**Incarnation Family Worship**

**March 22, 2020**

Welcome to worship this Sunday morning! We are saddened that we cannot yet gather as the body of Christ to share together in Word and Sacrament, but we are thankful that we can, through social media, worship separately together.  You are invited to follow the worship bulletin designed for family use.  You will need to identify a leader (L).  You will need to identify one or more to read the lessons and the sermon.  We are hard at work trying to get the sermon on Facebook live so that by next week you may listen to Pastor Jane preach the sermon.   You are invited to find a way to make your offering to God and send it to the church office so that the ministry of Incarnation may continue. Additionally, there are some reflection questions for you as a family to discuss following worship, and I’m sure Patrick would encourage you to sing a hymn or two.

**GREETING**

L: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**F: Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: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.**

**READINGS**

**First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

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**

 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**

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 Reading: John 9:1-41**

*Our Gospel will be narrative reading attached, we ask that each family member receive a part and participate in the reading.*

**SERMON**

**SERMON REFLECTION**

1.  What part of the sermon best speaks to you this day?
 **2**   Did you hear something new?  something familiar?
 **3**.  Did the sermon provoke a question or concern?

**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.**

**FAMILY PRAYERS** *All family members are encouraged to offer prayer petitions at this time.*

**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.**

**OFFERING**

*So that the various ministries of the congregation may continue, please take a moment to place your weekly offering in a basket and then mail to the church or give your weekly offering online at this time.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**All:** We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have given us – ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**BLESSING**

L: Almighty God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

**F: Amen**

**DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace, share the good news.

*Family may share the Peace of Christ with one another as worship ends.*

**John 9: 1-41**

**Narrator:**  As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him,

**Disciples:** “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

**Narrator:** Jesus answered,

**Jesus: “**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. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

**Narrator:** When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him,

**Jesus:** “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent).

**Narrator:** Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask,

**People:** “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”

**Narrator:** Some were saying,

**People:** “It is he.”

**Narrator:** Others were saying,

**People:** “No, but it is someone like him.”

**Narrator:** He kept saying,

**Blind Man: “**I am the man.”

**Narrator:** But they kept asking him,

**People: “**Then how were your eyes opened?”

**Narrator:** He answered,

**Blind Man:** “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.”

**Narrator:** They said to him,

**People:** “Where is he?”

**Narrator:** He said,

**Blind Man:** “I do not know.”

**Narrator:** They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formally been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them,

**Blind Man:** “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.”

**Narrator:** Some of the Pharisees said,

**Pharisees:** “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.”

**Narrator:** But others said,

**Pharisees: “**How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?”

**Narrator:** And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man,

**Pharisees: “**What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

**Narrator:** He Said,

**Blind Man:** “He is a prophet.”

**Narrator:** The 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 and asked them,

**Pharisees:** “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

**Narrator:** His parents answered,

**Parents: “**We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but 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.”

**Narrator:** His 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. Therefore, his parents said,

**Parents:** “He is of age; ask him.”

**Narrator:**  So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him,

**Pharisees:** “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”

**Narrator:** He answered,

**Blind Man: “**I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

**Narrator:**  They said to him,

**Pharisees:** “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

**Narrator:** He answered them,

**Blind Man: “**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?”

**Narrator:** Then they reviled him, saying,

**Pharisees:** “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”

**Narrator:** The man answered,

**Blind Man:** “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

**Narrator:** They answered him,

**Pharisees:** “You were born entirely in sins, and you are trying to teach us?”

**Narrator:** And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said,

**Jesus: “**Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

**Narrator:** He answered,

**Blind Man:** “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”

**Narrator:** Jesus said to him,

**Jesus:** “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”

**Narrator:** He said,

**Blind Man:** “Lord, I believe.”

**Narrator:** And he worshipped him. Jesus said,

**Jesus: “**I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.”

**Narrator:**  Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him,

**Pharisees: “**Surely, we are not blind, are we?”

**Narrator:** Jesus said to them,

**Jesus:** “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

**Fourth Sunday in Lent A**

**Incarnation Lutheran Church**

**I LACK NOTHING**

 **YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES THAT ONE SENTENCE THAT SHAPES MY SERMON JUST POPS RIGHT OUT AT ME – AND SOMETIMES IT DOESN’T. THIS WEEK WAS ONE OF THOSE TIMES THAT IT DIDN’T. I THINK IT WAS BECAUSE I FELT SO CALLED TO PREACH A SERMON THAT CONNECTS THESE SCRIPTURE READINGS, FIRST OF ALL, TO OUR WORLD SITUATION AS WE STRUGGLE WITH THE NEW NORMALS OF THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC; AND THEN SECONDLY, A SERMON THAT CONNECTS US TO ONE ANOTHER AS BEST WE CAN IN THESE DAYS OF SOCIAL DISTANCING. I THOUGHT ABOUT OUR FIRST READING – THE STORY OF DAVID’S CALL TO BE KING OF ISRAEL. SAUL, ISRAEL’S FIRST KING, HAS FAILED AND NOW GOD SENDS THE PROPHET SAMUEL TO BETHELEHEM TO FIND A NEW KING FROM AMONG JESSE’S SONS. ULTIMATELY, AFTER SEVEN OF JESSE’S SONS ARE PARADED BY SAMUEL BUT NOT CHOSEN, THE YOUNGEST, DAVID THE SHEPHERD BOY, IS BROUGHT IN FROM THE PASTURE. “THAT’S THE ONE,” GOD TELLS SAMUEL AND YOUNG DAVID IS ANOINTED WITH OIL AND NAMED KING OF ISRAEL.**

