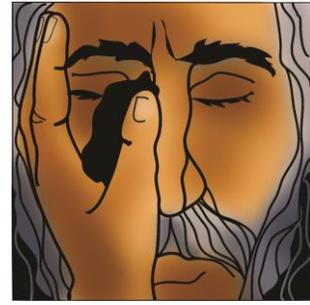


**Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Durant, Oklahoma**

**Worshipping in Place in a Time of Pandemic
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 22, 2020**



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.

Opening Hymn: Christ, Be Our Light

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain*

3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
Text © 1993 Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2014 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #47042.

Invocation

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be among us all, together and apart. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

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.

Lessons

I Samuel 16:1-13, RSV

16 The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" ³ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me him whom I name to you." ⁴ 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?" ⁵ And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eli'ab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." ⁷ 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 sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abin'adab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." ¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here." ¹² And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Psalm 23. RSV

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² he makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters

³ he restores my soul
 He leads me in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil;
 for thou art with me;
 thy rod and thy staff,
 they comfort me.
⁵ Thou preparest a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
 thou anointest my head with oil,
 my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely^[e] goodness and mercy^[f] shall follow me
 all the days of my life;
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
 forever.^[g]

Ephesians 5: 8-24, RSV

⁸ for once 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 learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; ¹³ but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴ Therefore it is said,
 "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
 and Christ shall give you light."

John 9: 1-41, Eggleston's Unauthorized Translation

Passing along, Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked, "Who sinned that he was born blind, the man or his parents?"

"Neither one" answered Jesus, "Neither one sinned, but he was born blind so that God's mighty works might be shown. It is necessary that we work the works of the one who sent me while it is day; when night comes no one can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Having said this, he spat on the ground and made mud out of the spit, and put the mud on his eyes, saying to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam (which translates as 'Sent'). So the man went, washed, and came to see. His neighbors and those who'd seen him formerly as a beggar said, "Isn't this that guy who sits and begs?" Some said "Yes, it is"; others said, "No, he just looks like him"; but he said, "I'm the one".

So they asked, "How did it happen that your eyes were opened?" He responded, "That guy, Jesus, made mud, smeared my eyes, and told me, 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam'. I did and I began to see." So they asked, "Where is he?" and he answered, "I don't know".

They led the man, who had once been blind, to the Super Pious Lay Folks. Now it happened to be the Day of Worship when Jesus made mud and opened his eyes. So, the Super Pious Lay Folks asked him again how he saw, and he answered, “He put mud on my eyes and I washed, and I see.” Some of the Super Pious Lay Folks commented, “This guy is not from God, because he doesn’t keep the Day of Worship”, so they asked the blind man again, “What have you got to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” The man answered, “He is a prophet”.

Since the Religious Folks didn’t believe that he had really been blind and now was able to see, so they called his parents, asking, “Is this your son, whom you say was born blind. How can he see now?” They responded, “We know this is our son and we know that he was born blind. We don’t know how it is that he sees now. Ask him yourself, he’s of age. He can speak for himself.” His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Religious Folks. Already the Religious Folks had agreed that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ would be kicked out of the congregation. So they said, “He is of age, ask him yourself”.

So, they called the man born blind a second time, “Give God the glory, we know this guy is sinful”. He answered, “I don’t know anything about him being sinful. I do know one thing; I was blind but now I see”. Again they pressed, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He responded, “I told you already and you weren’t listening. Don’t you also want to become his disciples?” They sneered at him with revulsion, “You’re his disciple, but we’re Moses’ disciples. We know that God has spoken through Moses, but we don’t know where this guy comes from.” The man answered, “The fascinating thing in all of this is, you don’t know where he comes from, and he has opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, God listens to him. Forever, no one has ever heard that anyone opened the eyes of one born blind. If he were not from God, he couldn’t do anything like this.” They answered, “You were born completely in sin, and you presume to teach us?” And they threw him out.

