

# *Fourth Sunday in Lent*

*March 22, 2020*



1812 North Highland Avenue  
Clearwater, Florida 33755  
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026  
[office@GraceCLW.com](mailto:office@GraceCLW.com)  
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. “I was blind, now I see,” declares the man. 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. While for the 9:45 service, it is based on the Adaptive order of service. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and this Sunday the service will be live-streamed from Pastor Jeff’s house with his wife Jenny and son Joseph assisting. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. The Holy Communion section is worded as if it is being distributed to the homebound , so if you have pre-consecrated communion elements you can partake.

**GATHERING SONGS**

*All Are Welcome*

Verse 1



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly



live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how



hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of



*Refrain*

Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950  
 Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen  
 Text and music © 1994 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.  
 All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

Verse 1

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for  
you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,  
*Refrain*  
watch - ing for you and for me. "Come home, come home!  
You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,  
Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909  
Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

### GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray. Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Congregation: Amen.**

## FIRST READING

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: <sup>1</sup>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."  
<sup>2</sup>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.'  
<sup>3</sup>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."  
<sup>4</sup>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?"  
<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD."  
<sup>7</sup>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."  
<sup>8</sup>Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."  
<sup>9</sup>Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."  
<sup>10</sup>Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."  
<sup>11</sup>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."  
<sup>12</sup>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."  
<sup>13</sup>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.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 23

*The psalm for the day is read responsively.*

Reader: <sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not be in want.

**Congregation:** <sup>2</sup>The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

Reader: <sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

**Congregation:** <sup>4</sup>Though 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.

Reader: <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

**Congregation:** <sup>6</sup>Surely 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

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

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

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL LESSON

## JOHN 9:1-41

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 9th chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might

be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>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, <sup>7</sup>saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup>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?” <sup>9</sup>Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” <sup>10</sup>But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup>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.” <sup>12</sup>They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

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

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

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

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

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

### Eyes Opened

Toward the end of today’s lengthy gospel reading, religious leaders summon, for a second time, the man who was blind from birth and whose sight Jesus restored one sabbath day. Confounded by Jesus’ disregard for the sabbath, they judge him a sinner and ask how a sinner could have worked such healing. They cry to the newly sighted man, “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” (John 9:24-25; emphasis added).

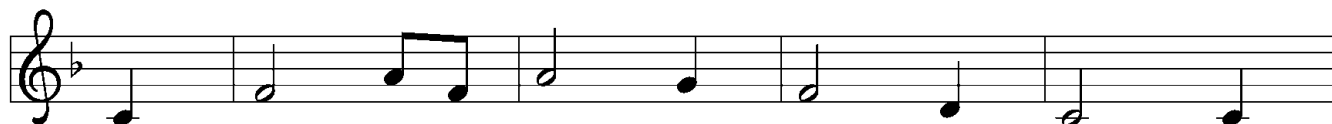
It is such a radically simple answer. But this clear testimony does not align with the preconceived judgment of the religious leaders, who won’t rejoice that the man’s eyes have been opened. Instead, the blame game initiated by Jesus’ disciples rages on in altered form. While the disciples wondered if it was the man’s or his family’s *fault* that he was blind to begin with, the religious leaders focused on a way to discredit the one who had restored his sight. Neither the disciples nor the religious leaders seem empathetic about the man’s blindness, nor joyful about the new possibilities for his life and participation in community now that he can see.

As we listen to the narrative unfold, perhaps we recognize some of the voices blaming, accusing, or (as with the man’s parents) seeking to withdraw from the controversy. The story stands in John’s gospel as another important sign, identifying Jesus as “light of the world” (John 9:5). But it also serves to remind us of ways we are blinded by our judgments and critiques of others and of ourselves. To what and whom are our eyes closed? What mixture of mud and washing might open us to see differently and, in so doing, restore us in and to community?

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY

### *Amazing Grace*



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and



now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5  
Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: 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.*

Prayer Leader: God of insight, open the hearts of the church and the world to all who testify to your deeds of power. 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.**

Prayer Leader: 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.**

Prayer Leader: God of insight, you care for our needs even before we ask. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day *especially* Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Kathleen Wacker, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George & Phyllis Clark, Jill Grote, Pastor Bruce Edwards, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Eliezar Granados, Deacon Connie Puls, , Joan Keeton, Alex Stevenson, Steve Davis, the Bell–Brown family and the family and friends of Kathleen Wacker, and those suffering from natural disasters, violence, and terror (especially the victims of the Nashville tornadoes including St. John Lutheran Church, those impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, those in harm's way while serving in the



military, and those unjustly or unnecessarily separated from their parents or children, and *those we name now with our lips or in our hearts* ). 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.**

Prayer Leader: 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.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Prayer Leader: 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.**

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

**Amen.**

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Holy and generous host, you set a table where we feast as friends. Prepare us to witness to your goodness with every gift you have given us to share, that all people may know your peace through Jesus Christ, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

Worship Leader: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Worship Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

Worship Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Worship Leader: When the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church last gathered for Holy Communion, we heard again of God's mighty deeds shown to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

**Congregation sings in response:**

Worship Leader: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

**Congregation sings in response:**

Worship Leader: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

### **PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION**

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. We thank you, living God, for the body and blood of your Son, which sustains us in the wilderness and the garden alike. As Christ has loved us in this feast, so send us to love Christ in our neighbors. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Worship Leader: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, help those who go to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your everlasting presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

Worship Leader: The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Worship Leader: The God of all grace bless you now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **SENDING SONG**

#### *There is a Balm in Gilead*

*Refrain*



There is a balm in Gil-e - ad to make the wound-ed whole;



there is a balm in Gil-e - ad to heal the sin - sick soul.



- 1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged and think my work's in vain,
- 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,
- 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

*Refrain*



but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.  
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."  
and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BALM IN GILEAD, African American spiritual

## **DISMISSAL**

**Pastor:** Together we have heard God's Word and shared in the Lord's Supper, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in Peace. Christ is with you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #27824. Scriptures and additional materials quoted are from the Good News Bible © 1994 published by the Bible Societies/HarperCollins Publishers Ltd UK, Good News Bible© American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992. Used with permission.