



*March 22, 2020*

*During this time of concern regarding the coronavirus and the desire to protect the health and wellbeing of our communities, the following is an online version of worship for you to use in the comfort (and safety) of your own home. The Session will continue to monitor the situation and will keep you updated as changes unfold.*

*Please let us know if you have prayer concerns or other needs as we continue to be the body of Christ during these difficult times.*

*We are not a people of fear but of great courage in Christ. We rest upon the promises of God and so turn to our Lord to guide us through these days. Our prayer is that you will be blessed in this worship and invite you to check out our online resources as well.*

*We'd love to hear from you!*

*We certainly acknowledge at the outset that the quality of music is not what we find when we worship together, but these are links we thought might be helpful in your worship*

## **PRELUDE**

Tchaikovsky-Hymn of the Cherubim - Liturgy of St John Chrysostom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggUtlUHIqQQ>

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The Lord is my Shepherd. There is nothing I lack.

**Many: God guides me in proper paths for the sake of God's good name.**

One: God bathes my head in oil; my cup is so full it spills over!

**All: Yes, God's goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life.**

## **HYMN**

*In Christ Alone*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjiiF83q7G0>

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Gracious God, we are people who still turn to darkness rather than light. We keep shameful deeds secret but flaunt our occasional acts of virtue. We see ourselves as blameless but pass judgement on others. We do not stand firmly enough with those who are vulnerable, but we step back protecting ourselves. Forgive us, we pray. Bring us into your light that we may see ourselves rightly. Bring us into your light that we may know ourselves loved. Bring us into your light that we may live more fruitful lives. Keep raising us, we pray, from the deadness of sin, and shine upon us with your grace. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

## **SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

## **DECLARATION OF PARDON**

How glorious is the Gospel, the wonder of God's love, the power of our Lord to overcome all and reign as King of Heaven! What grace He extends us that we might be called the children of God, for that is who we are. Hear the Good News, the Gospel and allow its truth to inform you mind, body and soul. Through the power and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are a forgiven people.

## **AN ACT OF PRAISE**      *Gloria*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.**

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Gracious God illumine our hearts and minds as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed, so that by the power of your Holy Spirit we may see what is good and right and true. And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to you, so that your glory becomes visible in our words and deeds. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

## **PSALTER**                      Psalm 23

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake.**

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.**

**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

## **MUSIC**

### **Musical Reflection on Psalm 23**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG0>

## OLD TESTAMENT

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the LORD.” But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

## CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

*Stephanie DeGeneste*

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ave3UsSEEitSp5hjI\\_yDKjENtxrswc8W](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ave3UsSEEitSp5hjI_yDKjENtxrswc8W)

**NEW TESTAMENT**

Ephesians 5:8-14

**For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.'**

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**MUSIC** This Little Light of Mine (A LITTLE ZIPPY!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBwJik2FKW0>

**GOSPEL READING** John 9:1-41

Quick video from Pastor Lynn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtLJSXBkD0o>

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

## REFLECTION

*Rev. Lynn Santulli*

I love the Gospel of John for its richness in the text, its soaring Christology, and its complexity. There is a depth to the stories that give me much to ponder and they seem rather like riddles that challenge the way I see the world and expand my vision when I take the time to wrestle with them. And, since we all seem to have a little more time on our hands these days, perhaps this is a good time to do just that.

The story we encounter today appears with all these elements firmly in hand. There is a question amongst scholars as to whether this is a post-resurrection story or not. It may become clear as to why they may think this as we jump into the deep end of this story.

Before we begin, let's take a look at some of the intricacies of the story. Jesus is on the road (later referred to as The Way by early Christians) and He and His disciples encounter a blind man from birth. The disciples ask Jesus who sinned that caused this and Jesus replies that no one person caused this sin but rather that the human condition that handicaps them from truly seeing has something to do with God's providence. Without God, humankind is blind from birth. We, too, then are blind from birth unless by God's grace we are granted sight, insight into God's truths. When we see, will we recognize The Way? And even further, what will be our response?

The subtleties continue to deepen as Jesus goes to the earth and with water from His own self, creates a paste that He presses upon the eyes. If this raises within us the story of Genesis as God made man from the earth, we might be onto something. With Christ's touch, with the water and the resulting mud, this man is healed. We are healed when the healing waters of baptism wrap our human bodies created from the earth and are raised up to new understandings. This act by Christ is not random, but carries within it deep meaning not only for this hapless blind man but for us as well.

