

I THIRST

A Gospel of John Lenten Study Guide

for the 2006

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

When was it that we saw you...thirsty?

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- Reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers that flow into the ocean.
- Make informed choices about which fish to eat and which to avoid. Consult the Monterey Bay Aquarium web site (www.mbayaq.org/cr/) and click on “Sea Food Watch” for a listing of fish choices to seek in our region.

For Action: Hunger Action

Take some time to enjoy some water together!

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*May our partnership witness to the spring of living water
that gushes up to eternal life.
In Jesus' name. Amen.*

(Source: *A Week of Daily Devotions*, Self-Development of People,
Presbyterian Church (USA), PDS 74350-03-012)

APPENDIX

Suggested Resources for Further Study

- The 202nd General Assembly (1990) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) recommended basic policies in support of water quality and implementation of the policies.
(<http://www.pcusa.org/environment/eds2003waterquality.pdf>)
- The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the “Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings with Study Guide,” which can help the church to understand and struggle with the issues surrounding limited water resources and takings, to think about the impact humans and groups have on the natural world and environment, and to explore why care for God's creation is part of our Christian call.
- (www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/water-resources.pdf) The latter resolution affirms that the “issues of water rights and regulatory takings are exceedingly complex” but also reminds the church that rights are “limited by the community’s responsibility to promote the common good and to restrain those who seek individual gain at the expense of others and the community as a whole.”

including cod, tuna, striped bass, Atlantic halibut, red fish, and Chilean sea bass -- that humans crave most are gone. Marine ecosystems are threatened by over fishing, coastal development, pollution, bycatch (unwanted creatures like sea turtles caught in fishnets), cruise ships, invasive species, mercury contamination, and offshore oil drilling.

So, the narrative in John 21 reverses our reality: at first there are no fish, but later there is an overabundance. It must be God's wish that the oceans and endangered fish species experience a resurrection of health and prosperity.

Hunger Action: Current Food Issues and Their Intersection with Our Lives

How is our food produced? What do we eat or overeat? What does this mean for our neighbors? Presbyterians are among those who seek to recognize that, in stewardship, what we choose to eat can be a powerful force in the working of the world.

- In considering food issues, consider reading *We Are What We Eat* (see www.pcusa.org/evangelism/churchdevelopment/pdf/rm_whatueat.pdf or PDS #68-600-02-003).
- Upon completing study of *I Thirst*, a subsequent study suggestion is *Just Eating?* (PDS 7436-05-361) from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, a thoughtful, comprehensive look at current food issues and their intersection with our lives. Read more about this study and related Presbyterian efforts at www.pcusa.org/hunger/food/index.htm.

For Action: Restoring Creation

The fate of the oceans is in our hands. We can:

- Recycle or dispose of our trash properly to lessen ocean pollution.
- Reduce our energy consumption to reduce CO2 and overheating of the oceans.

I THIRST

LENTEN STUDY GUIDE

WATER IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The theme of the 2006 One Great Hour of Sharing is water: *When was it that we saw you...thirsty?* All of us are called to know more. This watery blue orb spinning in the vastness of dark space is our only home, and water is the cradle and source of life on Earth. Life in all its forms is impossible without water. Genesis 1:2 pictures *God brooding over the face of the waters*. Water is the instrument through which God creates.

Earth is awash in water, continuously recycling the same amount the planet has had for eons. The salt water of the oceans is 97.5 percent of Earth's water. The remaining 2.5 percent is fresh water, but over 96 percent of that is locked up in glaciers and subterranean ground water. Accessible and renewable fresh water in lakes, rivers and aquifers is less than one-tenth of one percent of Earth's water. If all Earth's water were contained in two one-gallon containers, then our precious fresh water would equal only one teaspoon of water!

And renewable water rarely lies where we need it. We have tapped much of it already, and many of the world's great rivers now suffer from polluting overexploitation, and political conflict. The teaspoon of water is demanded by agriculture (70 percent), industry (20 percent), and domestic needs (10 percent).

There is a growing shortage of available water. Rivers are drying up: China's Yellow River has not flowed to the sea since 1985. Lakes are shriveling: Africa's Lake Chad has shrunk 95 percent in 40 years. Aquifers are dropping: water tables are falling on every continent. Half the planet's wetlands were lost to development in the 20th century.

There are many reasons why water is becoming scarce.

- *Diversion:* rivers are being dammed and diverted for agriculture and electrical power.
- *Technology:* modern pumps can pull water from aquifers faster than it can be replaced by precipitation.
- *Increased use:* humans use 45 times as much water as 300 years ago.
- *Improper use:* the average American flushes more water down the toilet daily than the average person in a developing country uses for a whole day's drinking, cooking, washing and cleaning.
- *Dietary habits:* in affluent countries, people are eating more water-consuming foods, especially meats.

*When the poor and needy seek water,
and there is none,
and their tongue is arched with thirst,
I the Lord will answer them... (Isaiah 41:17)*

In all corners of the globe, people are facing trouble with water. Today, more than one billion people of the world's 6.5 billion do not have access to clean drinking water. In 20 years, water shortages may plague two-thirds of the world's population. Today, declining water supplies are a major factor in conflicts around the world, particularly in the volatile and parched Middle East. Water-related illnesses contribute 80 percent of all sickness and disease worldwide. Water-related infectious diseases cause the deaths of some four million children each year.

