

Unfinished: Weekly Overview: 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?

Preaching & Teaching Notes by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox

Punctuation matters. Note the difference:

Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

OR

‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned. He was born blind.

So that God's works might be revealed in him, we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.

There is no punctuation in the original Greek text!

The punctuation shifts our attention

From: *Engaging the Living Word – a Resource for Teaching & Preaching* is provided by the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College. This edition is written by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox, Program Director for Congregational Thriving and Pr. Micah Isberner-Louwagie.



**Sunday, March 19, 2023
9:00 a.m.**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church

It is a joy to gather together for worship!

St. Paul Purpose Statement

Living Christ centered lives so we may love all, serve our community, and share the Word.

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. In-person worship with Holy Communion
10:00 a.m. In-person Sunday School – September – May
10:00 a.m. In-person Teen Time – September – May

Communion

We celebrate Jesus' presence each week in Holy Communion. This is the Lord's Supper and Jesus invites us: whether you are a lifelong Lutheran, or just considering Christianity; if you are an infant or elderly; if your family has been in the United States for generations, or has only recently arrived; if you are LGBTQIA+ or straight; if you live with disabilities, chronic illness, or are able-bodied and currently healthy; if you are home-blessed or homeless; ... YOU are welcome at God's meal of grace at St. Paul.

Accessibility

Handicap parking, entrance, wheelchair, and restrooms are available. Sound amplifiers and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher for assistance.

Children's Offering

In March and April the children's offering will support our synod partners in Tanzania and India. The offerings will be sent directly to non-profit organizations that work with the North Central Diocese of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC) in India. The Friends of Mwangaza supports education programs that tackle issues related to teaching, learning, public health, empowering women, and building community in Tanzania. Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry supports education through financially supporting students at the ALC boarding homes in India. Check out both organizations here: <https://lutheranpartners.org/what-we-do>
<https://www.mwangazapartnership.org/>

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Prelude

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
R. B. Farlee

When the prelude music begins, we invite you into a time of silent reflection to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

Welcome/Announcements

GATHERING

Confession

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who makes all things new, whose mercy endures forever.

All: Amen.

P: Gracious God,

All: We confess that we often invest our attention in misguided places and in misguided ways. We admit that where we focus our attention can prevent us from recognizing you at work right in front of us. Forgive us, and help us to center our lives in you so that cross-marked and Spirit-sealed we may join in your creative and redeeming work for all the world. Through Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Lord, Amen

P: By grace we have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. May the Holy Spirit strengthen us in our unfinished journey.

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”

ELW #843



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib - er - at - ing light;
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren with a strong yet gen - tle word;
3 Praise the one true love in - car - nate: Christ, who suf - fered in our place;



praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners, turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight.
praise the One who drove out de - mons with a pierc - ing, two - edged sword.
Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease,
Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des - ert's burn - ing sand;
Let us sing for joy and glad - ness, see - ing what our God has done.



calm - ing storms and feed - ing thou - sands with the ver - y bread of peace.
from this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.
Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

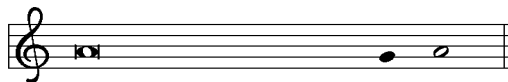
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Greeting

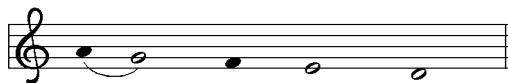
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

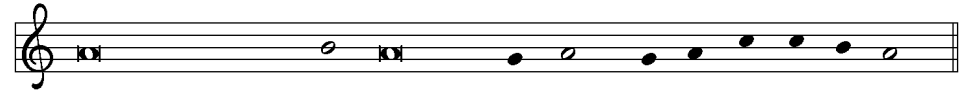
Kyrie



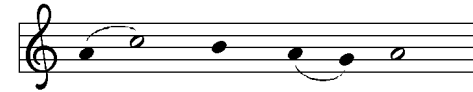
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray,

All: When we are distracted by things that cause us to lose track of your call, O God, turn our attention back to you. that we might recognize you at work in our lives. Direct the ponderings of our hearts toward where you call us to pay attention. Teach us to regard your work in all creation and to be attentive to what you are doing. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

WORD

First Reading

Gospel: John 9:1-17

P: The Holy Gospel according to John, the ninth chapter,

All: 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.”

Lenten Verse



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.

Second Reading: John 9:18-41

The Gospel continued:

¹⁸The Judeans 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 Judeans; for the Judeans 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 God does listen to one who worships God and obeys God’s 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.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Message

