

Sunday, March 22, 2020  
Fourth Sunday in Lent

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRELUDE

*“Amazing Grace”*

Mark Hayes

### GREETING

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

**C And also with you.**

### LITANY

*P Behold, now is the acceptable time;*

**C now is the day of salvation.**

*P Turn us again, O God of our salvation,*

**C that the light of your face may shine on us.**

*P May your justice shine like the sun;*

**C and may the poor be lifted up.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

*P Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ,*

**C 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!**

### 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.*

<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.

### **Reflection**

*I find it interesting that Saul's actions and disobedience caused God to reject the divine choice of Saul as king of Israel. (see 1 Samuel 15:10-23) Did God make a mistake in judgment, or was it what Saul did and didn't do that caused God to decide that he should no longer be king. What do you think? What did God command Samuel to do? (verses 1-5) Who did Samuel think God would choose as king? (verses 6-10) Who did God choose? (verses 11-12) What happened to David when Samuel anointed him king? (verse 13) Other people whom God calls have made mistakes and been disobedient, including David. Why do you think God chooses fallible humans to lead the people?*

### **PSALM 23**

**<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;**

**I shall not be in want.**

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

**<sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD,**

**and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.**

<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.

**<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.**

<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.

### **Reflection**

*This is perhaps the most recognized psalm in the Bible. Do you know this psalm by heart? If not, perhaps this is a good time to learn it. Why do you think we read this psalm in the same week that we hear about David becoming king?*

### **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.*

<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.”

### **Reflection**

*What does the writer of Ephesians mean by saying, “For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light”? When we confess our sins to God, we say, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” Is that saying that when we are darkness (interesting—not “in darkness,” and not “in light!”), we are sinful? (verse 8) What does it mean to be light, and to live as children of light? (verses 9-10) Where does the light come from? The writer adds another metaphor to this, writing that the works of darkness are unfruitful. What does it mean to be “unfruitful”? What do you think are some of these unfruitful works of darkness? (verse 11) Why do these works of darkness (which are done in secret) need to be exposed? (verses 12-13) Who are the sleepers who need to wake up? (verse 14) What in us is unfruitful, done in darkness and in secret, that needs to be exposed? What happens when a harmful secret is exposed?*

### **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.*

<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.”

### **Reflection**

*Who do Jesus and his disciples meet? (verse 1) What is the assumption that the disciples make about him? (verse 2) Jesus does not accept their premise. What does he say about the reason the man is blind? (verse 3) What Jesus says has the same theme as the reading from Ephesians—that God’s work brings light, and as long as Jesus is with them, they have the light. Why? (verses 4-5) What did he do to bring light to this man? (verse 6) What happened when the man did the work that Jesus (the light of the world) told him to do? (verse 7) What did the people who knew him before Jesus came into his life say about the change in him? (verse 8) Why do you think some of them thought he wasn’t the same man? (verse 9) They really bugged him about it! (verses 10-12) Who gets involved next? (verse 13) Why were they bothered that the man could see again? (verse 14) Note that they asked the same questions as the neighbors had. (verse 15) What conclusion did the Pharisees draw about this healing? (verse 16) I remember other verses in which Jesus says he will bring division. This is an example of such division. (verses 16-17) What does the man say about Jesus? It’s also an example of how what you believe can influence what you see and hear. How did the Pharisees’ belief about Jesus lead them to the wrong conclusion about the man? (verse 18) Why do you think the parents didn’t want to get involved? (verses 19-23) The notes in the Lutheran Bible suggest that scholars believe this represents a conflict between the Christians for whom John was writing and the leaders of the synagogue. This whole story seems to make both the man and the Pharisees who were questioning him move in opposite directions. How was the last question they asked the man different from the first question? (verses 24-27) What was the conclusion the Pharisees*

*drew from this whole encounter? (verses 28-29) What did the man answer them? (verses 30-33) How did the Pharisees respond? (verse 34) As I read this story, I can feel the frustration within me grow. And this makes me wonder, how am I like the man? How am I like the Pharisees? How does what I believe about others shape my conclusions about them? When does Jesus next appear in this story? (verse 35) How does Jesus reach out to the man? How does the man respond? (verses 36-38) What does Jesus tell the Pharisees? (verses 39-41) If we are the light, and yet we do the unfruitful works of darkness (see Ephesians 5), do we remain the light? How does Jesus' light shine in your life? In our life together?*

**SERMON**

**“Sight and Faith”**

Sarah Pierce

**SONG OF THE DAY**

***Lead Me, Guide Me***

**ELW 768**

*Refrain*

**Lead me, guide me, along the way;  
For if you lead me, I cannot stray.  
Lord, let me walk each day with thee,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

**I am weak and I need thy strength and pow'r  
To help me over my weakest hour.  
Help me through the darkness they face to see  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain***

**Help me tread in the paths of righteousness,  
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.  
I am putting all ... my trust in thee.  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain***

**I am lost if you take your hand from me,  
I am blind without ... thy light to see.  
Lord, just always let me thy servant be.  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain***

**\*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. 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.... Lin, David, Dee, Trina, Sue and those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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, 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. 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!**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS** *Kneel or sit as you are able*

*P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who is present, who gives life,  
who calls into existence the things that do not exist.*

**C Amen!**

*P If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand?  
Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.*

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

*P Gracious God,*

**C have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have turned away from you,  
knowingly and unknowingly.**

**We have wandered from your resurrection life.**

**We have strayed from your love for all people.  
Turn us back to you, O God.  
Give us new hearts and right spirits,  
that we may find what is pleasing to you  
and dwell in your house forever. Amen!**

*P Receive good news: God turns to you in love.*

*"I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God.*

*All our sin is forgiven in the name of ✠ Jesus Christ,  
who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for us.*

**C Amen!**

### **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

*P The peace of Christ be with you always.*

**C And also with you!**

### **DIALOGUE**

*P The Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

*P Lift up your hearts.*

**C We lift them to the Lord.**

*P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**C It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

*P Blessed are you, O God of the universe.*

*Your mercy is everlasting  
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.*

*Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.*

*Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.*

*Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.*

*Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness  
to the land of milk and honey.*

*Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.*

*Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.*

*Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.*

*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.*

*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.*

*With this bread and cup  
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:*

**C Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*P O God of resurrection and new life:  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless this feast.  
Grace our table with your presence.*

**C Come, Holy Spirit.**

*P Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us.  
Send us forth,  
burning with justice, peace, and love.*

**C Come, Holy Spirit.**

*P With your holy ones of all times and places,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God,  
blessed and holy Trinity,  
now and forever.*

**C Amen!**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**C 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!

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*P God's love is poured out in Christ for you.  
Open yourselves to receive it.  
All are welcome at this table.*

#### **COMMUNION**

#### **BLESSING**

*P May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
strengthen you and keep you in His grace.  
C Amen!*

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*P We thank you, living God,  
C 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. Amen!*

#### **BENEDICTION**

*P Now is the acceptable time.  
Now is the day of salvation.  
Holy God,  
speaking, spoken, and inspiring,  
✠ bless you, unbind you,  
and send you in love and in peace.  
C Amen!*

#### **DISMISSAL**

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