The Hunger Action Enabler and the Restoring Creation Enabler offer this Lenten study guide to help you and your congregation to be aware of critical water issues here and abroad. We have chosen six chapters from the Gospel of John to focus your faith and action as we proceed from the baptism of Jesus to his resurrection. We will consider the perspectives of Hunger Action and Restoring Creation as we investigate water issues.

What does Jesus give us that is like the large catch of fish?

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish (John 21:13). Another opportunity for community is found, at the waterside.

What are ways to build community, while we serve others and give aid to others?

Think about John 13, as Jesus washes his disciples feet.

What are ways that we experience or live out our faith?

Have you ever experienced a reminder of a sense of call, a reiteration of a call that you had previously felt?

What is something that you now feel encouraged by God to do or be?

What is something that you now feel challenged by God to do or be?

What new purpose does Jesus have for us to begin or finish?

How is this risen Jesus Lord of all nature and humanity?

Restoring Creation: A Resurrection for Seas and Oceans

The oceans, teeming with sea life and vast beauty, are created good in God's sight (Genesis 1:20). The living oceans cover more than 70 percent of the planet and contain 97 percent of all living matter on earth, from microscopic organisms to the largest animals on earth – including the blue whale, which can reach 100 feet and weigh 160 tons.

But the oceans and seas are now at risk. Global warming is heating up the oceans and they are absorbing the excess CO2 of global warming, killing much of Earth's coral reefs. To put it in stark terms, the world is swiftly running out of fish. We human beings are eating more and hunting more fish than they can reproduce. Ninety percent of the oceans' major predator fish –

UNIT SIX

OCEAN WATERS

John 21:1-19

Bible Study Notes

The new reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead shifts from Jerusalem to the Sea of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). So, the resurrection reaches earth's seas and oceans, and the fish that inhabit them. The disciples seem unable to figure out what to do with the risen Jesus, so they return to their work as fishermen. They have fished all night without luck. Then they see Jesus on the shore, but they do not recognize him. He tells them to throw their net on the right side, and now it is full of fish. We note Jesus' sheer generosity. One disciple recognizes Jesus: *It is the Lord*. Peter impetuously leaps into the lake to swim to be with Jesus. When the rest reach shore, all discover that Jesus has bread and fish cooking for their breakfast! Jesus enters into the experience of his disciples. He is their servant, just as he washed their feet before his crucifixion in John, chapter 13. So, they are to be servants in the world.

In "Total Recall," Jesus meets the fisherman Peter at work and calls him into service. It has been suggested that Peter must answer Jesus three times, having denied Jesus three times (see John 18:15-27). God may encourage us, or God may challenge us.

For Discussion

Define resurrection. Who is it good news for?

Who is this risen Jesus?

Where have we met Jesus in our life experience? How will you recognize him in the future?

Children, you have no fish, have you? (John 21:5). A society dependent upon fish to eat: Pollution and loss of waters also affects what we can take in to eat.

Why the Gospel of John?

Have you ever read the Gospel of John through the lens, or the clear pool, or the reflection, of water? Water, as either a "symbol" or a reality, runs throughout the Gospel of John, from the beginning of the story, with the baptism of John the baptizer with water -- if there can ever really, truly, be such a thing as just water -- to the final ending to the Gospel of John, with Breakfast on the Beach of the Sea of Tiberias.

Jesus is closely associated with water and our need for water. The Gospel of John presents that image and runs with it. Jesus speaks: *Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink* (John 7:37-38). At Jesus' crucifixion, water is exposed as part of Jesus' very flesh and blood.

Water, in John's Gospel, is the ordinary essential of daily living that interprets his identity to his followers and mediates God's presence to the world. Two-thirds of the human body is water. Three-quarters of the Earth's surface is covered with water. Water is the required physical substance in the entrance rite of the Church. Jesus offers us in the fourth Gospel water for spiritual thirst (ch. 4 and 7), healing (ch. 5 and 9), transformation (ch. 2), service (ch. 13), mastery of nature (ch. 6), and the water of death (ch. 19). Just as surely as each person on earth requires the right amount of water, the Triune God nourishes and refreshes God's creatures.

In this Lenten guide focusing on water, we offer you six units from the Gospel of John as you journey with Jesus to his death and resurrection. For each unit, we sketch out hunger and the environmental themes that Christians around the world are meeting today. And we include activities and action that can make you and your congregation deeper participants in the struggle to face the crisis of water scarcity and our need to preserve water as God's gift to all people and the whole creation. Let us use this study of the Gospel of John in both individual and group study, towards deeper thought and action on water, which is a divine gift.

UNIT ONE

WATER IS GOD'S GIFT

John 1:1-34

Bible Study Notes

John the baptizer introduces Jesus to the world in each of the four Gospels. In the Gospel of John, John the baptizer gives testimony to the Christ and baptizes with water, so that Jesus might be revealed to Israel.

