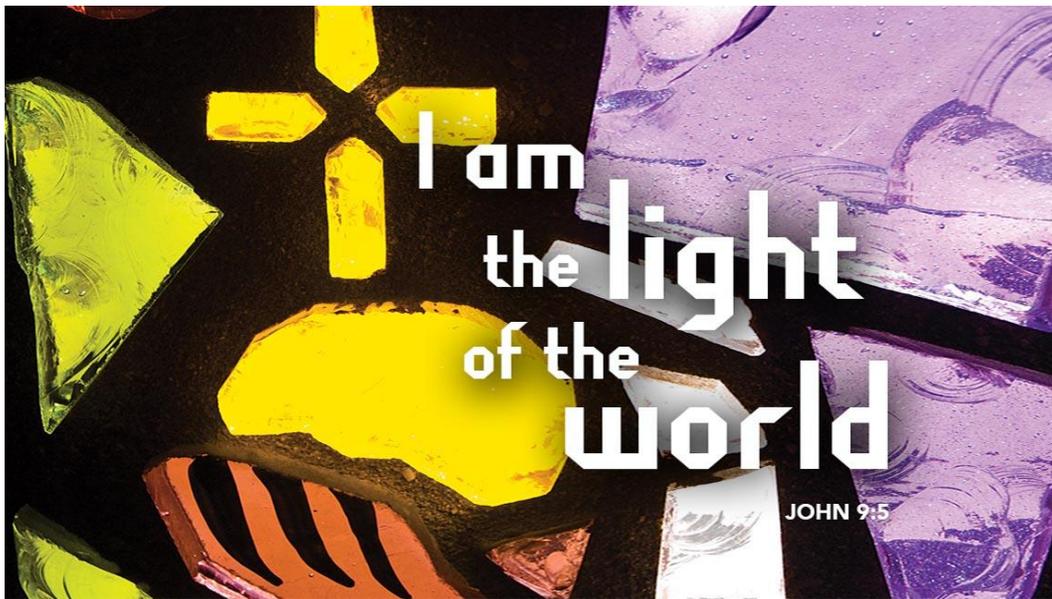


Fourth Sunday in LENT

March 22, 2020



**BLUE
RIDGE
TRINITY**

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



OUR MISSION
IS
Seeing God's Plan
Answering God's Call
Doing God's Work

WELCOME as we gather to worship the living and reigning Savior. **Guests and Visitors**, we are honored to have you with us in worship this morning. If you have no church home, we would be honored to have you join us at BRT. Do remember that we worship at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays, Choir meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. late August through Memorial Day. There are other ways to participate in the life and ministry of BRT. Let us know of your gifts and interests. May God bless our time together through our Lord Jesus and enrich our faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We, the members of Blue Ridge Trinity Lutheran Church ("BRT"), proclaim the message that God's Grace is infinitely inclusive and that everyone is welcome through our doors. We believe that Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

As disciples of Christ seeking justice and reconciliation among all peoples, we at BRT welcome all into the fullness of God's love. We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of mental and physical abilities, every gender identity or sexual orientation, whether single, widowed, divorced, separated, partnered or married, any color, culture or economic circumstance and those who feel or have felt excluded or abandoned. We recognize that each person is a unique creation of God and, through Grace, is called a child of God.

All are welcome at BRT.

All are welcome to worship, to hear the Good News, to receive the sacraments, and to share in fellowship and ministry.

As members of BRT, we pledge ourselves and our congregation to exercise our faith in Christ, treasuring one another's similarities while embracing our God-given differences. We pledge to ourselves and to all others that we will strive to live as a reconciling people, in our life together and in our outreach to the world.

