

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

“Cross” Current

March 18 & 19, 2023

AS WE GATHER

Some of the central people in the Gospel narratives we get to know by name; others we do not. Although the man born blind is a major person in John 9, we never learn what his name might be. We meet his parents and his neighbors and we meet the Pharisees to whom he tells the story of the miraculous restoration of his sight. Although we do not learn his name, Jesus said of the man born blind that the works of God were displayed in him. As the One brightening our lives with the light of salvation, Jesus brings a new vision to our lives—an eternal vision of life with God that never ends. God knows our names. He directs the cross currents of our daily lives. In His light we see light—and that is what matters!

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

WELCOME

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.
Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land. Psalm 85:8-9

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #685 “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”

Let us ever walk with Jesus, Follow His example pure,
Through a world that would deceive us And to sin our spirits lure.
Onward in His footsteps treading, Pilgrims here, our home above,
full of faith and hope and love, Let us do the Father's bidding.
Faithful Lord, with me abide; I shall follow where you guide.

Let us suffer here with Jesus And with patience bear our cross.
Joy will follow all our sadness; Where He is, there is no loss.
Though today we sow no laughter, We shall reap celestial joy;
All discomforts that annoy Shall give way to mirth hereafter.
Jesus, here I share your woe; Help me there your joy to know.

Let us gladly die with Jesus. Since by death He conquered death,
He will free us from destruction, Give to us immortal breath.
Let us mortify all passion That would lead us into sin;
And the grave that shuts us in Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
Jesus, here with you I die, There to live with you on high.

Let us also live with Jesus. He has risen from the dead
That to life we may awaken. Jesus, you are now our head.
We are your own living members; Where you live, there we shall be
In your presence constantly, Living there with you forever.
Jesus, let me faithful be, Life eternal grant to me.

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.

People: Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.

Pastor: Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

People: Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life! Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us make confession of our sins to God, our gracious, heavenly Father.

People: Eternal God, we confess that we all have sinned and need forgiveness. By nature, we are sinful from the very beginnings of our lives. Through our thoughts, words, and deeds, we daily sin against you. We have lived for ourselves in many ways, breaking your commands that direct us not to lie, steal, or transgress your holy will. We have walked in the darkness of bad choices and have left unfulfilled opportunities to do good and be blessings to others. O God, in your mercy forgive our sin and free us from selfishness and indifference, that we may joyfully follow your will and gladly obey your commandments. Graciously forgive our sins and direct us in ways of compassion and love.

Pastor: God promises to hear those who turn to Him with repentant hearts. Upon this your confession, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in ✠ peace.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

✠ WORD ✠

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 42:14–21* (The Lord turns darkness into light.)
¹⁴ For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. ¹⁵ I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. ¹⁶ And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. ¹⁷ They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, “You are our gods.” ¹⁸ Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! ¹⁹ Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the LORD? ²⁰ He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. ²¹ The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Ephesians 5:8–14* (Walking as children of the light)

⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

8:00 ANTHEM

“Shout to the Lord”

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *John 9:1–41* (Jesus heals a man who had been born blind.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰ So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸ 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 ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” ²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵ He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ 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?” ²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for

this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

CHILDREN'S SONG & CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

“Let Me Learn of Jesus” AGPS #156

Let me learn of Jesus; He is kind to me
Once He died to save me, nailed upon the tree.

When I go to Jesus, He will hear me pray
Make me pure and holy, take my sins away.

Let me think of Jesus; He is full of love,
Looking down upon me From His throne above.

SERMON HYMN #571 “God Loved the World So That He Gave”

God loved the world so that He gave His only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in Him believe Should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All then who trust in Him alone Are built on this chief cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die; His Son with saving grace is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest good.

If you are sick, if death is near, This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death; That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!

SERMON "Do You See What I See" **John 9:1-41**

(Rise)

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Be seated)

"CROSS" REFERENCE

Pastor: "The Great Exchange" is one of the ways that the gift of salvation given by Jesus Christ on the cross has been described. In the Solid Declaration, the Lutheran Confessions express that sacrificial gift of our Lord in this way: "Therefore, we believe, teach, and confess that the entire obedience of Christ's entire person (which He has offered to the Father for us, even to His most humiliating death on the cross) is credited to us for righteousness." Together we sing of the Lamb of our salvation, Jesus Christ.

SONG DURING OFFERINGS #547 "The Lamb"

The Lamb, the Lamb, O Father, where's the sacrifice?
Faith sees, believes God will provide the Lamb of price!