This is the jungle of the Jordan River, nearly 1300 feet below sea level – the lowest place on the planet. John has called the city slickers down from Jerusalem to meet him here to get a new attitude about God and life. John comes across as an environmental prophet like John Muir was a hundred years ago, calling people to meet the Creator in his wilderness. John pulls together the muddy water of baptism in the Jordan and the life changing Spirit of God. So, to meet God, to know Jesus, we must first meet our own mud and the wilderness that God has created.

In the beginning... (John 1:1) alludes to Genesis 1, where the Spirit of God is said to have hovered over the waters of the earth, the first of all that was. An early Christian poem celebrates the presence of God's eternal Word in God's act of creation. John's Baptism is given boldly in this context, of water present at creation, of water that gave way to the liberation of the children of Israel. *In the beginning was the Word...* Jesus Christ permeates the created order.

For Discussion

God calls us through waters of baptism into service in a turbulent world. God names us. When were you baptized into the Christian Church? Reflect upon your own baptism and how it can be defined as the beginning of your vocation.

For Action: Hunger Action

Consider support of Joining Hands Against Hunger with prayers and contributions.

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*If we listen with our hearts,
Creator God, we can hear your creation groan.*

*We can feel in our spirits that too much of our human activity
causes harm to birds, animals, land, water, air, and us.*

*Give us courage to listen to how we harm living systems,
to love the created world as a loved one
and not as a captive, there to do our will,
to love the created world as cooperation
and not as competition, a battle to be won,
to listen for ways to find our way as a part
of the balance of natural systems
and not as exploiters for today's economic gain,
to include your creation in our actions for justice
as Micah implored us toward what is good—
to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with you, Creator God.*

(Source: [Creation Groans](#),
[Are We Listening: Prayer Conversations on Social Justice](#),
by David P. Young, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Mission Interpretation & Promotion,
PDS 70-350-01-449.)

For Action: Restoring Creation

Water Quality in Philadelphia – How clean and safe is our drinking water in Philadelphia and how does it compare to other major cities? In 2001, the Natural Resources Defense Council investigated the tap water quality of 19 municipalities in the U.S. The report rated three problem areas – water quality, watershed protection and right-to-know reporting – on a scale of excellent, good, fair, poor and failing. Philadelphia was rated only fair on water quality and poor in watershed protection. Drinking water in Philadelphia is derived equally from the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers through inlets within the city. There are three treatment plants that produce 270 million gallons of water a day.

In Philadelphia's water, chlorination by-products are high, lead levels -- from corrosion of pipes -- are significant, the cryptosporidium microbial disease carrying pathogen level is high, and toxic pollutants periodically contaminate two rivers and affect the city's water. These conditions are connected to repeated illnesses in children and the elderly. The 300-mile long Delaware River watershed provides water for some 17 million people and is contaminated by storm water runoff, used water discharges by agriculture, communities and industry, sewage, and transportation spills. The city does not control its water sources and the state does not adequately regulate pollution of these waters. The federal government has acted to limit enforcement of the Clean Water Act. The city's water treatment facilities need to be upgraded, distribution pipes need replacement, and water conservation needs strengthening.

(Source: NRDC: www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/uscities/map.asp and Philadelphia Water Department: www.phila.gov/water/index.html)

What outrageous or difficult purpose is the Spirit calling you to act on at this time in your life?

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:16-17).

As part of creation, and liberated by God, what is our responsibility to the earth and to other people?

John the baptizer says, *I baptize with water...the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit"* (John 1:26, 33).

How is the Holy Spirit like water?

How important was water in the ancient world?

How important is it to us today?

What does it mean for a text to say that there is something to come, more important than water?

[Look further in the Gospel of John:]

In John 3:1-10, a faithful teacher, Nicodemus, struggles with difficult questions from and for the Divine Presence and is challenged to think about a second birth. The whole person undergoes the second birth. There is now the responsibility to make choices based on faith rather than stopping with human inclination.

What does your faith impact upon you to do, which might be difficult?

What is a truth which needs to be spoken, even at risk, in the world?

Can you envision the world in a way that is contrary to what current states of affairs would lead us to feel or see?

What is a question which you would like to ask the Divine Presence?

Restoring Creation: Water Is God's Gift

Today's water scarcity leads us to these recognitions that we need to uphold:

- Water is God's essential gift to all living beings. The rain or snow that falls as part of Earth's hydrologic cycle belongs to God, and it shows his goodness to all – to friends and even to enemies (Mt. 5:45).
- Universal access to water is a basic human right. Water belongs to the community of people and creatures who live in a watershed. Water must be under public control.
- Clean water must be available to all people, and water quality is the responsibility of all people to maintain.
- Water resources in forests, lakes and rivers must be treated with utmost care. Water is precious and scarce and it must be used in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- Water cannot be made a commodity to be owned by individuals or private business interests, to be bought and sold.

(From the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Team report Waters of Life to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, 2005)

Hunger Action: Water Is God's Gift

- Over one billion people lack access to safe drinking water.
- There is a strong connection between lack of access to water and poverty. Worldwide, people in poverty are more vulnerable to a scarcity of water, and thus bear more often the negative health impacts of a lack of potable water.
- Water has an important connection to malnutrition; and the lack of potable water can lead to disease and prevent the absorption of nutrients.

were mostly flooded by the waters of Lake Pontchartrain. Over 700 people died in New Orleans alone. This unique city of 500,000 is now a rotting ruin, its population largely dispersed, and its recovery seriously in doubt.

