

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent + Sunday, March 19, 2023



INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

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.

CONFSSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the [†] Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

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 *Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness* (ELW 843)



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib - er - at-ing light;
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil-dren with a strong yet gen-tle word;
3 Praise the one true love in - car - nate: Christ, who suf - fered in our place;



praise the One who frees the pris-'ners, turn-ing blind-ness in - to sight.
praise the One who drove out de - mons with a pierc-ing, two-edged sword.
Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal-ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease,
Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des-ert's burn-ing sand;
Let us sing for joy and glad-ness, see-ing what our God has done.



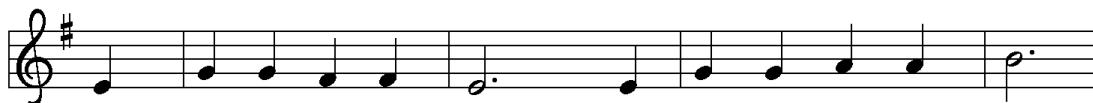
calm-ing storms and feed - ing thou-sands with the ver - y bread of peace.
from this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench-ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.
Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.

GREETING

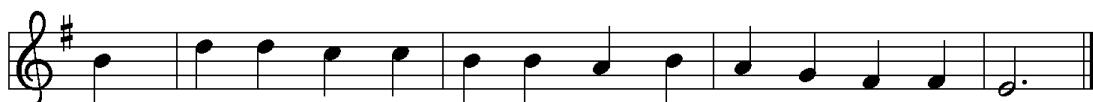
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

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.

A reading from 1 Samuel.

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:

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside 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.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clin ed.

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. Please be seated for a dramatic reading of this week's Gospel.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *There Is a Balm in Gilead* (ELW 614)

Refrain

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The top staff is for the soprano voice, the middle staff for the alto voice, and the bottom staff for the basso continuo. The music is in common time, with a key signature of one flat. The first section of the hymn begins with a melodic line in the soprano and alto voices, followed by a harmonic progression in the basso continuo. The lyrics are:

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;
there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

The second section of the hymn begins with a melodic line in the soprano and alto voices, followed by a harmonic progression in the basso continuo. The lyrics are:

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,
2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,
3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

The third section of the hymn begins with a melodic line in the soprano and alto voices, followed by a harmonic progression in the basso continuo. The lyrics are:

but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
and if you lack for knowl-edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Refrain

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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 us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made. Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain range to the smallest springtime bud. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Powerful God, you anoint kings and queens, and establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials, especially the governments of Edison and New Jersey. Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve, especially those we name out loud, in our hearts, or list online... Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community, especially the St. Paul's food pantry. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people. We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html. Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.

CHOIR ANTHEM: *Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)*

OFFERING SONG *Create in me a clean heart, O God* (ELW 186)

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



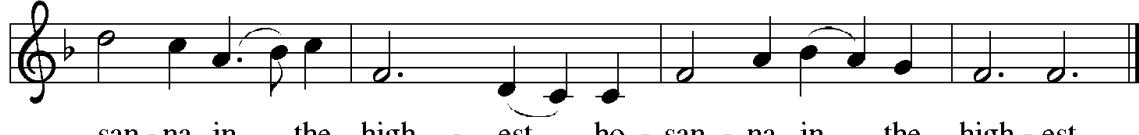
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

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.

Come, Holy Spirit.

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.

Come, Holy Spirit.

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.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

COMMUNION SONG



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer - cy now, we pray.

you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer - cy now, we pray.

e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION *Break Now the Bread of Life* (ELW 515)

1 Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, as once you
2 Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me, as when you
3 You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, your ho - ly

broke the loaves be - side the sea. Be - yond the sa - cred page
blessed the bread by Gal - i - lee. Then shall all bond-age cease,
word the truth that res - cues me. Give me to eat and live

I seek you, Lord; my spir - it waits for you, O liv - ing Word.
all fet - ters fall; and I shall find my peace, my All - in - All!
with you a - bove; teach me to love your truth, for you are love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOIR PRACTICE. Today after worship. There will be a brief choir rehearsal in the sanctuary after worship Sunday.

WALKING AT MENLO MALL. Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the entrance to Nordstrom under the cover of the parking garage and enjoy fellowship and walk around the park.

MIDWEEK SOUP SUPPERS IN LENT. Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., starting March 1. Set aside Wednesday evenings in March as a time to gather for soup, study and prayer. Share your family's favorite soup, bring some bread or make a salad to share. Sign up in the lounge.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SCHEDULE

Palm Passion Sunday, April 2, 10 a.m. Our worship begins with a palm procession led by our children and choir. At this service, the congregation will read the story of Jesus' Passion from Matthew's Gospel. During the reading of the Passion, Sunday school students will participate in a Holy Week lesson that puts them in the story.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7 p.m. A service of Holy Communion that begins the liturgy of the three days.

Good Friday, April 7, 7 p.m. A service of Tenebrae or shadows that immerses us in the story of Jesus' crucifixion with music, light and darkness.

Easter Vigil, April 8, 7 p.m. The liturgy of the three days comes to a close with a celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Easter Sunday, April 9, 10 a.m. A festival celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord with music from our Glory Band and Choir.

3FT FAMILY EGG HUNT. Join us on Saturday, April 8 at 10 a.m. for a family egg hunt and children's social. Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and neighbors to design a bag, collect and discover goodies, listen to music, color, and enjoy refreshments. There may be a special surprise visitor too! Rain or shine. Please sign up on the sheet in the lounge.

BIBLE STUDY.

There will be no Wednesday Bible Studies in Lent.

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

DAILY PRAYER. Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

Morning Prayer: Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#)

and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

Night Prayer: End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death* (ELW 452)

1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.

so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.