

Lent 4

March 19, 2023

Welcome to our worship on this Fourth Sunday in Lent! Our readings for today are a reminder of why Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. Our gospel for this Sunday is the story of Jesus' transformation of the man born blind. "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, God anoints our head with oil in our Baptism, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

*Congregational responses are printed in **indented boldface italics**.*

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC

OPENING HYMN: "God, Whose Almighty Word" ELW 673

*God, whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard and took their flight:
Hear us, we humbly pray, and where the Gospel day
Sheds not its glorious ray, let there be light!*

*Christ, who once came to bring, on Your redeeming wing, healing and sight;
Health to the troubled mind, sight where illusions blind;
Oh, now to humankind let there be light!*

*Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy Dove, speed forth Your flight;
Move on the water's face bearing the lamp of grace,
And in earth's darkest place let there be light!*

*Holy and blessed Three, glorious Trinity, Wisdom, Love, Might!
Boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride,
Through the earth, far and wide, let there be light!*

INVOCATION AND CONFESSION:

Holy Eternal Majesty, Holy + Incarnate Word, Holy Abiding Spirit,
have mercy on us!

We've trusted in our own strength rather than living in Yours;

We've rejected Your word of love and pursued the demands of other lords.

We've been turned in on ourselves, focused on our own needs and desires rather than living as channels of Your abundant grace.

*We've tried to live freely on our own terms,
 but have only bound ourselves more tightly in chains of slavery to sin.*

So hear us, O God, as we confess the brokenness of our lives—
 the sin that everyone knows and the sins we fear to name:

*Silence is kept for individual reflection and confession.
 After the period of silence, we sing (W+P 83):*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The first measure has a chord marking A^2 above it. The second measure has a chord marking $F\#m^{11}$ above it. The lyrics for the first staff are: 1 Lamb of God, you take a - way the; 2 Lamb of God, I'm ask - ing you to; (3) pre - cious blood of Je - sus Christ. The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The first measure has a chord marking D^2 above it. The second measure has a chord marking E^2 above it. The third measure has a chord marking A above it. The lyrics for the second staff are: sin of the world. Lamb of God, you; take a - way my sin. I con - fess that; cleans - es me from sin. The pre - cious blood of. The third staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The first measure has a chord marking $F\#m^{11}$ above it. The second measure has a chord marking D^2 above it. The third measure has a chord marking E above it. The lyrics for the third staff are: take a - way the sin of the world.; I've done wrong, I need your help a - gain.; Je - sus Christ cleans - es me from sin.



Refrain

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have

mer - cy on me. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have

Last time to coda ⊕

mer - cy, have mer - cy on me. 3 The

⊕ *Coda*

Lord, have mer - cy on me.

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GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the + love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit are with you all.

And also with you.

Then let's pray: Bend Your ear to our prayers, Lord Jesus, 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.

WORD AND PRAYER



1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
death we are re - born; though you die in all of
his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
rise with ev - 'ry morn.

*See ELW 334 for the full arrangement of this hymn.
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FIRST READING:

1 Samuel 16.1-13

NRSVUE

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I’ve rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I’ll send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I’ve provided for Myself a king among his sons.” ²Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he’ll kill me!” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I’ve come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I’ll show you what you shall do. 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’ve 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 His anointed is now before the Lord!” ⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I’ve rejected him— for the Lord doesn’t 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.”

¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord hasn’t chosen any of these.” ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest— but he’s keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we won’t sit down until he comes here.” ¹² Jesse sent and brought David in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one!” ¹³ 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...

This is holy wisdom; this is holy word.

Thanks be to God!

(to the same tune as the above canticle, “Tree of Life”)

***Living Water of salvation, be the fountain of each soul;
Springing up in new creation, flow in us and make us whole,
Flow in us and make us whole.***

THE HOLY GOSPEL:

John 9.1-41

NRSVUE

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

Glory to You, O Lord!

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

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who’d formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he’d received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man’s not from God, for He doesn’t observe the Sabbath!” Others said, “How can a man who’s a sinner perform

such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do **you** say about Him? It was your eyes He opened." He said, "He's a prophet..."

¹⁸ The *religious leaders* didn't believe that he'd been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who'd 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 we don't know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age. He'll speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the *religious leaders*, for the *leaders* had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He's of age; ask him."