The water that rose to the second floor of many houses was a contaminated brew of raw sewage, crude oil from leaking refineries, pesticides, mud, and bacteria. It is dangerous to be exposed to water like this and its residue. Cholera and dysentery are caused by such standing, polluted water. It is estimated that as many as 92,500 homes may have to be torn down because they are rendered uninhabitable by the flood. It will take years for many of New Orleans' neighborhoods to be cleared, rebuilt and resettled.

This catastrophe is at least partly the result of human manipulation of nature that has caused global warming and the destruction of vital wetlands south of the Mississippi River. North Americans and the 2004 Tsunami victims and the poor in cities in Africa and Asia are all experiencing similar catastrophes.

Hunger Action: Joining Hands Against Hunger

Around the world, there is cumulative pollution of aquifers and water sources by agricultural, industrial, and mining waste. One example, where people are taking action, is Bolivia. Joining Hands Against Hunger is a new project of mission for the Presbyterian Church (USA). A Presbytery in the United States is linked with the people in a developing nation, to listen to their priorities in overcoming poverty, and then partner with them for advocacy and change. In Bolivia, priorities to end poverty and hunger have been named and include fair trade, democracy, and environmental redress, including water contamination and mining contamination! (See www.pcusa.org/hunger/jhaj/bolivia.htm). The Bolivian Joining Hands Network is partnered with the Presbyteries of San Francisco and Newark.

What do I do to satisfy my thirst? How well does it work for me? How does God meet my thirst?

Why is it important that Jesus thirsts?

How much hurt is inflicted upon Jesus? What sorts of experiences would begin to equate with this sort of pain?

What has “finished? What has Jesus accomplished for the world?

Read John 7:39.

Consider a chiasm of scripture and water: “scripture,” “thirst,” “water,” “scripture” (verses 28, 34, 36). We find Jesus surrounded in water.

What does scripture tell us about water?

Restoring Creation: Water Pollution

Worldwide, of 6.5 billion people:

- 1.1 billion do not have safe drinking water.
- 2.4 billion do not have access to water for adequate sanitation.
- 2.2 million, mostly children, die yearly from diseases associated with lack of safe drinking water and poor hygiene.
- 6,000 people, mainly children, die each day in developing nations from diarrhea alone, and from water borne diseases that also infect people with cholera, typhoid, polio, meningitis, hepatitis.

The city of Harbin (metropolitan population, about six million) in northeast China recently shut down its water supply from the Songhua River because China’s largest oil company polluted a 50-mile stretch of the river with a benzene spill.

Hurricane Katrina unleashed unprecedented massive destruction in the U.S. Gulf Coast last August 29th. The graceful and vibrant, but below sea level, city of New Orleans long feared that a killer storm would breach its levees. Katrina overwhelmed the city’s inadequate levees, and New Orleans and its surrounding parishes

- If we ensure that people have access to water, an ecological concern, we will help them to reduce their impoverishment and hunger.

For Action: Restoring Creation

Where in the community of your church is there a bit of nature that speaks of God’s creation and of God’s gift of water? Visit that place. Take your family to it. Get acquainted with its surprises and secrets in all its seasons.

What watershed does our church or your home lie in? What is your nearest stream or river called? Would you drink a cup of water from your stream? Why is it clean or dirty?

For Action: Hunger Action

How do we pray? Consider adding *Water* to congregational concerns in prayer, keeping in mind not only the hungry but also those who desperately need clean water.

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*Holy God,
you sent your Son to be baptized among sinners,
to seek and save the lost.
May we, who have been baptized in his name,
never turn away from the world,
but reach out in love to rescue the wayward;
by the mercy of Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.*

(Source: Book of Common Worship, PC(USA), 1993, p. 199)

UNIT TWO

HOT WATER

John 2:1-11

Bible Study Notes

It is a familiar scene: Everyone in town is invited to the wedding party, the event of a lifetime for the bride and groom. Jesus' mother made him come so she could show him off. But suddenly something goes very wrong and the party is about to be ruined. The wine has run out, but the problem is still a secret from the guests. Mary wants her son to rescue the party. And he does! Jesus orders the empty wine jars to be filled with ordinary water preserved for Jewish purification rites. The water becomes wine and the bridegroom is complimented on his vintage wine! Notice that the water is the indispensable element in this transformation from scarcity to abundance. Water is life!

Jesus' first miracle involves water. In the water is the potential for both sacred and secular purposes.

This is a scene of great joy! It is followed in the second half of the second chapter of John's Gospel with a scene of pronounced anger.

For Discussion

Since Jesus is not yet known as a miracle worker, why does Mary approach him (v. 3)?

When you have run out of answers to a problem, how do you ask Jesus for help?

How does the quantity and quality of the wine demonstrate Jesus' glory?

Where do you need to see water turned into wine in your life right now?

