

Fourth Sunday in Lent



March 22, 2020

For Home Use

Hope Lutheran Church
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Lent is the special time of year when we begin our preparations for Easter by stripping away the non-essential and the unimportant, by listening in quietness to the groaning of a sinful creation, and by reflecting on our own sinfulness and on God's gift of forgiveness, which comes through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. In our service, you will note a longer act of confession at the beginning of each service, and more reflective songs and hymns with themes of the cross and grace. In this way, we prepare ourselves spiritually to walk the way of the cross with our Lord and Savior and to rise with him in the victory of Easter.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Make the sign of the cross in remembrance of baptism.

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

Amen

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalm 46:1-7)

Let us confess our sins before the Lord.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Gracious God,
we confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

GATHERING SONG:

“God, Whose Almighty Word”

- 1 **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.**
- 2 **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.**
- 3 **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.**
- 4 **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.**

Text: John Marriott, 1780-1825, alt.

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

And also with you.

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

BISHOP SUAREZ PRAYER FOR THE PANDEMIC

Merciful God,

We know that your heart overflows with compassion for your whole creation. Pour out your Spirit on all people living with this illness, or who are living with anxiety about this illness. Be with those who tend to the needs of the sick. Strengthen us all in body and spirit, console us when we are anxious, comfort us in grief, and hearten us in discouragement. Help to remind us that you claim us as your own, and are with us wherever we go. Through Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹The 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.” ²Samuel 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.’” ³Invite 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.” 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 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.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” ⁷But 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.” 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.” ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of

these.” ¹¹Samuel 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.” ¹²He 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.” ¹³Then 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 23

(recite responsively, congregation in bold)

¹The Lord | is my shepherd;

I shall not | be in want.

²**The Lord makes me lie down | in green pastures
and leads me be- | side still waters.**

³You restore my | soul, O Lord,

and guide me along right pathways | for your name’s sake.

⁴**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.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.

⁶**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

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

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL SONG

**Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.**

**1. Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work’s in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. (Refrain)**

GOSPEL READING: John 9:1-41

The Holy Gospel according to St. John

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹As *Jesus* walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The 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?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He 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.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then 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." ¹⁶Some 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. ¹⁷So 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."

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

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

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

I don't know about you, but I'm not thrilled when I go to the eye doctor. It's not quite as bad as going to the dentist, but it comes in a close, very close, second place. I guess I have several issues with going to the eye doctor. First, the lab tech puts drops in your eyes which I absolutely hate. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad if they would put the numbing drops in your eyes before they put the burning drops in your eyes. I don't know about you, but the eye doctor I go to has the tech put the burning drops in first and then the numbing drops.

Second, they turn off all of the lights and then use a prism to shine a very, very bright light into your eyes and all the while you are supposed to keep your eyes open! Then, when they finish shining the very bright light into your eyes, they turn the lights back on so you can't see anything! On the way out, someone offers you a very cheap pair of sunglasses so you can go out into a brighter light, the sunshine, and drive home. I usually decline the sunglasses and tell everyone I'll drive home with my eyes closed.

Admittedly, driving with your eyes closed is not a great idea. Let's face it, within seconds there would be an accident and someone may get injured. It is when we keep our eyes closed that we fail to see God at work in the world and in our lives. It isn't some bright light in the optometrist's office that keeps us from seeing. It is the world and Satan that keep us from seeing and experiencing the goodness, healing, and love of God.

In Jesus' day, it was widely thought that anyone who was born with some type of infirmity was either guilty of sin personally or someone else sinned. Hence the question the apostles asked

Jesus, “*who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind? (v.2)*” I guess the apostles can’t be faulted for asking the question because they only know what they’ve been taught to see. Jesus is changing the way the apostles and then how we see things. That is John’s point in today’s gospel.

A closer look at what John is telling us reveals several things to the apostles and to us. Jesus tells us that sin is not involved with the plight of the blind man. God allowed him to be born blind so that ***the work of God might be displayed in his life*** (v.3). God is using hardship to reveal His goodness, healing and love to us and to the blind man. So Jesus healed the man’s physical infirmity.

The blind man was not only healed physically, but also spiritually. Once his eyes were opened, he came to understand who Jesus is –the Messiah. He saw what others failed to see then and continue to fail to see today. ³⁵ *Jesus heard that they had 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 have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.’* ³⁸ *He said, ‘Lord, I believe.’* “

Today’s world is not unlike the times Jesus lived in. The Pharisees asked the blind man, more than once, how he came to be healed. The answer was given, but I guess by asking the question again and again, the Pharisees were hoping to hear the answer they wanted to hear. They weren’t happy with the truth so they kicked him out of the temple.

As Christians, we need to stand up for our faith and, if necessary, go against society and our religious and political leaders when we see that they are wrong. We need to pray daily for the United States of America and for the world. We need to open our eyes and see who God is and invite him back into this nation and the world. It is only through prayer that we will come to see the goodness, healing, and love God has for everyone in the world.

Meda Stamper wrote, “As the fruit of Jesus’ vine, we are on display and stand for something Other. If we never find ourselves at odds at all with the powerful and status quo, that perhaps, should give us pause. The blind man, unlike his parents, has the courage again and again to say what he knows, to speak truth to power, to tell what he can about the amazing grace by which he has been touched.”

John’s gospel is a story about grace, but it goes beyond grace to mercy and healing and knowing God. The blind man summed up beautifully the encounter he had with Jesus, “I was blind, but now I see.”

Have you had an eye exam lately?

Amen.

Please remember to mail your weekly offering to the church office. That will assist us to keep up with bills that will continue to come in. The address is: Hope Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 11316, Daytona Beach, FL. 32120.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Amazing Grace”

- 1 **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.**
- 2 **'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!**
- 3 **Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.**
- 5 **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.**

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. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day, *especially those affected by the Covid-19 virus, those in our prayer list and those we name in our hearts before you now....* Accomplish healing through the work of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, researchers and all who tend to human bodies. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, help this our congregation to lift up the unique gifts of each person who comes among us, 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.

SENDING

BLESSING & DISMISSAL

Jesus took the form of a servant and was obedient to death, even death on a cross. May you follow in his way and share in the resurrection. And may almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

+

Acknowledgments: Portions of the Liturgy for today were written by the Rev. Thomas L. Weitzel (LiturgyByTLW.com). Lessons and prayers are from Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2012 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #24316. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

REMINDER:
Our Church Building Is Closed and
All activities are canceled.



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LIVES