**THERE ARE A COUPLE THEMES IN THIS TEXT THAT SEEM TO FIT. THERE’S SAMUEL’S FEAR – FEAR OF SAUL, FEAR OF THE PEOPLE OF BETHLEHEM, FEAR OF FAILURE. AND SO, OUR FEARS OF THIS UNKNOWN TERRITORY IN WHICH WE ARE LIVING. THERE’S DAVID’S ANOINTING AND CALL TO SERVE GOD AND OTHERS AND SO OUR BAPTISMAL ANOINTING AND CALL TO SERVE GOD AND OTHERS– EVEN IN TIMES SUCH AS THESE. OR, THERE’S THAT POWERFUL REMINDER THAT OUR LORD DOES NOT SEE AS WE MORTALS DO – FOR WE LOOK ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE AND GOD LOOKS ON THE HEART. FEAR – BAPTISM – LOVING NOT JUDGING – ALL THEMES THAT SURELY SPEAAK TO US THIS DAY – BUT NOTHING REALLY JUMPED OUT.**

 **I LOOKED AT THIS LONG GOSPEL TEXT FROM JOHN – THE HEALING OF THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH. IMMEDIATELY THE “WHY SUFFERING?” QUESTION SURFACES. JESUS’ DISCIPLES ASK, “WHO SINNED, THIS MAN OR HIS PARENTS, THAT HE WAS BORN BLIND?” THEIR QUESTION REFLECTS ANCIENT BELIEF AND SADLY, MODERN BELIEF AS WELL. BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY DESERVE IT. EITHER THEY OR THEY PARENTS SINNED AGAINST GOD AND NOW GOD IS PUNISHING! HOW FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL MESSAGE THAT FALSE BELIEF FALLS…. “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD,” REMEMBER? IT IS NOT GOD WHO CAUSES THE SUFFERING. IT IS THIS BROKEN AND SINFUL WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE THAT BRINGS THE SUFFERING….AND GOD WEEPS…AND GOD PROMISES TO BE THERE WITH US IN THE SUFFERING. LUTHER CALLS THIS THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS – MAYBE A FITTING DISCUSSION FOR A WEDNESDAY EVENING, BUT FOR NOW, AGAIN, THIS DIDN’T JUMP OUT AT ME FOR THIS SERMON.**

 **AND THERE ARE MORE THEMES IN THIS GOSPEL TEXT. THERE’S THE BLAMING AND SCHEMING OF THE PHARISEES; THERE’S THE PARENTS’ FAILURE TO STAND BY THEIR SON REFLECTING THE POWER OF THE SYNOGOGUE TO EXCLUDE THEM FROM COMMUNITY – ALL THAT SHOULD PREACH, SHOULD IT NOT? BUT AGAIN, NOTHING JUMPED OUT.**

**AND THEN THERE ARE THE MORE THEOLOGICAL THEMES REFLECTED BOTH IN THE GOSPEL READING AND THE READING FROM EPHESIANS: DARKNESS TO LIGHT, BLINDNESS TO SIGHT, CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT. THERE’S EVEN THE GUIDANCE IN THE EPHESIANS PASSAGE FOR US THAT JUST BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL WE ARE NOT TO SUCCUMB BUT RATHER SING PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS – GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER AT ALL TIMES AND FOR EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. BUT STILL – NOTHING JUMPED OUT AT ME.**

 **SO, ALMOST IN DESPARATION, I TURNED BACK TO THE LECTIONARY TO RE-READ, RE-PRAY THESE TEXTS – AND THERE I DISCOVERED MY OMISSION; ONE I MUST CONFESS I TOO OFTEN MAKE. I HAD NOT LOOKED AT THE PSALM. AND THERE IT WAS –THERE’S THE MESSAGE THAT NEEDS TO BE PREACHED AND HEARD THIS DAY- PSALM 23, DAVID’S PSALM. AND WHAT MORE COMFORTING WORDS CAN WE HEAR TODAY THAN THESE WORDS THAT HAVE BROUGHT SO MUCH COMFORT, SO MUCH PEACE TO SO MANY PEOPLE IN TIMES OF DISTRESS THAN THIS BELOVED PSALM? WALK WITH ME THROUGH THESE WORDS WRITTEN BY DAVID, THE SHEPHERD BOY TURNED KING, EVER SO MANY CENTURIES AGO.**

