

# Fourth Sunday in Lent

“Cross” Current  
Traditional Worship Service  
March 19, 2023

## AS WE GATHER

Some of the central people in the Gospel narratives we get to know by name; others we do not. Although the man born blind is a major person in John 9, we never learn what his name might be. We meet his parents and his neighbors and we meet the Pharisees to whom he tells the story of the miraculous restoration of his sight. Although we do not learn his name, Jesus said of the man born blind that the works of God were displayed in him. As the One brightening our lives with the light of salvation, Jesus brings a new vision to our lives—an eternal vision of life with God that never ends. God knows our names. He directs the cross currents of our daily lives. In His light we see light—and that is what matters!

## ✠ PREPARATION ✠

**OPENING HYMN**    *“Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”*                      #685

1.        Let us every walk with Jesus, Follow His example pure, Through a  
            World that would deceive us And to sin our spirits lure. Onward in  
            His footsteps treading, Pilgrims here, our home above. Full of faith  
and hope and love, Let us do the Father’s bidding. Faithful Lord,        with me  
abide; I shall follow where You guide.
2.        Let us suffer here with Jesus And with patience bear our cross. Joy  
will follow all our sadness; Where he is, there is no loss. Though today  
we sow no laughter, We shall reap celestial joy; All discomforts that    annoy  
Shall give way to mirth hereafter. Jesus, here I share Your        woe; Help me  
there Your joy to know.
3.        Let us gladly die with Jesus. Since by death He conquered death, He  
will free us from destruction, Give to us immortal breath. Let us        mortify  
all passion That would lead us into sin; And the grave that        shuts us in Shall  
but prove the gate to heaven. Jesus, here with You I        die, There to live with  
You on high.

**4. Let us also live with Jesus. He has risen from the dead That to life we may awaken. Jesus, You are now our head. We are Your own living members; Where You live, there we shall be In Your presence constantly, Living there with You forever. Jesus, let me faithful be, Life eternal grant to me.**

### **INVOCATION**

**Vicar:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**People:** (sing) Amen.

### **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

**Vicar:** Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.

**People:** Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with my whole heart.

**Vicar:** Lead me in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

**People:** Behold, I long for Your precepts; in Your righteousness give me life! Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your promise.

**Vicar:** Let us make confession of our sins to God, our gracious, heavenly Father.

**People:** Eternal God, we confess that we all have sinned and need forgiveness. By nature, we are sinful from the very beginnings of our lives. Through our thoughts, words, and deeds, we continually sin against You. We have lived for ourselves in many ways, breaking Your commands that direct us not to lie, steal, or transgress Your holy will. We have walked in the darkness of bad choices and have left unfulfilled opportunities to do good and be blessings to others. O God, in Your mercy forgive our sin and free us from selfishness and indifference, that we may joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your commandments. Graciously forgive our sins and direct us in ways of compassion and love.

Vicar: God promises to hear those who turn to Him with repentant hearts. Upon this your confession, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in ☩ peace.

**People:** (sing) Amen.

### **SALUTATION**

Vicar: The Lord be with you.  
**People:** And also with you.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Vicar: Let us pray.  
Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** (sing) Amen.

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

*Isaiah 42:14-21*

<sup>14</sup> For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. <sup>15</sup> I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands,<sup>[a]</sup> and dry up the pools. <sup>16</sup> And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the

things I do, and I do not forsake them. <sup>17</sup> They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, “You are our gods.” <sup>18</sup> Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! <sup>19</sup> Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one,<sup>[b]</sup> or blind as the servant of the LORD? <sup>20</sup> He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. <sup>21</sup> The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious.

Vicar: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **EPISTLE**

### ***Ephesians 5:8-14***

<sup>8</sup> for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup> and try to discern 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 speak of the things that they do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Vicar: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **HOLY GOSPEL**

### ***John 9:1-41***

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

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>9</sup> As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed 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> Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. <sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and

beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” <sup>10</sup> So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So 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> So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” <sup>18</sup> The Jews<sup>[a]</sup> 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 how he now sees we do not know, 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 these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus<sup>[b]</sup> to be Christ, he was to 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 said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” <sup>25</sup> He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. 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> And 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, “Why, this is an amazing 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 if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man 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 in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. <sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>36</sup> He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to

you.” <sup>38</sup> He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt;<sup>[d]</sup> but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

**Pastor:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People:** Praise to You, O Christ.

**APOSTLES CREED** (found inside back cover of the hymnal)

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     *“God Loved the World So That He Gave”*     #571

- 1        God loved the world so that He gave His only Son the lost to save,  
          That all who would in Him believe Should everlasting life receive.**
- 2        Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, Who was made flesh and suffered  
death; All then who trust in Him alone Are built on this chief cornerstone.**
- 3        God would not have the sinner die; His Son with saving grace is nigh;  
          His Spirit in the Word declares How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.**
- 4        Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives all sins which you have  
done; And, justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest  
good.**
- 5        If you are sick, if death is near, This truth your troubled heart can  
cheer: Christ Jesus saves your soul from death; That is the firmest  
ground of faith.**
- 6        Glory to God the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One!  
          To Thee, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!**

**SERMON**

*“Jesus Helps Us See”  
Rev. Gordon W. Bruce*

*John 9:1-41*

**OFFERTORY** *(please rise)*

*“Create in Me”*

**#956**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Thy presence; And take not Thy Holy Spirit  
from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And uphold me with  
Thy free spirit. Amen.*

### **PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING HYMN**

**“We Give Thee But Thine Own”** #781vs1,6

*We give Thee but Thine own, What e'er the gift may be; All that we have is  
Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee. And we believe Thy Word, Though dim  
our faith may be: What e'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it unto Thee.*

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Vicar: Petitions heard... *(ending with...)* Lord, in Your mercy,  
People: **hear our prayer.**

**LORD'S PRAYER** *(found inside back cover of the hymnal)*

### **BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ☩ Son, and the Holy  
Spirit be and remain with you always.  
People: **(sing) Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN** **“Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness”** #563

1 Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my  
head.

2 Bold shall I stand in that great day, Cleansed and redeemed, no debt  
to pay; Fully absolved through these I am From sin and fear, from guilt  
and shame.

- 3      **Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which at the mercy seat of God  
Pleads for the captives' liberty, Was also shed in love for me.**
- 4      **Lord, I believe, were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.**
- 5      **When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies,  
This then shall be my only plea: Jesus hath lived and died for me.**
- 6      **Jesus, be endless praise to Thee, Whose boundless mercy hath for me,  
For me, and all Thy hands have made, An everlasting ransom paid.**

**SILENT PRAYER**