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who'd been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "I don't know whether He's a sinner. 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've told you already, and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, "**You're** His disciple, but **we're** disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses— but as for this man, we don't know where He comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Here's an astonishing thing! You don't know where He comes from, yet He opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but He does listen to one who worships Him and obeys His will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man weren't from God, He could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins— and *you're* trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they'd driven him out, and when He found him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "And who is He, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in Him." ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You've seen Him, and the One speaking with you is He." ³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who don't see may see, and those who do see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard this and said to Him, "Surely **we're** not blind, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you wouldn't have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains..."

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ!

(to the same tune as the above canticle, "Tree of Life")

***Christ, You lead and we shall follow, stumbling though our steps may be;
One with You in joy and sorrow, we the river, You the sea,
We the river, You the sea...***

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Be Thou My Vision"

ELW 793

*Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art:
Thou my best thought, both by day and by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and Thou my high tower,
Raise Thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.*

*Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, the first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art!*

*Light of my soul, after victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.*

APOSTLES' CREED:

Let's confess our faith together in the words of our baptismal creed:

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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:

Sustained by God's abundant mercy,
let's pray for the Church, the world, and all of creation:

Good and gracious God, we give You thanks and praise for Christ Jesus Your Son, whose light opens our blinded eyes, whose grace unveils the secret places of our hearts, and whose self-giving love and compassion embraces us in our human frailty and brings us safely through death's dark valley. Give us Your eyes, Lord, that we may recognize Your image and unique gifts in each person we encounter, no matter what their race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or nationality may be; and give us the wisdom and the courage to live into and welcome others into the new creation You're bringing into being in union with Christ. Merciful God, *receive our prayer.*

Empower us to care for the land and the waters of Your good earth, and for all the living things that dwell in and beneath them. Enrich the soil for the crops that'll draw their life from it; protect hills and shorelines from erosion; and grant relief to flood-stricken and drought-stricken lands, that all creatures may enjoy the bounty of Your creation. And equip our local and worldwide feeding ministries, nourishing us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God, *receive our prayer.*

Inspire us by Your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Raise up among us leaders who reject the lures of personal profit and prestige and work instead for the blessing of all in their care. Frustrate the efforts of those who wield violence, scapegoating, and terror to solidify their own power; still the storms of war in Ukraine, Yemen, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, the DRC, Afghanistan, Central America, and homes and communities in our own land; and grant us Your peace that surpasses all our political calculations— for only in You can we live in safety. Merciful God, *receive our prayer.*

Keep watch over those who work or watch or weep today, Lord. Tend those who are sick; give rest to the weary; bless the dying; comfort the grieving; relieve the pain of the suffering; and have mercy on all who are afflicted. Draw near to those who are hungry, homeless, lonely, or lost, and those who question Your presence and grace in the midst of their doubt or suffering. Let the light of Your healing love dawn upon them, renewing them in body and spirit and raising them to new strength and life in Your grace. We especially seek Your healing grace for our brothers and sisters... Merciful God, *receive our prayer.*

Other prayer petitions may be included here.

We give You thanks, God of life, that You call those who sleep in death and awaken them to new and eternal life in union with You. We remember with joy our ancestors in faith who cared for Your people, especially Joseph, the Guardian of our Lord; and we praise You for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Join us together with them as Your beloved children in this world and the next, and make us diligent in passing on the treasures of life in You to those who come after us. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Receive our spoken and silent prayers, O merciful God, that in all these things, we may be transformed into the likeness of Your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord is with you always.

And also with you.

Reconciled to God and to one another, we share a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

"I Will Love the Lord"

-- Michael Popham, Regi Stone, Tom Fettke

OFFERTORY CANTICLE: *(sung three times through)*

ELW 814



Take, oh, take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall be;



set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: TAKE ME AS I AM, John L. Bell

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Giver of all good gifts, receive these and all our offerings
as we present them in faithful service for the sake of Your Gospel.
Prepare our hearts to receive You in this meal as you pour out Your very presence
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:

Blest are You, holy, mighty, and merciful Lord— heaven and earth are full of Your glory!
You laid the foundations of the universe and filled the world with Your wonders;
You lifted us from the dust and breathed into us the breath of life.
You called a people to Yourself, as a light to the nations;
You delivered them from slavery, led them to the land of Your promise,
challenged them through prophets, and brought them home from exile.
You so loved our broken world that You gave us Jesus, Your only Son,
who poured out His life for us in self-giving love even unto death on the cross,
that we might have eternal life in the Spirit of His resurrection.
Now send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts,
that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as He comes to us in His holy Supper
and rise with Him to live as His body in the world.