**Refrain Worthy is the Lamb whose death makes me His own!
The Lamb is reigning on His throne!**

The Lamb, the Lamb, One perfect final offering.
The Lamb, the Lamb, Let earth join heav'n His praise to sing. **Refrain**

The Lamb, the Lamb, As wayward sheep their shepherd kill
So still, His will On our behalf the Law to fill. **Refrain**

He sighs, He dies, He takes my sin and wretchedness.
He lives, forgives, He gives me His own righteousness. **Refrain**

He rose, He rose, My heart with thanks now overflows.
His song prolong Till ev'ry heart to Him belong. **Refrain**

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Pastor: Great Physician, enlighten our eyes by your blessed Gospel, and hide us in your shelter in the day of trouble. Provide a home in your Church for those cast out by this world, and unite them with us in confessing your holy name. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord of hosts, your Son abides among His saints in the temple of His Church. Shelter all those who seek refuge under the cover of His tent, and raise up pastors in every age to serve them in your name. Bless all pastors, missionaries, and teachers of the faith, especially our Together in Mission partner, Pastor Chuck Ferry and family. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord of the Church, you bless your people with the gift of servants to perform ministry in your name. Bless Zachary Zieschang as he deliberates the call we have extended him to be our Director of Parish Music. Give him wisdom, guide him by your Spirit, and lead him to a decision in accord with your will. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Father, through Holy Baptism you have brought us into the light of Christ. Guide us always in your ways and teach us to know your will, that we would live our lives doing what is good and right and true. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, those who wait for your salvation have the promise that you will not forsake them. Lead those who wander in darkness through difficult times, that they would find the way of righteousness and not be put to shame. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Father of lights, every good and perfect gift comes from your hand. Bless Sharon Stehmeier and family as they remember Richard and Renee on their birthdays. Give them hope of the reunion to come in heaven. Comfort Chris upon the death of his Aunt Barb as she has joined the saints in heaven. We also rejoice with Dean and Elaine Colbo as they celebrate 50 years of life together as husband and wife, and the Thomas family celebrating Roland's first birthday and Grandpa Jim's birthday. Grant us to treasure all the people you place in our lives. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Gracious Father, you have promised that what we suffer does not condemn us, but instead displays Your glory. Sustain the afflicted in body or soul, especially Gene, Ardis, Noah, Joyce, Guy, Marga, Cheryl, Mike, Don, Pat, Shirley, Tom, Jill, Paulette, Janet, Norma, Vern, Amy, Cathy, Cindy, Dorothy, Helga, Vern, Carol, June, Jerry, Shirley and Sarah. Grant them to be encouraged in heart, trust you for healing and find hope and peace in Christ even in the midst of their trials. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: O Lord, everyone who believes in Jesus as Lord will not be put to shame. Unite your people to confess the truth of your Word, and free them from doubts over the mysteries of the faith. Bring us all with penitent hearts to receive the great riches of your Son's body and blood in the sacrament of the altar. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

Page 163

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN #570 “Just As I Am, Without One Plea”

Just as I am, without one plea But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am; Thy love unknown Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

HYMN #433

“Glory Be to Jesus”

Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the life blood From His sacred veins!

Grace and life eternal In that blood I find;
Blest be His compassion, Infinitely kind!

Blest through endless ages Be the precious stream
Which from endless torment Did the world redeem!

Abel’s blood for vengeance Pleaded to the skies;
But the blood of Jesus For our pardon cries.

Oft as earth exulting Wafts its praise on high,
Angel hosts rejoicing Make their glad reply.

Lift we, then, our voices, Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder Praise the precious blood!

HYMN #411 “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.
In Him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father.
In Him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart Lord Jesus.

I’m looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, We shall know the joy of Jesus.
In Him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. Blessed are you, heavenly Father, for you have once again fed and nourished us at your Table through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. As Lord of our lives, strengthen and support us so that we may walk as children of the light, and, sharing that kindly light, proclaim your love to all the world. Bless us day by day, and keep us hope-filled as we await your eternal kingdom, where you live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #917 “Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise”

Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.

Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;
With Thee began, with Thee shall end, the day.
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy name.

Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;
Turn Thou for us its darkness into light.
From harm and danger keep Thy children free;
For dark and light are both alike to Thee.

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

Preacher
Liturgist
Lectors
Organist

Pastor Harold Bender
Pastor Joshua Grotelueschen
Elisabeth Matusewic, Dalen Heinzen, Debbie Nier
JoLynn Bender

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