

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
March 19, 2023



**“LORD,
I BELIEVE.”**
JOHN 9:38

First Lutheran Church
116 Inner Drive
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UNITED by Christ, God call us to LOVE one another
As we RECEIVE, DISCOVER and PROCLAIM God's Word.

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.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING REFLECTION

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.

OPENING HYMN *"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"* ELW #843
(Vs. 1 & 3)

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

ELW page 203
(Vs. 2 & 3)

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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST CHOIR

Amazing Grace, My Chains are Gone
Arr. James Koerts

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

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.

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.

Word of God. Word of Life

Thanks be to God!

PSALM—Psalm 23 (read in unison)

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

**²The 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.**

**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 prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.**

**⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Word of God. Word of Life

Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *“Return to the Lord, your God”* ELW page 142

The Holy Gospel according to the ninth chapter of John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

¹As [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?” ⁹Some 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."

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

MESSAGE

Rev. Samuel Mailleue

HYMN OF THE DAY

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" ELW #815
(Vs. 1 & 2)

THE APOSTLE'S 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**

THE PRAYERS

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. 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 and those recovering from surgery.

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 the Le Sueur Food Shelf. 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.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TITHES

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray:

**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.**

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

ELW page 144

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy, holy, holy **ELW page 144**

THE 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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

Lamb of God ELW page 146
"Just As I Am, without One Plea" ELW #592
(Vs. 1 & 3)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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.

CLOSING HYMN

“Be Thou My Vision” ELW #793
(Vs. 1, 2 & 3)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.
Thanks be to God.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

POSTLUDE

Welcome to First Lutheran Church

*Whether you are looking for a place of worship
or are just passing through, we hope our service has blessed you
on your journey as your presence has been a blessing to us.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lenten Study with the Pastors. Wednesdays in March from 1-2:00pm. Join us for a chance to reflect on the Stations of the Cross with members of Zion UCC. Pastor Sam and Pastor Rosemary will share the leadership and we will alternate locations. When we meet at First Lutheran, please bring dessert-type goodies. When we meet at Zion UCC, they will provide them. Here's the schedule, feel free to come whenever you can - and bring a friend or two! Questions, contact Pastor Sam.

March 22—First Lutheran

March 29—First Lutheran

Ministry Focus for March is the Le Sueur Food Shelf. Monetary or food donations are being accepted in the Gathering Space.

The Red Cross Blood Drive will be at First Lutheran on Monday, March 20 from 12-6pm. Please call to make an appointment.

Fellowship Hour will be provided today by the Alinder family in honor of Marian's 101st birthday.

The Christian Education Team is looking for a few families to bring in some treats for Palm Sunday fellowship hour on Sunday, April 2. If you're willing to bring in a dozen muffins or some juice, please sign up in the narthex. Thank you!

Financial Update		
Week of	Amount Received	Amount Needed
3-12-2023	\$1,759	\$4,431
YTD	\$44,385	\$48,736

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Expires 11-2-2022

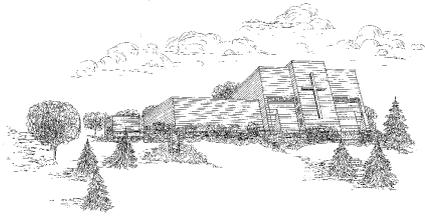
Worship Assistants

March 19, 2023

Organist/Pianist: Virginia Miller
First Choir Director: Jennifer Weick
Acolytes: Thea Braun
Reader: Edrie Barton
Usher: Steve Olson
Communion Asst: Tiffany & Cooper
Vanden Einde
Greeters:
Council Member: Dave Nelson
Fellowship: Alinder Family
Projection: Tech Team
Audio: Tech Team
Videographer: Becky Pollack
Offering Counters: Bob Bartle
John Miller
Altar Guild: Rita Patrias
Theresa Sullivan

March 26, 2023

Organist/Pianist: Virginia Miller
First Choir Director: Jennifer Weick
Acolytes: Sophie Tews
Reader: Bonnie Keech
Usher: Chuck Frauendienst
Greeters: Bonnie Keech
Council Member: Aaron Fredrickson
Fellowship:
Projection: Tech Team
Audio: Tech Team
Videographer: Becky Pollack
Offering Counters: Randy Baum
Joan May
Altar Guild: Rita Patrias
Theresa Sullivan



Weekly Schedule

Sunday, March 19	9:00a 10:00a 1-4p	Worship w/Holy Communion First Choir Rehearsal Councils As Leaders First Lutheran/Albert Lea
Monday, March 20	12-6p 7:00p	Blood Drive at First Lutheran Church Council
Tuesday, March 21	10:00a 10:15a	Coffee/Mary Unit Bible Study/Mary Unit Newsletter Deadline
Wednesday, March 22	1:00p 6:00p 6:30p	Lenten Study with the Pastors @ First Meal—GNH/GIGG/FLY GNH/GIGG/FLY
Sunday, March 26	9:00a 10:00a	Worship First Choir Rehearsal