In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
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."
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."
And so, remembering all that our Lord's done for us,
believing the witness of His resurrection, awaiting His final appearing in glory,
we share this foretaste of the feast to come, praying as Christ Himself has taught us:

***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.***

Sung to the tune of "When All Your Mercies, O My God" LBW 264

***O Lamb of God, You bear the sin of all the world away;
You suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.***



*O Lamb of God, You bear the sin of all the world away;
You set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.*

*O Lamb of God, You bear the sin of all the world away;
Eternal peace with God You made: give us Your peace, we pray.*

THE HOLY COMMUNION

*Now we share God's consecrated gifts among God's consecrated people, knowing that our living Lord Jesus is fully present with us in His Supper, giving Himself to us in bread and wine and forgiving love. Today, we'll share the Lord's Supper in our pews. As you came in, you each picked up a cup-and-wafer pack in the vestibule. Take that pack and unseal the wafer (under the first seal). When Pastor says, "**The body of Christ, given for you**", eat the bread and receive the body of Christ. Then unseal the cup (they're all grape juice). When Pastor says, "**The blood of Christ, shed for you**", drink the wine and receive the blood of Christ. We'll pause for silent prayer after we've all communed...*

*If you're joining us from your home, we invite you to share the bread and cup with one another. When giving the bread to your neighbor, say "**The body of Christ, given for you.**" When giving the wine/grape juice say, "**The blood of Christ, shed for you.**" Whatever's left over may be reverently eaten and drunk by everyone after our worship is over. Once we've all shared in the body and blood of Christ, we continue in blessing and prayer:*

SENDING

THANKSGIVING, PRAYER, AND BENEDICTION:

May the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in His grace. *Amen.*

Embodied God, at Your table, we've tasted the goodness of Jesus.
With the eyes of our hearts open to Your promise,
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with Your love. *Amen.*

And now may God the Wellspring of Love, † Christ Jesus the Resurrection and the Life,
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth and reconciliation bless you in your Lenten journey. *Amen.*

*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.*

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

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
The Lord has promised good to me; His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.*

*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.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISMISSAL:

God has a plan.

We're it!

What's our part in God's plan?

Sharing God's love in joyful service!

Then let's go in peace, live in joy, and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!



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To See or Not to See... (“Blindness” is Relative)

Our Gospel reading for today speaks of people with vision problems— not just physical ones, but spiritual ones— and all of them have something to say about our own vision in Christ...

First, there’s the man blind from his birth. Physically, he couldn’t see a thing, until Jesus healed him. But in some ways, he had better vision than all the rest. He knew his need— that he was a beggar to the core, not just by virtue of circumstance. And even when he’s able to see nature’s light, he squints to see gleam by gleam the light of Christ, the revelation of God in human flesh. In the end, though, he sees clearly not just with his eyes, but with his soul...

Then there are the disciples. They can see just fine, they think; they’re sure that someone’s sin caused the man’s blindness. It was a simple case of “cause and effect”: the way things are. But in reality, “things aren’t the way things are”; their vision’s impaired— and Jesus calls them on it. Jesus asks us with them not to look through the cataracts of blame, but rather through the lens of God’s love— the lens that show adversity to be opportunity, the fertile “weakness” in which God’s power is put to work.

And the neighbors? They have a vision problem, too. “Isn’t this the guy who used to sit and beg?” “Well, he sort of looks like him.” They knew him well when he was blind— but now they don’t recognize him once he’s healed. And isn’t that typical? So often, those whose lives have been profoundly changed are seen as strangers by those who shared the former narrow viewpoints and common blindness. Indeed, truth be told, those whose lives have been so changed are quickly seen as a threat by those around them who supposedly “see”— and are dealt with accordingly!

And the Pharisees? Near-sightedness was their problem; like the disciples, they couldn’t see past the Law of Shame and Blame. As far as they were concerned, no one who would violate Sabbath law could possibly be of God, no matter how much healing came from His work— and they certainly couldn’t learn anything from someone “born in sin”. And looking through the lenses of law and judgment, the Pharisees could offer such sin-steeped people only curses and condemnation...

Oh yes, there are all kinds of blindness in this lesson: the blindness of faithful disciples, who offer religious slogans of blame and shame; the blindness of neighbors and family, who shy away from new vision out of discomfort or fear; the blindness of religious authorities who can’t see any good coming from outside of their own system. And you and I can probably identify many other kinds of “blindness” in our own lives. The busywork of our jobs and family lives, the wants and needs that so often possess us even after we possess them, the mores of our upbringing that we consider moral absolutes, the fear that we won’t measure up in the eyes of others, the “rational lies” we tell ourselves to distract us from the real brokenness of our lives, the ease of choosing a life of do’s and don’ts over a journey of faith— they can all cloud our vision of God’s work among us, and render us every bit as blind as the blind man of the gospel story.