LITURGICAL SERVICE

The gospel for this Sunday is the story of a man born blind healed by Christ (John 9:1-41). "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment because God opens our eyes to see the truth that each of us is a "child of God." 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

You must know that I long to be with you in person. Nevertheless, I am with you in spirit through Jesus Christ who promised to be with us whenever and wherever we gather in His name. I pray that you are well and greet you in the name of God: the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God, Whose Almighty Word

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br4dZhlJdqk>

- 1 God, whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.
- 2 Christ, who once came to bring,
on your redeeming wing,
healing and sight;
health to the troubled mind,
sight where illusions blind;
oh, now to humankind
let there be light.
- 3 Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy dove,
speed forth your flight;
move on the water's face
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

4 Holy and blessed three,
glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might:
boundless as ocean's tide,
rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth, far and wide,
let there be light.

Text: John Marriott, 1780-1825, alt.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned away from you, knowingly and unknowingly. We have wandered from your resurrection life. We have strayed from your love for all people. Turn us back to you, O God. Give us new hearts and right spirits, that we may find what is pleasing to you and dwell in your house forever. Amen.

Receive the good news: God turns to you in love. "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for you. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Luther's Morning Prayer*)

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

WORD

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 9th 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 (*Pastor Cummings*)

Sanctify us in your truth, O Lord, for your word is truth. Amen.

When someone is sick or injured, we seek someone to blame. At other times, we think their illness or injury is nothing but bad karma. How about taking a different approach? What is more

important, assigning blame or offering help? Consider the lengths you would go to, to help a loved one who is sick or injured. Now, that is what God did in becoming human. God loves you, me and all people so much that through Jesus Christ, God wants to touch us as Jesus touched the man born blind and makes us whole.

Today, who might need God's touch? People who are made to feel invisible. Those who are isolated because of illness or age or gender or loss. You can help change that by an act of

kindness such as a call or a card or thoughtful gift or a smile. Let us not be blind to the needs of others around us.

Finally, where are you most in need of God's touch? Tell God about your fears, burdens and brokenness. Then, believe that God's love is poured out in Christ for you and open yourselves to receive it. Amen.

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.**

Let us pray:

We turn our hearts to you, O God, for you are gracious and merciful to all who are in need.

Brief silence.

Healing God, open the hearts of the church to testify to your deeds of power through Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, empower us to care for the earth and all living things that dwell in it, above it, and beneath it. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, raise up leaders to inspire goodness, righteousness, and truth in every land. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, come quickly to all affected by Covid 19. Grant healing through the work of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, and all caregivers. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, we thank you for saints called home who have lit up our lives by their faithfulness and service through Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, hear these and all our prayers that we commend to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING (*offer your own prayers and send your gifts to church*)

Let us pray: Merciful and generous God, you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing; receive the offering of our time, possessions and talents this day and show us where they might be best used for your glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

You Are Mine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgm9lkTNQmc>

- 1 "I will come to you in the silence,
I will lift you from all your fear.
You will hear my voice,
I claim you as my choice.
Be still and know I am here."
- 2 "I am hope for all who are hopeless,
I am eyes for all who long to see.
In the shadows of the night,
I will be your light.
Come and rest in me."
Refrain
"Do not be afraid, I am with you.
I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me,
I will bring you home;
I love you and you are mine."
- 3 "I am strength for all the despairing,
healing for the ones who dwell in shame.
All the blind will see,
the lame will all run free,
and all will know my name." *Refrain*
- 4 "I am the Word that leads all to freedom,
I am the peace the world cannot give.
I will call your name,
embracing all your pain.
Stand up, now walk and live!" *Refrain*

Text: David Haas, b. 1957, © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

SENDING

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

BLESSING

Merciful God bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Healer of Our Every Ill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwBewCxunL0>

Refrain

Healer of our ev'ry ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

- 1 You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. *Refrain*
- 2 In the pain and joy beholding
how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love. *Refrain*
- 3 Give us strength to love each other,
ev'ry sister, ev'ry brother;
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. *Refrain*
- 4 You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. *Refrain*

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Text © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

In peace, let your light shine.
In the name of Christ! Amen.

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