Jesus, hearing that they’d thrown him out, found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, Sir, that I might believe in him?” Jesus answered, “He’s talking to you”, to which he responded, “I believe Lord” and he worshipped him.

Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind.” Some Super Pious Lay Folks standing there asked, “We’re not also blind, are we?” To which Jesus responded, “If you were blind, you would not have been sinful, but because you say, ‘we see’, your sin sticks to you.

Sermon

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

The Ceylonese Methodist pastor, the Rev. D. T. Niles once described evangelism as “one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread.” ... Paraphrasing Pastor Niles a bit... even in these days of pandemic virus, stock market instability, and the political silly season, I believe we could safely say that what you and I are about, as Jesus’ disciples, is really that of “one formerly blind beggar showing another blind beggar where to gain his sight”.

For judgment I came into the world, says Jesus, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind.

So...Jesus, who has come among the human family to be the Light of the World... so Jesus and his disciples happen to be passing by, when they take note of a man blind from birth sitting by the road, begging... In what might seem to be, at a minimum, a most insensitive question, the disciples reflect the prevailing attitude of the time and the place in which they live, when they ask Jesus, “So Rabbi, who sinned, the man or his parents, that he was born blind?” They are surprised when Jesus answers, “It wasn’t because he sinned... and it wasn’t because his parents sinned... he was born blind that the power of God might be shown through him.” They are even more surprised when Jesus says, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” and scoops up some dirt, spits on it, makes mud, and packs the eyes of the very surprised blind man, with the instructions, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”...

For judgment I came into the world, says Jesus, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind.

The man does exactly as he is told, and to his surprise and to the great surprise of those friends and neighbors who’ve know him his whole life, he can now see... and since nobody has ever heard of sight be given to one who’d been born blind, everyone is mightily perplexed. Some folks think it must be a case of mistaken identity...”Is this really the blind guy who used to sit and beg?” some ask...”Nah” others answer, “Nah, he just looks like him”... to which the now formerly blind beggar answers, “Yes, its me!”...”Well how can that be?” they ask. He replies, “That guy named Jesus made mud, stuck it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash, so I did and now I can see”...”Well, where’d he go?”...”I don’t know”.

For judgment I came into the world, says Jesus, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind.

About now, the super pious lay folks... good religious folks are getting involved... Why? Because there’s a problem. What problem? Jesus made mud on the Sabbath, and that kind of work, in their minds, cannot be tolerated. So they question the now formerly blind beggar, who tells them the same story, “He put mud on my eyes and I washed and now I see”... to which some of these super pious lay folks... the good religious folks ...pronounce their studied assessment, “This Jesus guy can’t be from God, he doesn’t keep the Sabbath”... but others ask, “If he is a sinner, how can he do things like this? “ ... Arguing among themselves, they turn back to the

formerly blind beggar and demand, “Well, they’re your eyes which he opened, what do you think?” ... to which the formerly blind beggar quickly responds, “He’s a prophet”.

Now the super pious lay folks... the good church folks... don’t quite believe that either, so they seek out the formerly blind beggar’s parents...”Yes, he’s our son, but he’s of age ask him... Yes he was born blind, but we don’t know anything about it”... Parents who should be overjoyed that their son who’d been blind all of his life could now see... are intimidated, are frightened, are scared to death of the super pious lay folks... the good church folks ... because the word is out on the street... anybody confessing Jesus to be the Messiah, the Christ, is going to be kicked out of the local congregation and cut off from the community of faith...So, hemming and hawing... their joy overcome by fear... not wanting to get involved, they respond, “Ask him, he is of legal age”.

So, the super pious lay folks... the good church folks go back to formerly blind beggar, and entreat him to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth... by now, the formerly blind beggar is getting exasperated, “I already told you what happened and you wouldn’t listen. Do you want to become his disciples?” Well, this is not what they want to hear at all... “We’re disciples of Moses...we know that God spoke to Moses... we don’t even know where this Jesus comes from”...to which the formerly blind beggar replies, “Astounding, You don’t know where he comes, and yet he opened my eyes... Such a thing has never ever happened before, if he were not from God, he wouldn’t be able to do this”...This is, finally, too much for super pious lay folks... the good church folks ... and they kick him out of the congregation, and cut him off from the community of faith.

