

First St. John Lutheran Church

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist

Toni Wilbarger - Secretary



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

March 22, 2020 - 7:45 am

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Fourth Sunday of Lent

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! If you are visiting, please sign the guest book near the main door in the Narthex.

We offer a traditional service and a celebration service, a joint effort between members of both services with special music and a message. Our Sunday schedule is:

7:45 am	Traditional Service
9:00 am	Sunday School
10:15 am	Celebration Service

A.W.E. Service: We also offer a contemporary worship service on the second Wednesday of the month beginning with a light supper at 5:30 pm.

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:00 am in the lounge (middle floor of the educational building – turn right out of the door by the choir loft.

Children ages 3 through 6th grade will meet for Sunday School in the basement of the church (the JAM Room!).

Catechism Classes: The 7th grade class will meet at 9:00 am on Sundays in the catechism room next to the ladies restroom on the second floor of the Educational Building. Eighth grade class meets every other Sunday at 11:30 am in the lounge for a light lunch and class.

Nursery: Our nursery is in the church basement. The nursery is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table & a semi-private nursing area also are available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement. In the hallway, the ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, there is a sign up book in the Narthex (lobby) by the telephone. Or, you may call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Memorials: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office or in the Narthex (lobby) and place it in the offering plate.

ORDER OF WORSHIP – TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Prelude “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” arr. Hayes

Ringing of the Bell (Please stand)

Hymn “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross” No. 335

Invocation

P: In the name of the Father, and the (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Let us pray. God of heaven and earth, you come in close and make us your own. Equip us by your Spirit to confess our sins, embrace your forgiveness, and seek the way you set before us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

P: With honesty of heart, let us confess our sin.

(Silence for personal examination)

P: Merciful God,

C: **forgive us. You sent Jesus Christ to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We fail in love, neglect justice, and ignore your truth. Have mercy on us and wash away our sin. Create in us clean hearts for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

P: Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: **Amen.**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

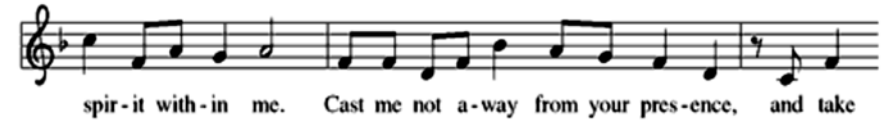
C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

(Everyone extends a greeting to those around them by saying:)

“The Peace of the Lord be with you.”

(Passing of the Peace which concludes by singing the following)



Greeting

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

C: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

P: 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.

C: **Amen.**

The Hymn of Praise - Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

(words printed below)

Jesus keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;
Free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

In chapter 15, Saul's failings finally caused the Lord to regret having made Saul king over Israel. Now, the Lord directs the prophet Samuel to find a replacement for Saul, who was made king by the people's popular acclamation. The new king, this time chosen by God, is a simple shepherd boy from Judah.

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." 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

You have anointed my head with oil. (Ps. 23:5)

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

**³He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³He revives my soul
and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

**⁴Though 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 spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

**‘Surely your 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

This letter teaches that through baptism Christians live in God's light. Therefore, we ought to live by doing those things that reflect the light of Christ.

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light--⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Lenten Verse

(Please stand)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel Acclamation (spoken)

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 9.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

Some people in Jesus' day regarded infirmities as signs of divine punishment, and a few thought Jesus was wrong to help afflicted people. When Jesus is criticized for healing a man born blind, the question arises as to whether such attitudes are not themselves a form of blindness, thereby showing the heart is far from God.

As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.

⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The 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?" ⁹"Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹He 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." ¹²They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then 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." ¹⁶Some 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. ¹⁷So 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."

¹⁸The 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 ¹⁹and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but 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." ²²His 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. ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴So 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." ²⁵He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He 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?" ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸He said, "Lord, I believe."

And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus 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." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Gospel Response (Spoken)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Sermon Hymn "O God of Mercy, God of Light"

Pastor Rayl
No. 714

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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.

The Offering

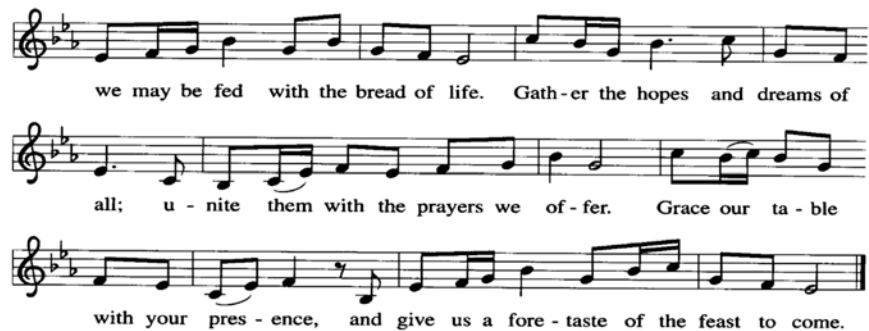
"Variations on 'Simple Gifts'"

Shaker Hymn Tune

(Please stand)

Offering Response – (Sung by the congregation)

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u - nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble
with your pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer

P: Merciful God, receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection, through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer (*Each petition concludes with this response*)

P: Hear us, Lord.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

The Lord's Prayer (*prayed by all*)

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.

The Blessing

P: May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into life renewed.

C: **We turn to the Lord for our life and hope.**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you (+) peace.

C: **Amen.**

Dismissal

P: Marked with the cross of Christ, go forth to love and serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Closing Hymn "God Be With You Till We Meet Again"
Postlude "Prelude in D Minor"

No. 536
Bach

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Darold Henninger, Kevin Ruedy

READER

Joanne Henningsen

ACOLYTES

Dominic and Kieara Vartorella

2020 EASTER FLOWER SALE
 SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



It's time to order the flowers that will decorate the church on Easter morning, April 12th. The price is \$9.00 per plant. You can choose a lily, daffodil, hyacinth, or tulip. Fill out the order blank below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. The final Sunday to order will be March 22nd when someone from the Altar Guild will be available to take orders in the Narthex. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks out to: **First St. John Lutheran.**

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 22nd.

Number of plants @ \$9.00 each _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

Type of plant: _____
 (lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) _____

In Honor of (Living) _____

March 22, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Out of Sight

Blindness and sight. Today's gospel is about a man born blind who is given sight, and about others, who, though they possess physical sight, are blind. There is more here than what meets the eye.

Why was this man born blind? Why is there suffering, illness, and disease in the world? The accepted wisdom of the day said it was because someone had sinned, either the man or his parents. If something bad happened, the reasoning went, it was surely deserved, brought upon oneself.

Jesus rejects this way of seeing things. Maybe some good can come from our blindness, our disabilities, our vulnerabilities. When we are most "out of sight," so to speak, the eyes of our hearts are most open to light and healing.

We are blind when we believe we alone hold the truth, or when we are unable to see someone else's point of view. We are blind when our convictions about life, love, politics, or the world are so rigid that what people see in us is arrogance, pride, and hypocrisy. We are blind when we close our eyes to the suffering and injustice in the world.

Jesus anoints the man's eyes and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he regains his sight. You can see how this became a story about baptism. Like the blind man, we wash in the healing and cleansing waters of baptism and our eyes are opened.

The early church called baptism "enlightenment" and "illumination." Through baptism we are invited on a vision quest. Faith teaches us to see in new ways. Jesus is the source of our vision, the light of the world. Can you see it? You are a child of God, beautiful in God's eyes. Sent from this place, you will be the light of God's eyes, light for the world.