But in the midst of all this blindness, there's one person who *can* see: **our Lord Jesus Christ!** From the beginning, when we blind folk can't see him, Jesus sees us and grants us that first taste of wholeness, that first **enlightenment**, in the waters of our Baptism. And even after that, even after confirmation— even after ordination, for that matter— our vision still isn't fully clear. Paul reminds us that children of light need to walk in the light, for the fruit of light is found in the walking. We can't just blink at the brightness of Jesus; we need to walk in what's good and right and true, to "exercise our spiritual eyes", to continue to learn. As the apostle Paul reminds us, "We're ruled by the love of Christ, now that we recognize that one man died for everyone, which means that they all share in His death. Christ died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but only for them who died and was raised to life for their sakes. No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards... If anyone's in Christ, there's a new creation—the old has gone, the new has come!" [2 Cor 5:15-17]

Christ heals us so we can see the fundamental sin behind our misdeeds, our desire to be in control. Christ heals us so we can see the sin of the world with its power plays and destructive values, as well as all the ways we buy into those destructive ways and share in their violence— so that we can see that when we do, we're crucifying **Him**. Christ heals us so we can see the reality of His resurrection as it destroys the power of sin and crushes hell underfoot.

And because Jesus has seen us in our brokenness and just so gives us healing and sight, we can now begin to see ourselves and others in their brokenness with new eyes— not the eyes of judgment or fear, eyes which shun others and blind themselves with cataracts, but the eyes of faith which look for the possibilities of God's healing power in the lives of every person we meet. In fact, this is our Baptismal calling— to be people of sight in a blinded world, people who see through the world's dark contradictions to the Light of Life.

In short, we're called to see others as Jesus has seen us. But like the blind man, we can't do this on our own. We need the healing of Jesus. So let's pray that we may indeed see what Christ Jesus has seen on our behalf— the love of God and the suffering of those around us— so that our eyes may become more like His, eyes that heal wounded hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

The Place Where We Are Right

*From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.*

*The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.*

*But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.*

*And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.*

• Yehuda Amichai

This Week at St Paul's

P = Parish House, F = Fellowship Hall

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Sun. 3/19 Lent 4	9:00 AM	Holy Communion in person and online: www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live
	10:30 AM	Fellowship Hour live and/or via Zoom: [use meeting ID 839 381 0896, passcode 90e8Dm]
Mon. 3/20	7:00 PM	Congregation Council via Zoom/FCC *
Tues. 3/21	7:00 PM	Evangelism Team via Zoom/FCC *
Wed. 3/22	6:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Soup Supper and Worship @ St John's Lutheran Activity Center, Richlandtown
Thur. 3/23	10:00 AM	Bible Study via Zoom/FCC *
	6:00 PM	Cub Scout Pack 007 [F]
	7:00 PM	Scouts BSA Troop 007 [F]
Fri. 3/24	1:00 PM	Al-Anon [F]
	7:00 PM	AA [F]
Sat. 3/25 The Annunciation to Mary	7:30 PM	"Seasons" @ Perkasio Patchwork Coffeehouse (320 W. Chestnut Street, Perkasio—doors open 7:00 PM)
Sun. 3/26 Lent 5	9:00 AM	Holy Communion in person and online: www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live
	10:30 AM	Fellowship Hour live and/or via Zoom: [use meeting ID 839 381 0896, passcode 90e8Dm]
	10:30 PM	Sunday School [P]

* If you'd like to participate in these **activities taking place over Pr Dave's Zoom platform**, go to zoom.us, click "Join a Meeting" at the top right of the page, use meeting ID 3700147169, and if it asks for a password, use 119805 and you should be in. If you're using your phone, these dial-in numbers will work: 929.205.6099 or 312.626.6799. After you dial, you'll be asked for the host's code, and you'll type in 3700147169#, then 119805# and you're in. (What's more, with your smart phone or computer, you can engage video as well as audio, so we can see and hear you—something that's precious right now!) You can also use **Free Conference Call [FCC]**: Dial 857.232.0157, enter conference code 144261, and you're in.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK:

