

Welcome to Sunday Morning Worship

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2020

Good Morning to our members and friends at home,

This resource is intended to be used by individuals and families who desire to set aside a portion of their Sunday for a moment of worship. Please adapt this resource as you wish. You will need to supply your own bible for the scripture lesson.

PRAYER Requests: Beginning this week you are encouraged to make requests for prayer (healing, comfort, thanksgiving and others) in the same way you would on Sunday morning. Please send those to pastor01089@gmail.com. They will then be sent out through our email list to the congregation for our common prayer life during the week. PLEASE remember that all prayer requests received become public knowledge. If you are uncertain if your request for another might be confidential, do not send it. For this Sunday please remember your community of faith in your prayers today.

An Opening Call to Worship

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life. Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength. Come, my Joy, my Love, my Lord. Come and hear words of praise.

Morning Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Holy God, we greet this new day with praise on our lips. In you alone do we trust. In you alone do we find peace, comfort, love and safety. From you we hear the call to enter your courts with praise that we might learn of your will and your way. From you we are offered the gifts of the spirit for faithful living that we may be disciples of your Christ, our way, our truth, our life, who taught us to pray, saying... *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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Scripture Lesson: John 9:1-34

Introduction to the reading:

In the second year of his Ministry, Jesus began to experience opposition to his ministry, especially from the religious community. As word of him spread, the Pharisees began to pay attention to what he said and what he did. More than once, Jesus put the spirit of the law above its letter, placing him at odds with the Hebrew law of his day. Wishing to remain anonymous, Jesus traveled to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. However, his presence in the temple did not go unnoticed and once again Jesus' compassion towards a person in need places him at the center of a controversy. We pick up the story as Jesus leaves the temple.

After the reading, you may reflect on the story and share your thoughts. There is a brief set of notes concerning this text for your reflection.

Prayers of the People

You may wish to add your own prayers for healing, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for comfort and others, silent prayer time is also included. The following prayer centers around all those who are in need this day.

Loving God hear these our prayers for all those in need: We lift to you all who are anxious, worried and despairing in response to this global pandemic. We ask that those who offer of themselves without thought of their own safety, nurses, doctors, care givers, emergency personnel and all those on the front lines of this battle find your strength and your support in their work. For those who are living in this sickness grant that their time of healing be at hand. We remember and pray for those in our community, those in our state and nation. We remember those who were struggling before this extra burden was added and this new crisis made manifest. We remember those who have been uprooted, moved from their homes and communities. Those compelled to seek safety in countries other than their own. We pray for them and with them mourn their loss of community, family, land and home. We remember and we pray for the women and the millions of children, the majority of those who are displaced. We pray for the elderly, who find their whole world gone in the twilight of their years. We remember and pray for all those who are persecuted because of their gender, race, creed or orientation. We remember the women and children who are also displaced and have become refugees in their own communities. We remember and pray for all those that mourn this day, who carry sorrow and pain in their hearts at the loss of a loved one. We remember and pray for those who struggle in poor health, in the hospitals, in nursing homes, assisted living and at home. For all those in need, everyone of them our neighbor, we offer our prayers...

(Personal prayers may be offered). Gracious God, who walks with us in trial and rejoicing grant us your peace in this moment. (Silent prayer time).

Unto you, O God, be all honor, glory and power, Amen.

Benediction: From Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear.

*Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.*

Amen.

Notes on the Text

The man born blind is healed by Jesus of Nazareth, a little mud, a little spit, and he can see for the first time in his life. He has been touched by Jesus. When asked about what happened he says: *the man called Jesus made mud, (he leaves the spit part out) spread it on my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash. I did and now I see.* So, the man born blind is brought to the Pharisees who ask the same question and he gives the same answer. They get into an argument over who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. He has healed someone of the sabbath. *He's a law breaker, a sinner.* So, the Pharisees ask the man's parents, who defer to their son and once again the man born blind is confronted. *We know that Jesus is a sinner,* they say. The man born blind says, *I don't know about that, but, one thing I do know, that I was blind and now I see. What did he do to you?* The Pharisees ask. *How did he open your eyes? I have told you, over and over again.* The man replies. *What is wrong with you! Want to hear it again!*

The man born blind is touched by Jesus and while he does not know everything, he does know one thing, he once was blind, and now he sees. That's what he knows. First-hand experience.

If you have been touched by Jesus what do you know? First, let me suggest that the first thing you know is that first-hand experience. Being touched by Jesus is not about institutional structure, it's not about doctrine and it's not about a set of rules or even about 2000 years of church history. It's about experiencing Christ in your life. It might be that wonderful feeling of unconditional love. It might be that long sought after release from heart wrenching pain and loneliness. It might be the rest and peace after bearing a heavy burden. It might be about forgiveness that was never dreamed possible. It's about being touched. Today, give some thought to how God has touched your life.