

Introduction to the day

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 diverse people of God.

OPENING SONG/PRELUDE

Love the Lord

©Lincoln Brewster

(sung by Wign & A Prayer only)

WELCOME

The congregation is invited to stand as they are able and to face the baptismal font.

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.

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.

Please remain standing and turn to face the altar as you are able.

GATHERING SONG

Lead Me to the Cross

©Brooke Ligertwood

VERSE

4 Am⁷ Em Bm⁷/D C

1. Sav-iour I come, ___ qui-et my soul, ___ re-mem-
2. You were as I, ___ tempt-ed and tried, ___ hu-

8 G D Em Bm⁷/D

- ber ___ re-demp-tion's hill, ___ where Your blood was spilled, -
- man. _ The word be-came flesh, ___ bore my sin in death. -

PRE-CHORUS

11 C G D Am⁷

— for my ran-som. _ Ev-ry-thing _ I
— Now, You're ris-en. _

14 D^{sus} D Em D Cmaj⁷

once held _ dear, _ I count _ it all _ as loss. _ Lead me to the cross, -
_ where Your love poured _ out. _ Bring me to my knees, _ Lord, I lay me _ down. -

20 D Cmaj⁷ G D Last time to Coda ☪
Am⁹

— Rid me of _ my-self, ___ I be-long to _ You. _ Oh, lead me. ___

INSTRUMENTAL

24 C D Em Bm⁷/D C Em Bm⁷/D

Lead me to the cross. _

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

Kyrie

©Kent Alleluia Liturgy

Leader

In peace, let us pray
to the Lord

CONGREGATION

Lord have mer cy,
Christ have mer - cy,
Lord have mer - cy.

2

Leader

For the peace from above,
and for our salvation, let us pray
to the Lord

CONGREGATION

Lord have mer- cy,
Christ have mer - cy,
Lord have mer - cy.

Leader

For peace in the world,
for the health of God's church,
and for all unity, let us pray
to the Lord

CONGREGATION

Lord have mer-cy,
Christ have mer - cy,
Lord have mer - cy.

Leader

For this holy house,
and we who offer praise, let us pray
to the Lord

CONGREGATION

Lord have mer cy,
Christ have mer - cy,
Lord have mer - cy.

Leader

Help, save, comfort and defend us,
gracious Lord

CONGREGATION

Lord have mer- cy,
Christ have mer - cy,
A - - - - - men

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.

Please be seated

WORD

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

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (Jeri Wartena)

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 1 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

(Jeri Wartena)

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

²**The 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.

⁴**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.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely 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

(Jeri Wartena)

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.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

KIDS' MESSAGE

(Pr. Carolyn Brodt)

The congregation is invited to stand as they are able to welcome the Gospel

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

(Due to length, Gospel will be read by multiple people in “readers’ theatre” style)

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

Narrator: While walking along the road, Jesus saw a man who was blind since his birth.

Disciples: ²Teacher, who sinned? *Who is responsible for this man’s blindness?* Did he commit sins that merited this punishment? If not his sins, is it the sins of his parents?

Jesus: ³Neither. His blindness cannot be *explained or* traced to any particular person’s sins. He is blind so the deeds of God may be put on display. ⁴While it is daytime, we must do the works of the One who sent Me. But when the *sun sets and* night falls, this work is impossible. ⁵Whenever I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

Narrator: ⁶After He said these things, He spat on the ground and mixed saliva and dirt to form mud, which He smeared across the blind man’s eyes.

Jesus: *(to the blind man):* ⁷ Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.

Narrator: Siloam means “sent,” *and its name reminded us that his healing was sent by God.* The man went, washed, and returned to Jesus, his eyes now alive with sight. ⁸ Then neighbors and others who knew him were confused to see a man so closely resembling the blind beggar running about.

Townspeople: Isn’t this the man we see *every day* sitting and begging *in the streets*?

Others: ⁹ This is the same man.

Still Others: This cannot be him. But this fellow bears an uncanny resemblance to the blind man.

Formerly Blind Man: I am the same man. *It’s me!*

Townspeople: ¹⁰ How have your *lifeless* eyes been opened?

Formerly Blind Man: ¹¹ A man named Jesus *approached me and* made mud from the ground and applied it to my eyes. He then said to me, “Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.” I went and washed, and suddenly I could see.

Townspeople: ¹² Where is this man *who healed you*?

Formerly Blind Man: I don’t know.

Narrator: ¹³⁻¹⁴ The townspeople brought the formerly blind beggar to appear before the Pharisees *the same day Jesus healed him*, which happened to be on the Sabbath Day. ¹⁵ The Pharisees began questioning him, looking for some explanation for how he could now see.

Formerly Blind Man: He smeared mud on my eyes, and I washed; now I see.