UNIT FIVE

WATERS OF DEATH

John 19:28-37

Bible Study Notes

Within this profound narrative of his crucifixion, Jesus knows that his life and ministry are now finished – completed and accomplished. He calls out, *I am thirsty*. We remember his thirst and hers in the conversation with the woman of Samaria in chapter 4. The ordeal of arrest, trial, his beating by the soldiers, and his agony of crucifixion have drained him dry. Thus, Jesus joins all whose work kills them, whose enemies have overwhelmed them. Jesus is very human at this cruel moment of need. Jesus is apparently quoting here from Psalm 69:21, *for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*. The soldiers offer Jesus a sponge full of diluted wine and vinegar, the wine of soldiers and laborers. And Jesus drinks it.

He is identifying with the servant of Psalm 22, whom God has forsaken to a brutal death. And Jesus is acting out the agony of the suffering servant of Yahweh, described in Isaiah 53 in his rejection and suffering, and in his acceptance of punishment that makes us whole. So Jesus drinks to the last drop the wine and vinegar as the cup of sorrow and pain that his Father has given him. For only when he has drunk the bitter wine of death will his Father's will be fulfilled, and living water flow to fill the thirst of the poor and powerless in every generation.

Jesus is crucified. Jesus thirsts. Water is in Jesus. Water flows out of Jesus, immediately following his death.

For Discussion

What am I thirsty for? What are the people I love thirsty for? What are the people I dislike thirsty for?

*We long to live as those who join you in the transforming of life.
Take our lives this day, O Christ,
that we may truly be your people.
We are listening to the sounds in the world of trade.
We have heard the longing of the peoples of the world
as they reach out to us
and plead for the just sharing of all you have given us.
Their stories will now become our prayers to you, O God:*

*“I am Hawa Amadu, a landlady in Ghana.
My country’s water has been sold as a condition for aid.
Foreign companies now control the water supply.
Sometimes I will go without food
so my grandchildren can have water.”*

*“I am Vicente Gomez Gutierrez, a small-scale farmer in Mexico.
Our hope is nothing more than this—to be able to sell our crops for a
reasonable price so that we have enough to eat.
We don’t ask for anything else.”**

*Our hearts are moved by their longings, O God.
Carry our lives close to yours, Jesus Christ,
that we may be empowered to move into prophetic action
which will ensure that all people
may be present at God’s feast of life.*

*Give to us now all the gifts, which we need
to begin to make a difference, O God.*

*Take our lives this day, O Christ,
that we may truly be your people.
We commit ourselves to you now and for the days to come.
Amen.*

(Source: [Global Week of Action Worship Guide on Trade and Globalization: Worship Service on Trade and Globalization](#), Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance & Presbyterian Church (USA), p. III, available at www.pcusa.org/trade/downloads/worship_guide_low.pdf.)

*These are two of several voices from the original prayer.

What traps you, like your good wine running out?

How does the consumer culture around us prevent us from seeing our emptiness and the possibility of the miraculous?

What is our attitude towards God’s gifts? What does the right attitude look like?

Restoring Creation: The Global Warming Crisis

Danger signs of global warming are becoming more alarming and cannot be ignored:

- Earth’s temperatures are rising. This past year 2005 was the second hottest year (after 1998) on record worldwide. Eight of the ten hottest years have occurred since 1996.
- Sea levels are rising, and the oceans are warming and becoming more acid, killing coral reefs and flooding island nations in the Pacific.
- Arctic sea ice is now melting dramatically during the summer. Glaciers in Greenland, Antarctica and on mountains, like Mt. Kilimanjaro, are melting and shrinking.
- Predicted intense storms showed up last year (2005) in a record 27 named tropical storms and 14 hurricanes -- including Katrina and Rita.

The fossil fuels -- coal, oil and natural gas that we burn to generate our electricity and fuel our cars and trucks -- are producing dangerous accumulations of green house gases, like carbon dioxide, in the atmosphere that trap heat now threatening all of life on earth.

The U.S. has 4 percent of the world’s population, but produces 21 percent of Earth’s greenhouse gases that cause global warming. We are each contributing recklessly to the planet’s impending suffocation. Our civilization and all creatures are literally “in hot water!”

Scientists tell us that unless the world takes drastic and immediate steps to reduce production of greenhouse gases:

- Atmosphere CO₂ levels will double by 2050.
- Global temperatures will rise 2.5 to 10 degrees F. during the next century.
- Sea levels will rise 10 to 30 inches, flooding coastal cities and islands.
- Warming climates will drive U.S. broadleaf forests northward and turn the South into arid savannahs, dooming animal and plant species to extinction.
- The poor in developing nations will face famine, war and dislocation.

Hunger Action: Lifestyle Integrity

- Our own everyday choices may impact the ability of someone else to have clean water to drink.
- Drinking bottled water, instead of tap water, can bring about a host of unintentional and unnecessary ecological effects. Perhaps only 12 percent of plastic water bottles are recycled, compared to 30 percent for plastic soft drink bottles. Petroleum is used in the production of plastic bottles. Greenhouse gasses are emitted in the trucking of plastic bottles to stores. (Source: Eco-Justice Notes, March 11, 2005, www.eco-justice.org/E-050311.asp. See also the flier from Public Citizen, *Fact over Fiction: Why pick tap over bottled water*, available at www.citizen.org/documents/Fact%20over%20fiction.pdf.)
- Excessive consumption in the global North, and wasteful overuse, especially by agribusiness, has significantly depleted the world's water resources. One toilet flush uses as much water as the average person in a developing country uses for a whole day's drinking, cooking, washing, and cleaning. (Source: 2003 Earth Day Sunday Resources, as reprinted in Peace Meal, March 2003, p. 6.)