 **DAVID WRITES, “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT.” IF ANYONE KNOWS THE DEPTH OF THAT WORD “SHEPHERD” IT IS DAVID. HE’S THE SHEPHERD BOY, REMEMBER? THE YOUNGEST OF ALL JESSE’S SONS - YET THE ONE ENTRUSTED TO TEND HIS FATHER’S SHEEP, THE ONE CHARGED WITH PROVIDING FOOD AND WATER /SHELTER AND PROTECTION FOR THEM. HE KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE SHEPHERD OF SHEEP. BUT IN DAVID’S DAY, KINGS AND RULERS HAD ALSO COME TO BE KNOWN AS SHEPHERDS OF PEOPLE WITH THE HUGE TASK OF PROVIDING FOR AND PROTECTING THEIR PEOPLE. AND DAVID HAD BECOME A SHEPHERD KING. HE KNOWS WHAT THE WORD “SHEPHERD” MEANS AND HE SEALS IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD AS SHEPHERD WITH THESE WORDS, “I SHALL NOT WANT.” ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT IS, “I LACK NOTHING.” WITH THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH AS OUR SHEPHERD WE LACK NOTHING. DAVID BECAME THE ROYAL LINE THROUGH WHICH JESUS, WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, WAS BORN. THE CROSS AND EMPTY TOMB SEAL FOR US THIS PROMISE. WE LACK NOTHING.**

 **DAVID THEN SHOWS US ALL THE WAYS IN WHICH OUR LORD PROVIDES FOR US. GREEN PASTURES, STILL WATERS TO RESTORE OUR SOULS. AS I WRITE THESE WORDS AND LOOK OUT MY WINDOW, I SEE NEW GREEN GRASS GROWING RIGHT IN MY FRONT YARD. I SEE THE CALM STILL WATERS OF LAKE MURRAY. AND MY BLOOD PRESSURE DROPS A FEW POINTS AND MY SOUL IS RESTORED. IF GREEN GRASS AND LAKE WATER ARE NOT RIGHT OUT SIDE YOUR DOOR, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO IMAGINE SITTING IN THAT GRASS – PERHAPS BAREFOOTED – FEELING THE GRASS BENEATH YOUR TOES. TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO BASK IN THE STILLNESS OF WATER. BREATHE. LET THE LORD RESTORE YOUR SOUL – AND AS YOU DO, BE THANKFUL THAT HIS PATHS, THE PATHS HE LEADS YOU TO, ARE WAYS FOR US TO LIVE – NOT TO OUR OWN GLORY BUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE LORD.**

 **SO, THEN, WITH SOUL RESTORED WE FACE LIFE. DAVID PUTS IT THIS WAY, “EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE DARKEST VALLEY;” OR THE MORE FAMILIAR WORDS FROM THE KING JAMES BIBLE, ‘YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE SHADOW OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH,’ I WILL FEAR NO EVIL.” WHEN LIFE HAPPENS, SUCH AS OUR WORLD’S DARKEST VALLEY RIGHT NOW, THE LORD PROMISES TO BE THERE WITH US; NOT TO MAKE SURE THAT ONLY THOSE WHO DESERVE IT GET THIS VIRUS, (THAT’S ANCIENT THINKING; THAT’S POOR THEOLOGY) BUT TO BE AN ABIDING PRESENCE WITH US AS WE WALK THROUGH THESE VALLEYS, ASSURING US AS ST. PAUL WRITES TO THE CHURCH IN ROME, “FOR I AM CONVINCED THAT NEITHER DEATH, NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS, NOR RULERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR POWERS, NOR HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION , WILL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS OR LORD” (ROMANS 8:38,39).**

 **NOW, THESE NEXT TWO VERSES ARE AMAZING. HERE, IN A PSALM WRITTEN BY DAVID, THE SHEPHERD KING, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, WE FIND BOTH OUR SACRAMENTS: THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER – THE GOOD SHEPHERD PREPARES A TABLE FOR US – BREAD WINE – BODY AND BLOOD – BROKEN AND GIVEN FOR YOU. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - IN THE WATERS OF BAPTISM THE LORD ANOINTS OUR HEAD WITH OIL AND WE ARE SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MARKED WITH THE CROSS OF CHRIST FOREVER. AND AGAIN, WE HEAR DAVID’S WORDS ECHO. I LACK NOTHING.**

 **LIVING THEN IN THE PROTECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPERD, TRUSTING THAT GOOD SHEPHERD TO PROVIDE FOR OUR EVERY NEED - NOT OUR WANTS, BUT OUR NEEDS - WE DWELL WITH THE LORD, NOW AND FOREVER.**

 **MAY THESE WORDS OF DAVID RESTORE YOUR SOULS AND BRING PEACE TO YOUR LIVES IN THESE DAYS AS WE SEPARATELY TOGETHER WORSHIP OUR GOOD SHEPHERD, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**