- The Armed Forces, President Biden and his cabinet, Crossroads Pregnancy Care, David & Mary Johnson Sr., Morgan, Ally, Dontay, & Emily Hassler, Andrew Edmonds, Don & Karen Ludovici, Derek & Matt Ludovici, Barbara Graser, Bob Knapp, Bob & Charyl Westervelt, Ray Constable, Connie Slotter, Norm Diehl Sr., Amy Miller, Karen Capella, Chrissy Cousins, Bob Shimalla, Robert & Cheryl Ball, Melissa Manhart, Tammy Zepiora, Aaron Hamlin, Gary Hertzog, David & Carol

Marks, Katie, Cassidy Owens, David Gullett, Kelly & Jim, Kelsey Shaak, John Apple, Dr Jenn Phelps, Karen K., Bill Baringer, Keith, Joe, Ron Diehl, Annabelle Weller, Kelly, Kareem, Bret & Layann, Pr Ghislaine Cotnoir, Dr Stephen Motsay, Brenda Oelschlager, Brody, Sens. John Fetterman and Bob Casey, former Pres. Jimmy Carter, Bill Schumacher Jr.; the people of Afghanistan and Ukraine; victims of natural disasters and gun violence; everyone struggling with COVID-19 and its containment.

- Families and friends of Kamryn Jenkins, Martha Reumann, Pr John Stevens Kerr, Patti Jo Zackowski.

Serving in Worship Today:

Usher:	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>	Altar Guild:	Marie Shaw, Aundie Hamlin,
Communion:	Rich Baringer		Janet Miller
Acolyte:	Linda Hertzog	Bulletin:	Winnie Knapp
Counter:	Patty Schumacher	Reader:	Sascha Baringer

Today's bulletins are sponsored by Bob and Winnie Knapp with "wishes of blessings to our church family in getting Bob through his therapy; we couldn't have done it alone. Love all of you!"

Our **Sunday School at St Paul's** meets from 10:30-11:30 AM on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. We have room for all students age 4 through fifth grade, with older kids being helpers/leaders— and we have a great group of students ready to welcome you. Spread the word and join us for Sunday School!

On Wednesday evenings during the Lenten season (through March 29), we're joining our friends from St John's Lutheran Church and St John's UCC in Richlandtown in a series of **Midweek Lenten Services at St John's Lutheran's Activity Center**. We'll begin with simple soup suppers at **6:00 PM**, then begin our time of worship around **6:45 PM**. Our theme this year is "**Created for Community**"; we'll be reflecting on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, and with God, using ways than "sermons" to reflect on the Scriptures. Pr Dave will be the musician for most of the services. **We're "hosting" the services on Mar. 15 & 29**, which means we're responsible to provide some soups, bread, and maybe dessert on those nights— so if you can help with this, please let Pr Dave know. Come on out and invite your friends to join you!

Come join us this Thursday, **Mar. 23** from **10:00 AM-12:00 NN** via Zoom or Free Conference call for our **Thursday Morning Bible Study**. We're digging into the Scripture readings for the upcoming week to discover the treasures that await us come Sunday. You don't have to be a biblical "expert" to get a lot out of this study— so come join us and invite your friends as well!

With our transition to weekly Holy Communion, we have an **urgent need for Altar Guild volunteers**. It's not difficult, and it's a very meaningful ministry. Please consider helping; text Marie Shaw at 610.310.8458 (please identify yourself) or call 215.536.8812 for more information.

Lutheran Disaster Response continues to work with companions in Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, and in our own land to providing refugees and disaster victims with immediate support and supplies as well as pastoral and psychological support and long-term reconstruction efforts— and we can be partners in those relief and rebuilding efforts. For more information or to give, go to www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Ways-to-Give. You can send your donations to Lutheran Disaster Response, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Your gifts will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by these disasters.

Our tradition of **“Monthly Specials”** is a special opportunity for giving to help specific ministries in our community and beyond— some of them through the Lutheran church, others through the community organizations. For March, our **Monthly Special Recipient** is **Crossroads Pregnancy Center**. Please give as you’re able!

Stewardship Note: Our congregation’s expenses for 2022 exceeded our income by \$29,000. Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to support our ministry together. If you’d like to give electronically (via Simply Giving, our church website, or some other electronic means) and would like some information on how to do that, please contact the church office.

Feeding the Hungry: Our Social Ministry Team is now helping to **pack food bags at the Quakertown Food Pantry** the first Thursday of every month from 1:00-3:00 PM. No experience is necessary— everyone’s welcome to provide this vital ministry to the community. Contact Sara George, primrose40@aol.com or 215.538.3786 if you’re interested in helping. In addition, we encourage you to **bring in canned goods** to donate to the Quakertown Food Pantry. Hunger continues to stalk our Quakertown area neighbors between homeless folks, families trying to make ends meet on meager salaries, and those whose Social Security checks just don't stretch to the end of the month. You can place your donations in the narthex for pickup.