For Action: Restoring Creation

- Drink tap water, not bottled water! Water sold in little plastic bottles is not ubiquitous. In 2002, 15 billion bottles of water were sold in the U.S. The biggest producers are Perrier, Danone, Pepsi, and Coca-Cola.
- The water is often not as pure as claimed. Approximately 25 percent of bottled water is merely tap water. It is usually not tested as thoroughly as our tap water is, and may contain bacteria and chemicals.
- Bottled water is much more expensive than tap water, and the profits are huge. The environment suffers when aquifers are pumped dry to produce.
- Those throw away plastic bottles add hundreds of thousands of tons of non-degradable plastics to our landfills worldwide. Perhaps only 12 percent of plastic water bottles are recycled, compared to 30 percent of soft drink bottles. Petroleum is used to make plastic bottles, and greenhouse gasses are emitted in the trucking of plastic bottles to stores.
- Instead of buying questionable spring water, get a nice durable plastic water bottle, fill it from the kitchen tap, and use it over and over!
- Protect waters in the United States. In advocacy and following the issues, try these sources:
 - www.sierraclub.org/cleanwater/. Clean water is among the Sierra Club's top priorities and focuses on three areas: water quality, wetlands, and factory farms.
 - www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/default.asp. The Natural Resources Defense Council.

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*O God, even as we affirm our faith,
we know that we are your humble and human people.
We need your help in all that we hope to do in your name.*

poverty-focused development assistance to ensure fulfillment of this commitment?

- Follow the implementation of CAFTA and negotiation of future “free trade” agreements.
 - Speak with your Representative about how he or she voted on CAFTA and why. From Philadelphia, Representatives Fattah and Schwartz voted against CAFTA.
 - The Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) is under negotiation and the initial step of its signing could occur early in 2006. The concerns are the same, but a large body of water is in play, the freshwater resources of the Amazon basin. Indigenous groups are leaders among those concerned about the future of the water. We need to continue to raise questions, concerns, and advocacy on behalf of others. Updates on AFTA may be read at www.citizen.org/trade/afta.
- Learn more about the Millennium Development Goals, approved by 191 nations of the world in 2000, including the United States, towards what we can accomplish together through the governments of our nations.
 - Of the eight goals, the first is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, reducing by half the proportion of people who live on less than one dollar per day and by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
 - The seventh goal is to ensure environmental stability, including reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015.
 - To read the eight Millennium Development Goals, see www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.
 - Write your Senators and Representatives in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Sample letter: www.bread.org/get-involved/one-campaign/volunteer-tool-kit/sample-letter.html.
(Consider joining the ONE Campaign.)

For Action: Restoring Creation

What can our churches and we as families and individuals do to repair the injured creation and slow global warming? We can act to:

- Conserve energy: turn off unused lights, lower our heat, and drive less.
- Choose electricity from renewable energy sources, like the “PECO WIND” energy program.
- Use compact fluorescent lamps (CLFs) instead of incandescent light bulbs.
- Recycle paper, cans, plastic and paper.

For Action: Hunger Action

How can your church make water available at meetings? What would you serve it in? How would you wash it later?

Consider carrying a reusable water bottle during Lent. Do not drink bottled water or any other beverage from a disposable container.

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*Where can we go from your Spirit,
or where can we flee from your presence?
It was you who formed my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
We are fearfully and wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works.
In your book were written all the days
formed for me when none of them yet existed.*

(Based on Psalm 139).

(Source: *Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday*, 2000 materials.)

UNIT THREE
LIVING WATER

John 4:1-15

Bible Study Notes

Jesus is traveling through Samaria, north of Jerusalem, where people hostile to the Jews live. It is much like the Middle East today. While the disciples are away looking for food, the tired Jesus sits on a well wall, hoping for a drink. Jesus is a human, who thirsts.

A Samaritan woman comes out alone at midday to draw water. She and Jesus hold a direct conversation about thirst. Jesus offers to give her living water like a spring of water gushing from her. Notice how skeptical the woman is and how Jesus challenges her. Notice that Jesus is defying Jewish social rules by talking to a woman in public. Consider her hard daily work of pulling up buckets of water, then carrying the water in heavy jars over a long distance to her home. In many places in the world today, women must do the hard work each day of carrying water, which may take hours each day.

The well in Samaria is accessible to every one with a bucket. Water ensures survival.

Some humor! A final comment on this chapter of the Gospel of John is that it is packed with irony. Jesus wants a drink. He gives the water. Then, together, Jesus and the Samaritan woman end up getting something bigger.

For Discussion

How do you like this picture of a tired and thirsty Jesus?

The woman challenges Jesus. He asks her to deepen her thinking. *How does this woman make you feel about her?*

- In support of debt relief, which will empower nations to take steps to fight poverty within their bounds, visit www.jubileeusa.org.

Privatization of water risks higher prices for water, pricing the poor out of their fair share. For the poor, losing access to water is truly a matter of life and death. On the other hand, water can indeed be towards healing.