It is also interesting to note that the healing of the man occurs at the pool called Sent which reminds us that Christ himself was sent into the world and the apostles and disciples are sent as well. The healing occurs out of our sight, just as the resurrection will occur out of our sight as well. There is not detailed recounting of the experience. All we know is that the healing occurs because the man returns proclaiming the healing (remind you yet of the women at the empty tomb?). It too was the Sabbath day when Jesus rose and accomplished the healing of the world from its sin, when new light broke forth and the world looked with wonder upon her Savior. But not everyone saw, and fewer understood.

And that leads us further into the story. When the blind man comes back with vision, no one seems to believe him. As a matter of fact, they claim it's not even him. Hm, does that sound familiar as well? It gets even more intriguing because the response by the healed man is yet another of the 'I am' sayings of Jesus. This gets lost a bit in the translation which is why a close reading continues to reveal deeper layers.

The blind man's parents don't want to upset the apple cart either as they don't want to be thrown out of the synagogue. Historically, believing that someone was the messiah was not illegal. It would have been seen as being misinformed, but not worthy of dismissal. So it wasn't until there were Jews who believed in Jesus as Messiah and persisted in that belief until they parted ways with the synagogue and churches became the place where the faithful gathered.

By now we can begin to see why scholars might consider this story a post-resurrection story, but if so, why would John include it here and perhaps more to our point today, what does it say to us today?

John was writing to the faithful of the church community. People that were being challenged for their faith, belittled and even martyred. It is a story that reminds us that in our greatest challenges, the times when the world seems dark, when our vision for the future and Christ's presence in our midst appears fuzzy or dim, that it is precisely at these moments that the Resurrected Savior comes to meet us. He brings in His presence the healing of our fears and anxieties and remind us that He has already overcome all, He will overcome this as well. Our challenge is to remain faithful and look with new eyes upon the world around us. To be reminded that in our baptism we are a new creation that is Christ's work and that work will not stop until it reaches fruition.

We are in the midst of a dark and anxious time, but we do not see as the world sees. We see in the world the hand of Christ and lean into the work at hand to continue to build God's Kingdom here on earth until we are called from this earth. Storms end and this one will too, as well. We can look with fresh eyes to Christ and find our way, The Way, when we open our hearts and have the courage to speak and live our convictions, regardless of what others may say.

Let us as the disciples of Christ fulfill our calling to live into the hope that Christ promises. When we cannot see, Christ is our vision and guide. He is the Shepherd who cares for His flock and knows how to get us home. Christ is the one upon which we can lean because He alone is the foundation of our faith, the Lord of our heart and our Hope in the darkest of storms. Praise be to God!



## **HYMN**

*Be Thou My Vision*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT\\_Hjg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg)

## **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH      Apostle's Creed**

**I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**MUSIC**    *VOCES8: Lux Aeterna (Eternal Light)- Edward Elgar*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwdeqVmXlHk>

**OFFERING** - *Reflect on what offering might make to those around you and to the community. Commit your tithes to church (you can even go to the church's website and click on 'Donate Now' to send in your gifts or snail mail your offering to church.*

## **\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him all creatures here below; praise Him above ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Rev. Lynn Santulli*

### **Health Issues:**

Brian; Anthony; The Beaucasan Family; Leon Edwards; Cynthia; Elaine Duesbury; Frank; Drew Moore; Candyce Norris;

Glenna Stevens; Terry; Janie Whiteford; Henry Ward, Jr.;  
Jay and daughter; Chrissie and her son Jake; Bob Newell;  
Kassi and Family; Juliet Fydrich; Neen Davis; Michael R.; Karen West;  
Lindsey Loftons and Brenda Hopper; Kathy Fyfee; Thomas West Jr.;  
Marlotte Toy Williams; the Carlson family

### **Homebound:**

Sonnia Cook; George Germinder; Mary Jo Buck.

### **World Issues:**

Southern Cameroon (Ambazonia)

For the caregivers, first responders, medical professionals, leaders who are on the frontline of dealing with this health crisis as well as all those who have been infected and affected by this virus.

### **The LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN**      *We Are Marching in the Light of God*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn16ABWn20c>

### **\*BENEDICTION**

**Go forward in the peace of Christ and proclaim the power of the Gospel through acts of kindness, generous spirits, and courageous love**

**POSTLUDE**      Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord (contemporary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idQ1n3cdgfo>

O The Deep Love of Jesus (Epic Feel)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLTu1xv2-Us>

For a more classical feel:

Loving Shepherd of Thy Sheep

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqRt7Z\\_P-IY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqRt7Z_P-IY)