

**Fourth Sunday in Lent – *Unfinished: Called to Attentiveness***  
**March 19, 2023**

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.

**Greeting**

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.  
**And also with you.**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God’s mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess to you our faults and failings.**

**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**

**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**

**we spoil rather than steward your creation;  
we cause hurt though you call us to heal;  
we choose fear over compassion.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,  
as we seek to follow in your way of life.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:

God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,  
so that all may receive life.

This promise is for you!

God embraces you with divine mercy,

☩ forgives you in Christ’s name,

and revives you in the Spirit’s power.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Song**

**“God, Whose Almighty Word”**

**#673 vs. 1,3,4**

**Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**Reading: Psalm 23 – We will read responsively by verse**

<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.**

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Children’s Message**

## Gospel: John 9:1-41

<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 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>When he 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 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 <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 Jews; for the Jews 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 man, 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 he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person 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 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 the one speaking with you is he.” <sup>38</sup>He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <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 him 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**

## Sermon

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Continuing through out Lent theme - *Unfinished: Discovering God's Call in the Not Yet*, we today get a healing story. The story of Jesus spitting in the dirt, rubbing mud on the blind man's eyes, and telling him to go and wash. And he can see. The line of questions that follows leads to wonder what it is that we see around us, and what do we miss.

From our Lent resource we hear:

Look back on the past day, week, or month. Think about how you spent your time and attention. Now think about what you value, what is important to you. Did your time and attention align with your values? Were you attentive to what really matters in your life, or did other things capture, take, and hold your attention? And how were you - or are you - shaped by where your attention goes? In the story of the Man born unable to see, we find an evolution in his attentiveness. Having to repeatedly tell how he came to have sight, we discover that the more he tells his unfinished story, the less it becomes about him, and the more it becomes about Jesus. In our own unfinished lives, how does our attentiveness to who Jesus is and what Jesus does alter, change, or transform us, our stories, and our living?

In the difficulty of this moment, the man is bombarded with challenges to his experience. His whole existence to this point is questioned because of the skepticism of those around him. But, truly, he does not know who healed him, because he was blind. He only knows that he had been blind, and is not blind anymore.

And because of it all, each character in the story misses the true presence of Christ in their midst. But Jesus says to the Blind Man, "You have seen him. He is the one speaking to you."

There are many things at play that make these other characters miss Christ's presence in this moment. Many of which we can relate to.

This encounter calls us to think about our own attentiveness and where Christ is present and active in our lives.. We are called and urged to reflect on the following:

- We are shaped by where we invest our attention
- Sometimes our attention is contrary to our values
- Sometimes demands make it impossible to focus our attention where we want to
- Jesus captures our attention
- Jesus is at the center of our stories
- Jesus changes us and our experiences
- Jesus transforms our stories and our lives

In our pondering these realities, and coming to our own understanding and grasp of our own openness, we ask ourselves these questions:

- How do I typically decide where I invest my attention?
- What captured and held my attention today?
- Where do I wish I could have invested my attention today?
- Did my attention align with my values?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

People of God, in this season of Lent we are reminded again and again that we do not go it alone. The man born blind was simply there on the side of the road. It was the disciples who made him the subject of this healing story. He didn't put himself into the line of questioning and doubts about his life that followed.

But Jesus remains constant. With all the discarding of this man's story, and use of him as a prop for what may be other narratives, Jesus remains constant. He gives him the time and the place to realize who it is that has healed him. "You have seen him. He is the one speaking to you."

Each and every day we, too, experience this. Christ's presence is the one and only constant in our lives. Other distractions and things calling for our attention come and go, but God in Christ Jesus is always there. We are called into a deeper practice of seeing where it is that God is acting in our lives and the world around us.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

**Song of the Day    "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"**

**#779**

### **The Apostles' 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.

*A brief silence.*

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 establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials (*specific leaders may be named*). 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 (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Sandy, family of Carol Bilderback*). 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*). 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 (*especially Joseph, Guardian of Jesus*). 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.**

## **Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

God of good gifts,  
receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.  
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

**Amen.**

## **Words of Institution**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**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**

## **Communion**

### **Prayer**

Embodied God,  
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.  
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,  
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors  
and touch the world with your love.

**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

## **Sending Song**

**“What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”**

**#774**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!**

And all of Good Shepherd said, **AMEN!**

**Our prayers and sympathies to the family of Carol Bilderback who passed away on Sunday. Funeral arrangements are pending for March for March 27.**

## March Financial Snapshot

The numbers as of 3/15:

Total  
Revenue **\$13,763**

March '22 Revenue \$21,340

Total  
Expenses **\$6,830**

March '23 Projected \$27,000

Current Difference

**\$6,933**

What we've learned:

We've pinpointed the source of high XCel bills of recent months. We hope to have fixed the issue.

Something To Celebrate:

Because of the generous response to the Ministry Objectives of our Stewardship Appeal, we have funds in the Property Reserve to make the repairs that need to be made!

Feeling Extra Generous?

Consider a special gift to recoup the cost of the last three months where our XCel bills were \$2,000 - \$3,000 higher than our normal highs.



## Palm Sunday French Toast Fellowship Brunch

Following Worship on April 2



### Have you remembered Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in your will or estate plan?

When you make or revise your will or estate plan, or review your life insurance or retirement fund beneficiaries, please consider naming Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd/Endowment as one of your beneficiaries.

The use of the following sample bequest language will ensure that your gift is directed appropriately:

I hereby leave  
(% of estate/dollar amount/residue of my estate/% or residue) of my estate/trust to  
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd/Endowment  
1120 Cedar St. Eau Claire, WI 54703  
to be used in such a manner as outlined in the LCGS Gift Policies  
(or designated for a specific purpose)

### GOOD SHEPHERD ENDOWMENT FUND GOOD FRIDAY FISH FRY



April 7th 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

BEER BATTERED COD,  
POTATOES, GREEN BEANS, COLE SLAW,  
DINNER ROLL, DESSERT

MEALS MUST BE RESERVED IN ADVANCE  
CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR RESERVATIONS

2 PIECE MEAL - \$12

3 PIECE MEAL - \$16

1 PIECE FISH OR CHICKEN KIDS MEAL - \$5

QUILT RAFFLE - \$10/TICKET - MAX 200 SOLD



Lutheran Church of the  
**GOOD SHEPHERD**  
KNOWN - SEEN - LOVED

1120 Cedar St.  
Eau Claire, WI 54703  
(715)834-2959  
lcgseauclaire@gmail.com

### GOOD SHEPHERD ENDOWMENT FUND GOOD FRIDAY QUILT RAFFLE

\$10/ticket Max 200 tickets sold



Pieced by LINDA HJERLEID  
Tied by LCGS Quilters  
68" x 70"



Pieced by JOANN FUERBRINGER  
Machine Quilted by Kristy Goettl  
66" x 74"



Pieced by SHARON SMITH  
Custom Quilted by Kristy Goettl  
68" x 70"



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