For Action: Hunger Action

In the United States, we have the power of our relative economic wealth and its relationship with other peoples of the world (and we might, for example, exercise purchase choices, based on how they might impact others), and we have the power of democratic voice. Take this spring as a fresh time to participate in advocacy efforts, speaking to Washington, DC, about choices and policies that our nation can make, and be a part of, towards fulfilling our nation's role in fighting global hunger, preventable diseases, and shortages of clean water.

- Come to Washington with others from the Presbytery of Philadelphia for "Second Tuesday" trips, in coordination with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office, with the focus of our learning and advocacy for spring/One Great Hour of Sharing 2006 to be Advocacy for policies increasing our nation's active commitment to making strides against global poverty. (Sign up with the Hunger Action Enabler: SSteinnagel@presbyphl.org)
 - Spring dates: February 14, March 14, April 11, and May 9.
 - Issues to consider discussing with Congress:
 - What would we like to see in equitable trade agreements between wealthy and developing nations?
 - At the Group of 8 Summit of July 2005, the United States promised to double assistance to the developing world by 2010. Will Congress approve significant increases in

- **Privatization:** Ten corporations dominate the global water industry. They typically obtain a concession to manage, maintain, and supply a city's water system from the local governments, which cannot afford to maintain and expand it by themselves. The corporation receives all revenues for service to users, and soon raises prices to maximize profits. The poor cannot then afford water. And there is often no testing for water purity. In the U.S., some 15 percent of the regional water systems, covering more than 40 million people, have been taken over by private companies.
- **The World Bank:** It is common for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to sponsor these corporate thefts of municipal water by demanding that a nation privatize its water services in order to borrow development funds. These privatization contracts are very difficult for a nation or a city to reverse.

Hunger Action: Privatization of Water

The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), affirmed by Congress in 2005, eases the privatization of water by making it more difficult for local governments to subsidize public water systems.

- Nicaragua is one nation where a concern regarding CAFTA was water privatization.
- For Presbyterian-based policy and resources on international trade agreements, www.pcusa.org/trade is an extremely valuable source.
- Learn about what other organizations are doing about international trade agreements: www.afsc.org/trade-matters/other-orgs/default.htm.

Water privatization has also occurred, when it has been set as a precondition for development assistance aid or “Jubilee” debt relief for a developing nation.

Think about other women who challenge Jesus. Consider Mark 7:24-30//Matthew 15:21-28.

How might individuals be operative in calling Jesus back to his true identity?

For further consideration of the Samaritan woman as a “challenging woman,” to whom we might continue to listen today, a well-thought resource is a sermon by Nelia Kimbrough, of the Open Door Community, preached at Open Door worship on February 27, 2005: *She Was That Kind of Woman* (printed in Hospitality, the Open Door Newsletter, June 2005). The Open Door is a Christian and Presbyterian response to homelessness and imprisonment in Atlanta, Georgia and beyond. See: www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 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 (John 4:13-14). Jesus is greater than his and the Samaritans’ shared ancestors.

Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water (John 4:15). As great as water is, the relationship with Jesus is greater.

As great as water is, the reconciliation between man and woman and formerly divided nationalities is greater. Jesus grants us this freedom.

Who is a Samaritan to you: some one(s) with whom you face division?

When you were growing up, who were the people you were told not to associate with?

Jesus and the Samaritan woman find community in the sharing of a drink.

Read Exodus 17. What happens when the people of Israel need a drink and stand together in community?

Tell of a time that you were very thirsty.

Tell of a time you have experienced community in water.

How many times do you take water in a day?

Why does Jesus tell the woman that if she knew who he is, she would have asked him for living water?

What does this story say to powerless people and groups in our society and in the world today?

What will keep someone in a disabled situation or create such a situation for people who are vulnerable?

What will you say “No” to?

Why has God given the covenant people a Sabbath?

[Look further in the Gospel of John:]

Compare this passage with John 9:1-16, which recounts another healing and its involving water, even human water.

Hunger Action: Access to Water

The amount of fresh water available for people’s use worldwide is affected in both amount and accessibility. Look back at John 3:22-24. What factors are affecting the abundance of water today, and how are you involved? What does baptism do to the boundaries between people?

- Of all the water on earth, a miniscule minority of the water appears as fresh water.
- Fresh water is being used up.
- Effects of global warming, such as rising sea levels and altered seasonal patterns, are having an impact on fresh water resources.
- Many of the world’s poorest farmers, for example, in Africa and Asia, lack access to irrigation water, and where technologies exist, financial and other commitments have lagged. (Source: *Troubled Waters*, World Ark, Heifer Project, Fall 2003, p. 4.)
- It is predicted that half of the world’s most impoverished nations will face moderate to severe water shortages by 2025.

Recommended resources about women and water:

- Case studies recording women’s voices on their relationship with water: www.citizen.org/cmep/water/gender.

Restoring Creation: Privatization of Water

*If the wars of this century were fought over oil,
the wars of the next century will be fought over water.*
(Ismail Serageldin, vice president of the World Bank, 1995)

The invalid described in John, chapter 5, was deprived of the water in the Bethesda pool. It was not his water. He did not matter to the managers of the pool. The World Bank has predicted that by 2025, two-thirds of the world’s population (now 6.5 billion people) will run short of fresh drinking water.