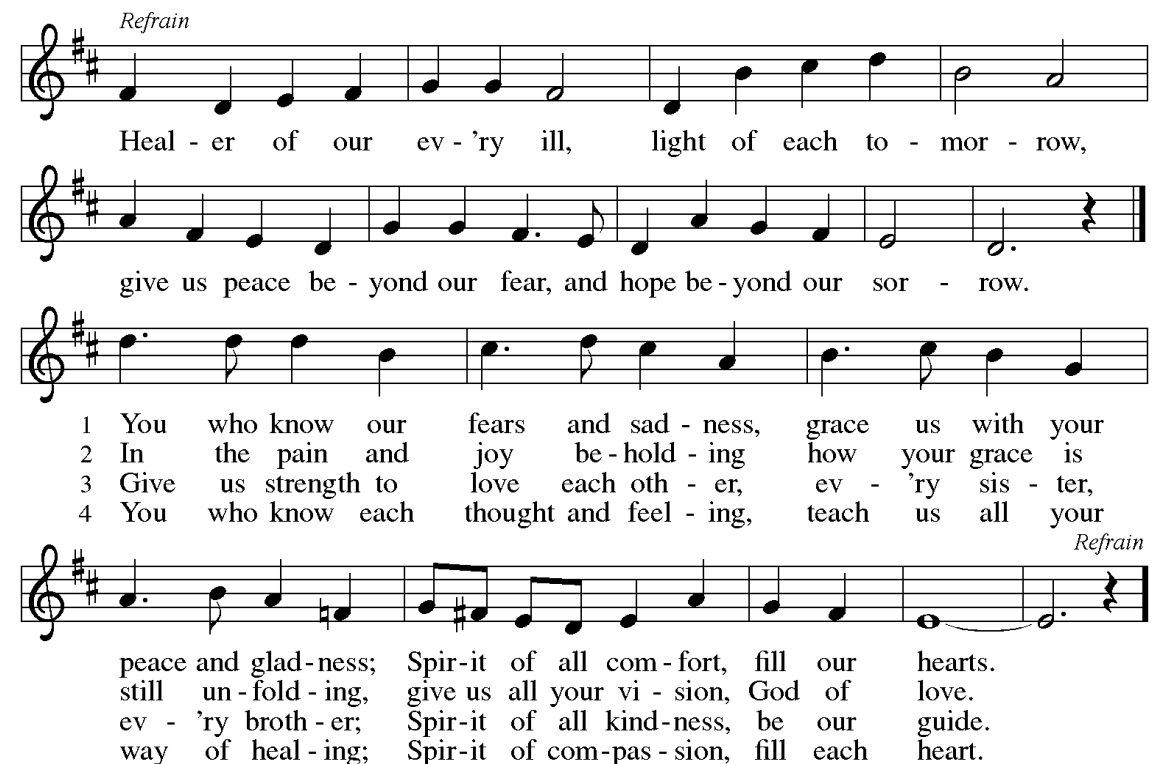
Sermon

Hymn of the Day

“Healer of Our Every Ill”

ELW #612

Refrain



Heal - er of our ev - 'ry ill, light of each to - mor - row,
give us peace be - yond our fear, and hope be - yond our sor - row.

1 You who know our fears and sad - ness, grace us with your
2 In the pain and joy be - hold - ing how your grace is
3 Give us strength to love each oth - er, ev - 'ry sis - ter,
4 You who know each thought and feel - ing, teach us all your

Refrain

peace and glad - ness; Spir - it of all com - fort, fill our hearts.
still un - fold - ing, give us all your vi - sion, God of love.
ev - 'ry broth - er; Spir - it of all kind - ness, be our guide.
way of heal - ing; Spir - it of com - pas - sion, fill each heart.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL, Marty Haugen
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Prayers of Intercession

Sustained by God’s abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Each petition ends with these words:

P: Merciful God,

All: receive our prayer.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: And also with you!

P: Let us share a sign of Christ’s peace in whatever way you are comfortable.

MEAL

Offering

“Amazing Grace”

Jim Brickman

Offering Response

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God,
and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.
Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God,
and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.
Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, O
Lord, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me.
Re - store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.

Offering Prayer

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

Preface

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

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.

Invitation to Communion

P: Come to the banquet for all is now ready.

Communion

Communion Music

"Lamb of God"



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

"His Mercy is More"

Matt Boswell | Matt Papa

- 1 What love could remember no wrongs we have done
Omniscient all knowing He counts not their sum
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
Our sins they are many His mercy is more
- 2 What patience would wait as we constantly roam
What Father so tender is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest the vilest the poor
Our sins they are many His mercy is more
- 3 What riches of kindness He lavished on us
His blood was the payment His life was the cost
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Chorus

Praise the Lord His mercy is more

Stronger than darkness new every morn

Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Prayer after Communion

SENDING

Blessing

P: May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of God's hand.

All: Amen

Sending Song

“As the Sun with Longer Journey”



1 As the sun with long - er jour - ney melts the win - ter's snow and ice,
2 Through the days of wait - ing, watch - ing, in the des - ert of our sin,



with its slow - ly grow - ing ra - diance warms the seed be - neath the earth,
search - ing on the far ho - ri - zon for a sign of cloud or wind,



may the sun of Christ's up - ris - ing gent - ly bring our hearts to life.
we a - wait the heal - ing wa - ters of our Sav - ior's vic - to - ry.

Text: John Patrick Earls, OSB, b. 1935
Music: NAGEL, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
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Music © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve in love.

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Christ, the Life of All the Living”

Anne Krentz Organ

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Lila Edeus, Lori Dewey, Harold Julifs, John Ukena, and Berta Beyer.

Worship Assistants:

Opener – Jen Pillars

Head Usher – Stacey Avelar

Acolytes – *Volunteer Needed*

Greeters – Bob & Judy Bartel

Ushers – Greg Zeigler, Donna Kendall

Reader – Greg Zeigler

Sound – Greg Zeigler

Closer – Ordean family

Musicians:

Julie Woessner

Dawn Zeigler

Next week's Assistants – March 26

Opener – Chad Arians

Head Usher – Chad Arians

Acolytes – *Volunteer Needed*

Greeters – Audrey Cox, Cathy Cox

Ushers – John Renner, Keith Peugh

Reader – Keith Peugh

Sound – Jim Gorman

Closer – Arians family

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