For judgment I came into the world, says Jesus, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind.

Now we don’t know where Jesus has been or what he’s been doing while this interrogation and argument has gone on... 26 verses, Jesus’ longest absence in John’s Gospel... but, now he reappears and asks the formerly blind beggar, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ... to which the man replies, “Who is he, Sir?”, to which Jesus responds, “You’re looking at him!” Falling on his face in worship, the man who’d spent his entire life in the abject darkness of blindness... the man who’s eyes have been washed clean and who can now see with his eyes and can see truly see through the eyes of faith, declares, “Yes Lord, I believe”.

For judgment I came into the world, says Jesus, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind.

All this is just too much for the super pious lay folks... the good church folks ... those who want to keep things safely as they've always known them... as they protest to Jesus, "Are you saying that we're blind?"... "If you were truly blind, you wouldn't be guilty, but because you claim to be able to see, you are."

The Ceylonese Methodist pastor, the Rev. D T Niles once described evangelism as "one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread." ... Paraphrasing Pastor Niles a bit, especially in these tumultuous days of the continuing political "silly season", dramatic economic instability, and sheltering in place due to pandemic coronavirus... I believe we could safely say that what you and I are about is "one formerly blind beggar showing another blind beggar where to gain his sight"... Even as we temporarily shelter in place during these days of the political silly season, dramatic economic tumult, and pandemic coronavirus, let us remember that the cure to whatever ails, assaults, and scares us is always found in the Great Physician, Christ Jesus himself... as Martin Luther commented at the end of his life, "We are beggars, this is true".

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

Hymn of the Day: If You But Trust in God to Guide You

- 1 If you but trust in God to guide you
with gentle hand through all your ways,
you'll find that God is there beside you
when crosses come, in trying days.
Trust then in God's unchanging love;
build on the rock that will not move.
- 2 What gain is there in anxious weeping,
in helpless anger and distress?
If you are in your Savior's keeping,
in sorrow will he love you less?
For Christ who took for you a cross
will bring you safe through ev'ry loss.
- 3 The Lord our restless hearts is holding,
in peace and quietness content.
We rest in God's good will unfolding,
what wisdom from on high has sent.
God, who has chosen us by grace,
knows very well the fears we face.

- 4 Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving,
offer your service faithfully.
Trust heaven's word; though undeserving,
you'll find this promise true to be.
This is our confidence indeed:
God never fails in time of need.

Text: Georg Neumark, 1621-1681; tr. Composite
Text © 1978, 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2014 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #47042.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

Prayers of the People

R: The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

Lord God, you sent Samuel to anoint David in front of his brothers, and your Spirit came mightily upon him all the days of his life. Anoint us with your Holy Spirit, that we may serve you all the days of our lives. **R**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our Good Shepherd. Even as the Psalmist talked *about* you in his Psalm, until he started talking *with* you, so train us to learn from his example. Become for us not only the subject of our holy conversation, but also our dearest confidant and companion. **R**

Holy Spirit, help us understand what is pleasing to the Lord so that we may be children of the light. Wake up our sleeping spirits so that the light of Christ may shine on us and through us. **R**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Light of the World. Even as you opened the eyes of the blind, open our eyes to see your presence everywhere, and give us the courage to confess our faith boldly, like one who knows whom to thank. **R**

Great Physician, the infirmities of all people are subject to you and your word. If it be your will, heal those with special needs whom we name silently or aloud before you: (Our Saviour's Prayer List – last page of this document.) **R**

Though we remember we are dust and to dust we shall return, we remember that we are your precious dust. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death

- 1 Awake, O sleeper, rise from death,
and Christ shall give you light;
so learn his love, its length and breadth,
its fullness, depth, and height.
- 2 To us on earth he came to bring
from sin and fear release,
to give the Spirit's unity,
the very bond of peace.
- 3 There is one body and one hope,
one Spirit and one call,
one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,
one God who made us all.
- 4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved,
who died that he might save;
with kind and gentle hearts forgive
as God in Christ forgave.