In support of the YWCA, our Social Ministry Team is looking for **donations of personal care items** such as shampoo and conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste, body wash and soap, face and body lotion, deodorant, and mouthwash. Thank you!

Joyful Noise Raffles begin! Tickets for our Joyful Noise raffle of a king-size handmade quilt have now been completed and are ready for distribution to willing sellers. If you can help sell raffle tickets, please see Linda Hertzog; raffle tickets are in color and show a picture of the beautiful quilt that’s being raffled. Thank you to Rita Feikel for purchasing the quilt and donating it to Joyful Noise!

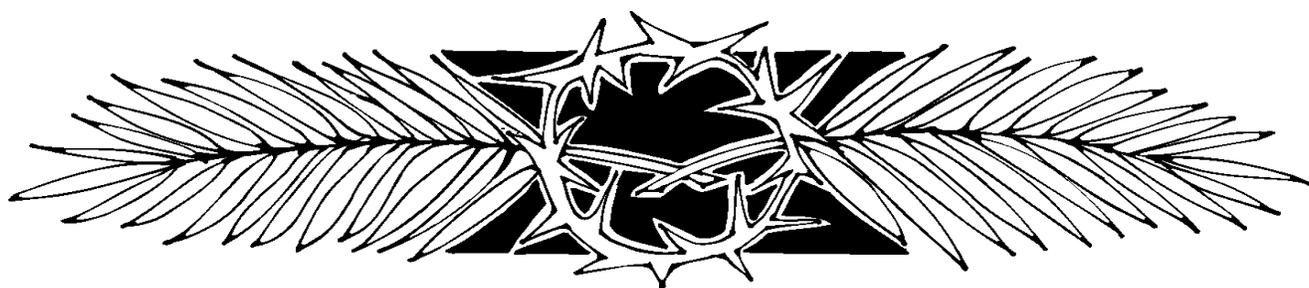
“Paint St Paul’s”: Back in 2022, we completed the painting of St Paul’s inside and out at a cost of \$19,900, which we withdrew from our investments until we finished raising funds for our parking lot renovation. Now that we’ve successfully exceeded our fundraising goal for the “Lots of Love” campaign, we’re ready to raise the funds to repay our investments for the painting. A form for making a pledge toward this campaign is available in the pews. Please prayerfully consider what you can donate toward this worthy cause as we welcome all to St Paul’s.

The Perkasio Patchwork Coffeehouse at Perkasio Mennonite Church is thrilled to welcome the Celtic folk group **Seasons** to its next coffeehouse this Saturday, **March 25 @ 7:30 PM**. (Doors open at 7:00 PM.) We've had the blessing of welcoming Seasons to our Joyful Noise festivals in the past, and we're thrilled to do so this year too. Their concerts include traditional Irish songs and instrumentals as well as original compositions on harp, hammered dulcimer, fiddle, concertina, and more. Perkasio Patchwork Coffeehouse is located downstairs in the handicap-accessible church fellowship hall. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors (65+), \$6 for students 13 and up, and free for kids 12 and under, with all ticket sales at the door. A portion of our proceeds will go to Southwest FL ERT, a program of Mennonite Disaster Service helping to repair and rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Ian. Masks are strongly recommended except when eating some of our delicious refreshments. Come and enjoy this great evening of music!

Our **2023 Synod Assembly** will be held in person on **May 5-6** at Franconia Mennonite Church. The theme is **"Transformed to Serve in a 'Where's the Faith?' World"**. Registration materials and costs are being posted on the synod's website (www.ministrylink.org). Far more than a series of tedious business meetings, our synod assemblies feature dynamic speakers, vibrant worship with many styles of music and leadership, informative displays by organizations and ministries across our synod, and plenty of lively fellowship. Once again, we can have a third "youth/young adult" delegate, and we can also include plenty of visitors (and since the Assembly is within easy commuting distance from our home, it's especially easy for us to visit). To register as a delegate, please inform Pr Dave and then go to www.ministrylink.org to register. (We'll cover the cost for our delegates.)

For the latest announcement updates, go to:

docs.google.com/document/d/1aZi_IL0SHaQ1BOGFS_s3bt0oHoTQ4fCy9tO372PZioE/edit#



Fourth Sunday In Lent

For more information on our ministries, please contact:

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