

# Worship in the Home

## Fourth Sunday in Lent March 22, 2020

*In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, you can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. ELCA offers this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home.*



*The Prayer of the Day may be prayed.*

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.**

*Then the readings for this Sunday may be read, as follows.*

**First Reading** 1 Samuel 16:1-13

<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, Samuel 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>Jesse 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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm** *Psalm 23 may be sung or spoken in response to the First Reading.*

<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.

**Second Reading** Ephesians 5:8-14

<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.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel** John 9:1-41

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<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 the one 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 Jesus 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 Judeans 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 Judeans, who 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 person, 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 does listen to anyone who is devout and obeys God's will. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this person 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 he is the one speaking with you." <sup>38</sup>He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Jesus. <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 Jesus 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."

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Reflection

*Having read these readings, think of this:*

Here is yet another story of water. Two weeks ago, we heard in John 3 about being “born of water and the Spirit.” Last Sunday, in John 4, Jesus offered us “living water.” And today a man who has been blind all his life is made to see by a combination of the saliva from Jesus’ body and the water of a pool called “Sent.” Ancient Christians believed that all of these readings tell us of baptism. No matter how good or how poor our ordinary vision is, we are blind to the mercy of God, to the world the way God sees it, and to the needs of our neighbor. Fear, especially right now, can make us yet more blind. But Jesus is the one who is Sent; it is as if his cross and resurrection is a pool in which we can wash and once again see. He awakens us to light. He anoints us with the Spirit that enables us to walk without fear through the valley of the shadow of death. Then, baptized into his risen life, we are to turn and be something of the same gift to our neighbors, part of God’s comfort to them, part of the goodness and mercy God makes to follow them.

*If you have a hymnal (or using the link below), you might now sing or read “Amazing Grace.” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 779)*

[Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound](#)

## Prayers of Intercession

Praying separately in our homes and together in the Spirit, let us pray for the church, the earth, the world, and all who are in need, responding to each petition with the words “hear our prayer.”

*A brief silence.*

For the church around the world we pray:

Strengthen all the baptized with the light of hope in you, despite an inability to gather for worship. Guide bishops and pastors as they make decisions for their communities. At this time of great distress, give preachers the courage of Jonathan Edwards, whom we commemorate today, to speak your word with mercy and might. As at the annunciation you sent an angel to bring good news to Mary, so send an angel now to the world with your gospel of peace and love.

*A brief silence.*

O God our Shepherd, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For the earth we pray:

Give your wisdom to humanity to care for the lands and the seas, with all their living things. Provide rich soil for crops to grow. Bring rain to lands suffering drought. Protect hills and shorelines from damage caused by erosion.

*A brief silence.*

O God our Gardener, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For the nations of the world we pray:

Give your peace to the nations of the world. Call a halt to all violence, terrorism, and warfare, at this time and forever. Anoint us with your Spirit of social justice, that we join with bishop and martyr Oscar Romero to care for the poor. Empower heads of state and legislators to enact adequate and helpful policies for the health and welfare of their citizens.

*A brief silence.*

O God our Mighty Fortress, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Facing the coronavirus we pray:

Be present with those who have contracted the virus, those who are quarantined, those stranded away from home, those who have lost their employment, and those who are filled with fear. Console those whose futures are disrupted or seem empty. Support health professionals and medical researchers as they address the pandemic. Comfort our distressed world.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you are our Everlasting Arms. In your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For all in need we pray:

Remembering the story of the man born blind, we pray for all who are blind or of low vision. Heal those who suffer from anxiety and disease. Accompany all who today will die. Support physicians, nurses, therapists, home health aides, and all who tend to human bodies. Come quickly to all who seek your presence this day, especially those whose names we call out to you now.

*A brief silence.*

O God our Healer, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lastly, for ourselves we pray:

Receive these prayers we share in the silence of our hearts.

*A longer time of silence.*

O God, our Hope. In your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

United with all who have died in the faith, especially those we remember now, we pray that at the end we will join with them in your presence.

*A brief silence.*

O God our Homeland, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*If you have access to Evangelical Lutheran Worship, you may conclude by singing or reading "Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery" (ELW 334), stanzas 1-3 and Lent 4.*

*Then conclude with these prayers.*

Let us pray:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of Baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**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.**

May the grace of Christ attend us,  
and the love of God surround us,  
and the Holy Spirit keep us,  
now and ever.  
**Amen.**

Worship and all activities at St. Paul's are canceled until further notice.

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