right to engage him in a thorny theological debate. This is a different kind of vulnerability, not the confession of need but rather a bid for respect. And again, Jesus honors it. He invites her to embrace a future where neither of their inherited faiths wins the argument because God's plan is for so much more. And when she leans in, connecting his proclamation to her own sacred teachings, Jesus honors her with his own trust. He confesses to her—the first person to whom Jesus himself makes this claim in John's Gospel—that he is the expected Messiah.

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Serena Rice, pastor of Abiding Peace
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This whole interaction reveals the power that vulnerability offers to open up space for connection, trust, and learning. In a context where social expectations discourage any form of interaction, and where personal history lays landmines for shame, we instead find a growing trust and depth of sharing. We can only wonder how the church might embrace more vulnerability in our efforts to open connections to our neighbors.

Prayer

Gracious God,

You meet us where we are and invite us into honest connection. Give us courage to be vulnerable, to release shame, and to trust one another. Shape Your church into a place where openness leads to belonging and love.

Amen.



Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42

Bishop Greg G. Busboom of the
Central/Southern Illinois Synod



When the Samaritan woman approaches Jesus, he sees her as someone with a story to share and a gift to offer. "Give me a drink," begins Jesus, honoring the fact that not only did Jesus have something to share with her, but she also had something to share with Jesus. Jesus, in all of his humanity, was just as dependent on her as she was on him. Jesus needed physical water. The Samaritan woman needed living water.

As members of the body of Christ, we recognize that all people, regardless of who they are, have been created in the image of God and are, therefore, not objects, but rather subjects, each with their own story, each with their own gifts, each with their own God-endowed dignity. Serving our neighbors begins with recognizing that they have gifts to share. Only when we recognize our dependence on others can we, with Christ-like love, share our gifts with them. Only when we are willing to receive from our neighbors, including those who are different than us, a drink of water, can we authentically share with them the living water that is Jesus.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, our Living Water, open our hearts to see and honor the stories of all God's children, including our Palestinian siblings, so that our thirst might be fully quenched in you. Amen.

Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42
Sarah Sedlacek



Lent is a season of thirst. We thirst for certainty in uncertain times, for connection in a world of scrolling, for rest in lives that rarely pause. Jesus, tired and thirsty himself, sits at a well and says to a Samaritan woman, “Give me a drink.”

He begins with vulnerability, not authority. With relationship, not correction. Jesus offers her “living water”—not something external and temporary, but a spring within. He sees her fully, speaks truth gently, and does not turn away. And in response, she leaves her water jar behind—the very reason she came—and becomes the one who invites others: “Come and see.”

This is the quiet miracle of Lent. Christ meets us in ordinary places, speaks into our deepest thirst, and invites us to live differently—not from shame, but from grace.

We, too, carry jars: old identities, regrets, fears, and habits that no longer give life. Jesus does not shame us for carrying them. He offers something better. And sometimes, slowly, we find the courage to set them down.

Questions to Ponder

Where in your life do you feel most thirsty right now—physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

What “wells” do you return to that never fully satisfy?

Is there something you are carrying that Christ may be inviting you to leave behind?

Weekday Devotional Guide

John 4:5-42
Sarah Sedlacek



Where might Jesus be asking you to begin with vulnerability instead of certainty?

Who in your life might need to hear, through you, “Come and see”?

Prayer

Lord, you meet us in our thirst. Help us to trust your living water. Give us courage to be honest, and grace to leave behind what no longer gives life. Amen.



VISEO DIVINA (DIVINE SEEING/LOOKING)

Viseo Divina, or “Divine seeing/looking,” is a practice of using images to become more attuned to the Divine. Use one of the images from this week’s devotion.

Begin with finding stillness: take a few deep breaths, allow yourself to be present to the moment, and ask God to show you what this image may have to offer in this time. Place the image in front of you and simply sit with it for a few minutes, taking time to enjoy the image. Next, recall what part of the image caught your eye when you first looked at it. Take a minute or two to gaze only at this part of the image. After you have done this, return to looking at the entirety of the image. What feelings does it evoke for you? What questions emerge? Are there areas of your own life that the image speaks into? As you conclude, you may want to close with a word of prayer to God, giving thanks for the many ways the Divine speaks to us.