Some Pharisees: ¹⁶ God can’t possibly be behind this man because He is breaking the rules of the Sabbath.

Other Pharisees: How can such a lawbreaking scoundrel do something like this?

Narrator: The Pharisees were at odds with one another about Jesus and could not agree *whether His power came from God or the devil.*

Pharisees (to the formerly blind man): ¹⁷ What do you say about this man, about the fact He opened your eyes so you could see?

Formerly Blind Man: *I have no doubt*—this man is a prophet.

Narrator: ¹⁸ Some of the Jews suspected the whole situation was a charade, that this man was never blind. So they summoned the man’s parents to testify about his condition.

Pharisees: ¹⁹ Is this man your son? Do you testify that he has been blind from birth? How therefore does he now see?

Parents: ²⁰ We can tell you this much: he is our son, and he was born blind. ²¹ But his new sight is a complete mystery to us! We do not know the man who opened his eyes. Why don’t you ask our son? He is old enough to speak for himself.

Narrator: ²²The man's parents were a bit evasive because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. It had been rumored that anyone who spoke of Jesus as the Anointed One would be expelled from the synagogue. ²³So they deferred the thorny question to their son, ²⁴and the Pharisees called on him a second time.

Pharisees: Give God the credit. *He's the One who healed you.* All glory belongs to God. We are persuaded this man you speak of is a sinner *who defies God.*

Formerly Blind Man: ²⁵If this man is a sinner, I don't know. *I am not qualified to say.* I only know one thing: I was blind, and now I see.

Pharisees: ²⁶What did He do to you? How did He give you sight?

Formerly Blind Man: ²⁷*Listen,* I've already answered all these questions, and you don't like my answers. Do you really need me to say it all over again? Are you thinking about joining up with Him and becoming His followers?

Pharisees (berating him): ²⁸You're one of His followers, but we follow Moses. ²⁹We have confidence that God spoke to Moses, but this man *you speak of is a mystery;* we don't even know where He comes from.

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁰Isn't it ironic that you, *our religious leaders,* don't even know where He comes from; yet He gave me sight! ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does respond and work through those who worship Him and do His will. ³²No one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of any person blind from birth. ³³This man must come from God; otherwise, this miracle would not be possible. *Only God can do such things.*

Pharisees: ³⁴You were born under a cloud of sin. How can you, *of all people,* lecture us?

Narrator: The religious leaders banished him from their presence. ³⁵Jesus heard what had happened and sought out the man.

Jesus: Do you believe in the Son of Man?

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁶I want to believe, Lord. Who is He?

Jesus: ³⁷You have seen His face *with your new eyes,* and you are talking to Him now.

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁸Lord, I do believe.

Narrator: The man bowed low to worship Jesus.

Jesus: ³⁹I have entered this world to announce a verdict *that changes everything.* Now those without sight may begin to see, and those who see may become blind.

Some Pharisees (who overheard Jesus): ⁴⁰Surely we are not blind, are we?

Jesus: ⁴¹If you were blind, you would be without sin. But because you claim you can see, your sin is ever present.

Please be seated

SERMON (Pr. Carolyn Brodt)

The congregation is invited to stand as they are able

HYMN OF THE DAY

Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)

©Chris Tomlin

1 Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Chorus My chains are gone I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood his mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

3 The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

4 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

CREED

Let us join with Christians throughout the world in this Lenten Season and confess our shared faith using the words of 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.

Please be seated

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Jeri Wartena)

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

(Prayer requests provided by congregation to be added here by Reader)

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.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

*We acknowledge that all we have is a gift from God
and in gratefulness we return to God a portion of
the time, finances, and gifts that God has given us.
Thank you so much for your continued support.*

OFFERING 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,
our living Water and our merciful Guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs
we bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,
and provided them water from the rock.
We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert,
pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.
Pour out your Spirit on this holy food
and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:
wash away our sin,
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us using the language of your heart.

**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.

*All are welcome to join in our communion celebration.
Please follow the directions of Pastor Carolyn and the ushers.*

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.

The congregation is invited to stand as they are able.

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.

SENDING SONG *I Believe*

©Brian & Sherry Pearson

I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
Who was to come, into the world.
So that God's word may live in us

I believe that you are Christ, the son of God
I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
I do believe
I do believe
I do believe
I believe you are Christ

I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
Who was to come, into the world.
So that God's word may live in us

I believe that you are Christ, the son of God
I believe that you are Christ, the son of God.
I do believe
I do believe
I do believe
I believe you are Christ

I do believe
I do believe
I do believe
I believe that you are Christ

Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*After brief announcements related to the ministry of Bethel,
the congregation is invited to stand and face the font.*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.
Thanks be to God and we will.