

March 22, 2020
Fourth Sunday in Lent

Though we are not together in the Sanctuary of our church, We gather in Spirit.

Hymns are reprinted under LicenSing # A-730510.

INVITATION & GATHERING

Prelude and Quiet Moments

Lighting the Christ Candle

As we journey through Lent, as we move towards the darkness of the cross, we light a candle to remind us of the Light that cannot be put out.

May its light remind us that we are not alone, in the good and the bad of life, we are not alone.

Call to Worship

The Lord is our shepherd; we will have all that we need; we are released from fear.

The Shepherd guides us in fruitful living, giving us healing and pardon.

Even though difficulties and dangers may lie ahead, we do not need to fear.

God's love and strength are as a rod and staff for us.

God will give us abundantly from God's own love.

Surely this goodness and mercy will be with us all of our days, and we will dwell in God's loving care forevermore.

Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Gracious God, who created us in your own image, open our eyes to see your presence among us, moving in powerful ways at all times and in all places.

Open our ears to hear familiar words in new ways—ways that will change us and challenge us to become the people you created us to be.

Grant us the power and the courage to come out of the darkness and fear and into the light of Jesus Christ, that we may serve you by serving others.

We pray this in the name of Jesus who also taught us to pray saying...

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn "Come to My Heart" VU 661*

**Come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
teach me to walk in your way.
Come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
Come to my heart today.
Give me the peace and joy
That only you can bring.
Come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
Give me a song to sing.**

**Fill me with love, Lord Jesus;
teach me to walk in your way.
Fill me with love, Lord Jesus;
fill me with love today.
Give me the peace and joy**

**that only you can bring.
Fill me with love, Lord Jesus;
give me a song to sing.**

**Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus;
teach me to walk in your way.
Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus;
Answer my prayer today.
Give me the peace and joy
that only you can bring.
Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus;
give me a song to sing.**

Prayer of Confession

(Sung - VU 865)

**Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

Healing God, we have languished in our blindness. We have chosen to hide in darkness in order to avoid reaching out and risking acceptance.

We are afraid of the light, and yet we crave it. In your light, there is healing and hope, restoration and transformation.

Forgive our lack of faith and our fearfulness, O God. **Give us courage to reach out to the light and accept its healing rays.**

May our lives be transformed by your mercy, for we pray this in Jesus' Name.
Amen.

Words of Assurance

Even though you have lived in darkness, God's light is being poured out for you. Accept the light and love that is freely offered, and be transformed by its healing mercies.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

PROCLAMATION & RESPONSE

Scripture

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.'

John 9:1-41

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 neighbours 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 worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement 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.

Sermon

THANKSGIVING & COMMUNION

Offering Invitation

**Hymn of Dedication (VU 581 vs. 2)*

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.

Good works of service are for offering.

When we are giving, or when receiving,

we belong to God, we belong to God.

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

SENDING FORTH

Hymn *"The Lord is my Shepherd"* *VU 747*

**The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.**

**My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.**

**Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill,
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.**

**My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.**

**Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:**

**and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling place shall be.**

Commissioning and Benediction

In these strange times, as in all times, we remember that God, our Shepherd is with us, we are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of Jesus Christ.

And the blessing of God our Creator, Christ, our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, be with us, now and always.

Amen.

Postlude