- 5 For us Christ lived, for us he died,
and conquered in the strife.
Awake, arise, go forth in faith,
and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895-1984

Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2014 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #47042.

Benediction

And now may Almighty God, the Father, and the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us together and apart, keeping us in his light, in his grace, in his love, and his mercy, and his truth, now and forever. Amen.

Our Saviour's Prayer List

- **HUGHES & MERIDETH FAMILIES** *struggles w/numerous health issues*
- **KYM Earles** *health & life struggles*
- **ALBERT Jackson** *life struggles*
- **SHARON Cottengim** *health struggles*
- **KATHLEEN & BRANDON Burnette** *life struggles*
- **ADDIE Curtis** *child with health struggles*
- **JIM Watt** *health struggles*
- **WAYNE Weissenbuehler** *health concerns*
- **ADAM & FAMILY** *life struggles*
- **CHISUM FAMILY** *life struggles*
- **STEVE Kirven** *health/healing*
- **TERRY Bona** *health struggles*
- **ASHLEY Monk** *health*
- **RICK Payne** *multiple health issues/struggles*
- **IRENE Ruse** *health issues*
- **JUSTIN McNabb** *health*
- **LINO Ramirez** *health/healing*
- **STEPHANIE Mangrum** *healing/health*
- **MEGAN & BRAD Hill** *life struggles*
- **RHONDA Clouse** *health struggles*
- **GARY Dominick** *health struggles*
- **DEBRA Johnson** *health/healing*
- **KELLY Finley** *serious health issues*
- **PAISLEY & FAMILY Choate** *child with serious health issues*

- **PAM** Neal *health/well-being*
- **DAVID** Anderson *health/well-being*
- **CHARLIE & CAROL** Burnette *health & healing/strength & well-being*
- **HAROLD** Harmon *health*
- **RAJEANA & FAMILY** Johnson *healing*
- **VICTIMS OF CORONA VIRUS & CONTROL OF SPREADING THIS VIRUS**
- **CORSON FAMILY** *transition/life changes*
- **CURT** Silvestri *health*
- **JOANNA & JOSH** Nannestad *life changes*
- **FAMILY OF JOHN** Childress *mourning loss of loved one & friend*
- **FAMILY OF VINNY** Cacasea *mourning loss of loved one & friend*
- **KANDACE** Keith *health*
- **FAMILY OF RAND** Burnette *mourning loss of loved one (Brandon's uncle)*
- **JAN** Eggleston *recovery/healing*
- **FAMILY OF JESSICA** Espinoza *mourning tragic loss of a beloved mother & family member*
- **MARILYN** Comer *health concern*
- **OLEN** Beaver *child traumatized by tragic event*
- **LARRY, ROWENA & FAMILY** Hughes *health issues/life struggles*
- **JAY** Nick *healing*
- **TIM** Nick *health/healing*
- **FAMILY OF ROBYN** Sanders *mourning loss of loved one*
- **JACKSON FAMILY** *health issues*
- **WASHINGTON IRVING SCHOOL** *prayer & partnership with staff, teachers & students*
- **WESLEY CENTER** *students, staff & programs*
- **LIGHT OF HOPE SHELTER** *praying that this homeless shelter soon becomes a reality.*
- **FOUR MILE LUTHERAN** *Mabank*
- **GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN** *Marshall*
- **ELCA SEMINARIES**
- **OUR SAVIOUR'S** *ministries/community outreach/transition*

***Requests will remain in the Prayers of the Church for 4 Sundays
unless the church office is otherwise notified.***