Poised to capitalize on this crisis are private companies, many of them multinational corporations who are probing the planet for opportunity to turn the misery of water-starved regions into profits. For them, water has become a commodity to be bought and sold for maximum profit, not a sacred resource belonging to the local community. Pricing impoverished people out of the water market is truly a matter of life or death! (Cases-in-point include Ghana and South Africa. For a Presbyterian report, see www.pcusa.org/washington/issuenet/africa-040311.htm.)

- Dams: 45,00 large dams have been built worldwide, many financed by the World Bank, shifting control of the impounded water to corporations.

UNIT FOUR
WATER WARS

John 5:1-15

Bible Study Notes

Jesus has come back to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast, maybe Pentecost. He goes to the Pool of Siloam, a public source of domestic water. It is described as a kind of hospital ward for people with chronic conditions: the blind, lame and paralyzed. Jesus approaches one man who has been disabled with atrophied legs for 38 years. He is waiting for someone to place him in the pool at the rare moment when the waters get disturbed. This disabled man is never first in line in life. Jesus asks the sick man if he wants to be made well, and then Jesus tells him, *Stand up, take your mat and walk*. And immediately the man is made well and starts to walk on those useless legs.

The pool at Beth-Zatha reputed for healing. Jesus is greater than the pool. Jesus is not bound by the obstacles present. Jesus here identifies exclusively with this street person and with all people like him. But the people in power despise him.

For Discussion

How would you picture the invalid? What prevents the man from being healed?

A sick man is ignored and left alone, while the resources are right there to help him.

What does Jesus mean by his question in v. 6?

How would you rephrase Jesus' reply in v. 8?

Jesus is greater than the water, but let us imagine that the healing of the waters would also be real, if people were not impeded. Jesus breaks down the barriers. He is the final link.

- *Teach a Woman to Fish...and Everyone Eats. Why Women Are Key to Fighting Global Poverty.* (Sojourners magazine, June 2005, pp. 29-34.)
- Another excellent resource: Horizons, The Magazine for Presbyterian Women, March/April 2005, cover feature on water.

Restoring Creation: Access to Water

*Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
you who have no money, come buy and eat! (Isaiah 55:1)*

Most of us give little thought to where we will find our next glass of water, because we have abundant water from our tap at home, water fountains, and bottled water. Access to clean and affordable water is vital to public health. But many people are denied access to clean water for drinking and cleaning.

- Deforestation and industrial forestry: Haiti has lost 99 percent of its forests, so its soil has eroded and lost fertility, and its rivers are filled with sediment. Heavy rains cause destructive mudslides. As a result, Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas.
- Monoculture forestry and agriculture: Crops like eucalyptus, sugar, and rice consume most of the water in a region, leaving little for traditional village agriculture that lives with available water supplies.
- Mining on steep slopes fills valleys with debris and poisons streams with sediment and chemicals. Mountain top removal coal mining in West Virginia is destroying rivers and forests.
- Dams are often built with money from the World Bank, shifting control from the people and their governments to global corporations.

For Action: Restoring Creation

LIVING WATERS FOR THE WORLD (LWW) is a ministry of the Synod of the Living Waters (covering Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that provides pure water to needy communities through mission partnerships. LWW supplies water purification systems and trains local community leaders to operate and maintain their own locally owned equipment.

LWW was established in 1992 and presently operates in villages in Mexico, Haiti, Guatemala, Brazil, Honduras and Belize. The Rev. Wil Howie is LWW leader. Congregations interested in involvement with LWW to provide clean water and health education in developing nations can contact Wil Howie at www.livingwatersforthe.world.org

For Action: Hunger Action

“Efforts to combat hunger without explicit attention to the unique needs of women and the constraints they face fail [unique needs and constraints including lower levels of literacy and education; vulnerability to violence and HIV; and inability to own land or get credit for business]” (Strengthening Rural Communities, Bread for the World Hunger Report 2005, p. 40).

Learn more about women’s interaction with water globally. Support efforts to expand the recognition of the rights of women worldwide. (Informative articles may be found at www.pcusa.org/washington/issuenet/africa.)

Suggested Lesson Prayer

*Almighty and eternal God,
we fervently lift up our eyes to you,
searching for help and guidance
in the midst of very many problems.
Come and show us how to serve the refugees
and the oppressed;
how to stand alongside those who struggle
for social justice;
Come, liberate us from captivity to confessionalism,
and make us agents of reconciliation and unity.
Give us a will to love and serve you
though loving and serving others.
Show us your way.
Enable us to grow in the knowledge of your truth.
Make us bearers of your hope,
and instruments of your peace.
May we be living witnesses of that unity
which binds Divine Parent, Son,
and Holy Spirit into one forgiving and redeeming God.*

*Show me your way, O God.
Show me the way toward deeper community
with me sisters in struggle.
Show me the way to your Abundant Life,
present in my heart even now.
Show me ever more fully the Way
that is your beloved one, Jesus.*

(Source: Women Students in the Pan African leadership course, Kitwe, Zambia, as printed in For the Healing of the Nations, Church World Services, 1996, “Day 23.”)