

Ascension Lutheran Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent..... March 22, 2020

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

CALL TO WORSHIP

God is in the water that restores our soul.

And God is in the night when we lose our way.

God is in today and tomorrow, raising up leaders, prophets and dreamers.

And God is in the wilderness with us—every step of the way.

So with confidence we declare—

If God is in those spaces, then God is surely here.

Let us worship the God of creation.

Let us worship the God of wilderness spaces.

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.

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.

A reading from First Samuel.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

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

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.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

A reading from Ephesians.

⁸Once 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.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

The holy gospel according to John, the ninth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

SERMON The Rev. Christina Auch

APOSTLES CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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 into hell.**

**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

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of insight, open the hearts of the church and the world to all who testify to your deeds of power. Raise up voices in your church that are often silenced or overlooked due to age, gender expression, race, or economic status. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, empower us to care for the land and all living things that dwell in it and beneath it. Provide rich soil for crops to grow. Bring rain to lands suffering drought. Protect hills and shorelines from damage caused by erosion. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, bring peace to all people and nations. Anoint leaders who seek goodness, righteousness, and truth on behalf of all. Frustrate the efforts of those who would seek to cause violence or terror. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, you care for our needs even before we ask. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day. Accomplish healing through the work of all who tend to human bodies.

We pray especially for those we name aloud now or silently in our hearts...

Mary Allen (Karen Hubbard's friend), **Kathy** Backof (Donna Lilly's friend), **Dan** Birch (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Carolyn** Blitz (Bill Bridges' friend), **Kathy** Bradley (friend of Bill Bridges), **Jennings** Brooks (Jim Wilson's roommate), **Chris** Carman (Judy Bridges' friend), **Betty** Connor (Karen Hubbard's friend), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges Aunt), **Joan** Craig (Clarann Schiavo's friend), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams' friend), **Ann** Fitzsimmons (Steve and Jenny White's friend), **Evan** Greene (Allen Philbeck friend's son), **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **The Holida Family** (friend of Lisa Philbeck), **Michael** Huntsinger (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mack** Jenkins (Dave Williams' friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Cathy** Kingsborough (friend of the Lacy/Smolzer family), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Kevin** Lilly (Vicky Galloway's 2nd cousin), **Heather** Lyerly (Rose Cook's great niece), **Cathy** Lyerly (Rose Cook's sister-in-law), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Bernice and Roger** McDaniels, **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Charlotte** Morin (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Tommy** Price (Edith Kelly's nephew), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Harold** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Lori** Rosamond (Pastor Christina's stepsister), **Pastor Eric** Sellers (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Zuzana** Rybnicek (The Blalock's friend), **Jan** Tucker (Ozark bank employee), **The Vonbehren Family** (Barbara Davis' cousins), **Renee** Walton, **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Eric** West (Bob and Vickie Jones' son-in-law), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt), **Denise and Savannah** Yount (Sandra Waldrop's friends)

Members: **Dean** Davis, **Lin** Washburn, **Dot** Paul, **Bob** Bryant, **Jane** Sneed, **William** Coyne, **Jim** Wilson, **Steve** Eckard, **Sandy** Harman, **Bobbie** Johnson, **Patricia** DuBose and **Bobby** Jones

In Undergraduate College: Emma Auch, Brooke Buchanan, Parker Hart, Elizabeth Hoffman, Samantha Hoffman, Jacob Stone

Those Awaiting Arrival of Children: Jack Blalock and Ally Bruser (Greg and Chrystal Blalock's son and daughter-in-law); Emma and Patrick Budzinski (daughter and son-in-law of Greg and Chrystal Blalock).

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, help this congregation lift up the unique gifts of each person who enters, no matter their physical capacity, cognitive ability, or sensory need. Help us to be creative and brave in making our facilities and our ministries accessible to all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of insight, you call out to those who are asleep and awaken them to new life with you. We give thanks for your saints. Join us together with them as your children in this world and the next. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: All face to face, in person gatherings at Ascension are canceled through Sunday, March 29.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Online Giving is now available. Make a one time or recurring gift using the website or the GivePlus app on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Easter lilies are available for purchase. Make checks payable to Ascension and put "Easter Lily" on the memo line of your check. Cost is \$10 each Flowers may be taken home after the 10:30 worship on Easter Sunday, April 12. Please include (1) the name of the person being honored or remembered and (2) who the flowers are being given by. You may give online from the website also.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #47161. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Ascension Lutheran Church

PO Box 266 Shelby, NC 28151

Ascensionlutheranshelby.com

Facebook.com/ascensionlutheranshelbync

704-487-5679

Rev. Christina Auch, Pastor 704-472-7783

Debby Chaffin, Secretary

Steve White, Organist

Rose Cook, Financial Secretary

Daryl Cook, Council President 704-418-3103