

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

May we all experience the peace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Before our worship: listen to and speak quietly with God.....

during worship, hear God speak to you...

following worship, speak to one another in love.



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020
4th SUNDAY OF LENT**

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," he declares. In

baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*SONG (781) Children of the Heavenly Father

**1 Children of the heav'nly Father
safely in his bosom gather;
nestling bird nor star in heaven
such a refuge e'er was given.**

**2 God his own doth tend and nourish,
in his holy courts they flourish.**

**From all evil things he spares them,
in his mighty arms he bears them.**

**3 Neither life nor death shall ever
from the Lord his children sever;
unto them his grace he showeth,
and their sorrows all he knoweth.**

**4 Though he giveth or he taketh,
God his children ne'er forsaketh;
his the loving purpose solely
to preserve them pure and holy.**

*APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God And the
communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE (p. 138)

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Merciful God, **the fountain of living water, you quench our
thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always.
Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of
your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who**

lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord's chosen successor to Saul.

¹The 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.” ²Samuel 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.’” ³Invite 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.” ⁴Samuel 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?” ⁵He 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.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.” ⁷But 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.” ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” ¹¹Samuel 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.” ¹²He 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.” ¹³Then 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.
Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks Be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The Lord | is my shepherd;
I shall not | be in want.
²The Lord makes me lie down | in green pastures
and leads me be- | side still waters.
³You restore my | soul, O Lord,
and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake.
⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall |
fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me. R
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.
⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the | Lord forever.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

*Because We Now Live in the Divine Light Which Is Jesus Christ, We
Conduct our Lives in Ways That Reflect the Light of Christ, So That our
Activity Is Truly Pleasing to God.*

⁸Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as
children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good
and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.
¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose
them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do
secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for
everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,
“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks Be to God.**

The Holy Gospel According to John **Glory to You, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

*Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind, Provoking a Hostile Reaction That He
Regards as Spiritual Blindness to the Things of God.*

¹As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The 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?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He 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.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then 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.” ¹⁶Some 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. ¹⁷So 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.”

¹⁸The 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 ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but 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.” ²²His 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. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴So 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.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He 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?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus 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.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to You, O Christ.**

MESSAGE

John 9

A young girl gets cancer in her legs and has to have her legs amputated. A horrible, horrible thing. Horrible for the girl and for her parents. As a parent, I can't think of any thing worse than having to have to watch your child go through something like this. But this mother had to go through something that was just as bad maybe worse.

She worked in a school and one day one of her co-workers came up to her and said, “*you must feel really guilty for not taking better care of yourself when you were pregnant with Janey*”.

The nerve! Can you imagine the nerve of someone to say that to a grieving mother? It's terrible, terrible but it happens.

There is this man who had been born with just one arm. He says a number of people have come up to him and asked what kind of drugs was his mother was taking during her pregnancy.

It maybe be in our nature to blame someone for misfortune.

There is a car accident, they must have been drinking, they must have been texting. We even do it to ourselves what did I do to deserve this?

And to top it off some believe it is God that is doing the punishing

The Disciples see a man that was born blind and ask Jesus.

'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'

But Jesus answered,

'Neither this man nor his parents sinned;

Jesus doesn't get into the blame game he just goes about to heal the man and bring him into a new relationship. A new relationship with life and a new relationship with him, with Jesus.

We even see this with the corona virus COVID-19. We are tempted to blame this one or that one. Instead we should follow Jesus' lead and go about trying to make the situation better.

'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.'

What can we do? We can isolate ourselves if that what is required. We can call and or write letters to people who could use to encouragement and human contact. We can contribute if we can to those that are trying to help.

Another interesting thing about this story is what the symbolism tells us. Jesus puts mud on the man's eyes and tells him to go wash - and he is healed. Again he is brought into a new relationship with Jesus and life. The mud brings us back to the conversation Jesus has with Nicodemus - remember *"you must be born from above or you must be born again?"*

That seems to be what happened through the mud and the washing. The mud brings us back to creation the original birth.

then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7 NRSV

And then the washing reminds us of baptism and new life. One last thing about this reading it maybe the best. The man's healing wasn't received well by everyone for example the religious leaders didn't like it and threw him out of the temple. Which was a big thing for him especially back then. Jesus found out about it and Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, Jesus heard he was in trouble and sought him out. Jesus searched for the man in trouble and found him.

This maybe one of my favorite verses in the Bible right now. That is fantastic news. The man was in trouble and Jesus sought him out and found him.

So think about that. We often think about it the other way around. We are in trouble and so rightfully, we look to Jesus. And that's great but if that's great, how wonderful is it to think that when we are in trouble Jesus looks for us?

So 3 take aways from this story. Just because bad things are happening to you or a loved one doesn't mean that someone sinned. God isn't out to get you to punish you. When we mess up, we might have to face the consequences of our actions but God isn't out to zap us.

Second, through healing comes a new relationship with life and Jesus. But don't put mud in your eye.

Third maybe the best, well for me it is. Well, I go back on something I just said. I said Jesus isn't out to get you. Are you in trouble? Jesus is out to get you - but in a good way.

Quite often when we are in trouble we isolate ourselves from the ones that love us and can help us, family, friends and God. (If you have the virus you will have to isolate yourself) but for the most part we need the help of our loved ones. Yet even if you isolate your self and try to hide from God. Know this, Jesus will seek you out - because he loves you. And all God's people said, (I heard you) Amen.

SONG (779) Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.**

- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**

- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

- 4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**

- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.**

APOSTLES CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of insight, open the hearts of the church and the world to all who testify to your deeds of power (like Jonathan Edwards, whom we commemorate today). Raise up voices in your church that are often silenced or overlooked due to age, gender expression, race, or economic status. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, empower us to care for the land and all living things that dwell in it and beneath it. Provide rich soil for crops to grow. Bring rain to lands suffering drought. Protect hills and shorelines from damage caused by erosion. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, bring peace to all people and nations. Anoint leaders who seek goodness, righteousness, and truth on behalf of all. Frustrate the efforts of those who would seek to cause violence or terror. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, you care for our needs even before we ask. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day (especially **Kaitlynn, Marcia, Jenny, Bob, Horst, Janet, Crystal, Carol, Adair, DJ, Bob, Jim, Dan, Darrell, Cheryl, Holly, Michel family, Carol, John, Edla, Ray, Jerry, Arthur, Leah, Laura, Glenda, Brian, Tom, Jerry, Jon, Grosso family, Richard, Nikki and all those struggling with COVID-19**). Accomplish healing through the work of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, and all who tend to human bodies. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, you care for your congregations around the world we especially lift up St. John Lutheran Church, Kasson St. John Lutheran

Church, Waseca Chatfield Lutheran Church, Chatfield Kisimba Lutheran Church, Tanzania Mkiwa Lutheran Church, Tanzania. Come quickly to all who seek to live out your mission in these times. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, help this assembly lift up the unique gifts of each person who enters, no matter their physical capacity, cognitive ability, or sensory need. Help us to be creative and brave in making our facilities and our ministries accessible to all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, you call out to those who are asleep and awaken them to new life with you. We give thanks for your saints (especially). Join us together with them as your children in this world and the next. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

SONG (765) Lord of All Hopefulness

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy:
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.**

- 4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.**

BENEDICTION

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

SENDING MUSIC

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