**Morning Prayer: Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**March 22, 2020**

**A Prayer for A Pandemic**

*By Cameron Wiggins Bellm*

**May we who are merely inconvenienced**

**remember those whose lives are at stake.**

**Me we who have no risk factors**

**remember those most vulnerable.**

**May we who have the luxury of working from home**

**remember those who must choose between**

**preserving their health or making their rent.**

**May we who have the flexibility to care for our children**

**when their schools close**

**remember those that have no options.**

**May we who have to cancel our trips**

**remember those who have no safe place to go.**

**May we who are losing our margin money**

**in the tumult of the economic market**

**remember those who have no margin at all.**

**May we who settle in for a quarantine at home**

**remember those who have no home.**

**As fear grips our country,**

**let us choose love during this time**

**when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,**

**let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbor. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn:** O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

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*The Leader begins the service with one or more of these Opening Sentences.*

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. *I John 1:8, 9*

Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. *Joel 2:13*

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” *Luke 15:18, 19*

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, because we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by following his laws which he set before us. *Daniel 9:9, 10*

Jesus said,” If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” *Mark 8:34*

**Confession of Sin**

*The Leader says to the people*

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

*Silence may be kept.*

*All say together*

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you**

**in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;**

**that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*The Leader says*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

**The Invitatory and Psalter**

***Leader:*** Lord, open our lips.

***People:* And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

*All say together*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

***Leader:*** The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come let us adore him.

**Psalm 23**

*All say together*

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

**2 He makes me lie down in green pastures   
and leads me beside still waters.**

**3 He revives my soul   
and guides me along right pathways for his 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.**

**5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;   
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.**

**6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,   
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \***

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

**The Lessons**

### A Reading from 1 Samuel 16:1-13

The 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.” Samuel 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.’ Invite 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.” Samuel 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?” He 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.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” But 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.” Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel 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.” He 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.” Then 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.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

**11 The Third Song of Isaiah**

*All say together*

**Arise, shine, for your light has come,   
    and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.**

**For behold, darkness covers the land;   
    deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.**

**But over you the Lord will rise,   
    and his glory will appear upon you.**

**Nations will stream to your light,   
    and kings to the brightness of your dawning.**

**Your gates will always be open;   
    by day or night they will never be shut.**

**They will call you, The City of the Lord,   
    The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.**

**Violence will no more be heard in your land,   
    ruin or destruction within your borders.**

**You will call your walls, Salvation,   
    and all your portals, Praise.**

**The sun will no more be your light by day;   
    by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.**

**The Lord will be your everlasting light,   
    and your God will be your glory.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

### A Reading from The Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

**Prayer** *Adapted from New Zealand Prayer Book*

*All say together*

**God of the present moment.**

**God who in Jesus stills the storm**

**and soothes the frantic heart;**

**bring hope and courage to all**

**who wait or work in uncertainty.**

**Bring hope that you will make them the equal**

**of whatever lies ahead.**

**Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,**

**for your will is health and wholeness;**

**you are God, and we need you. Amen.**

### *Leader:* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 9:1-41.

### *People:* Glory to you, Lord Christ.

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “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.” 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, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). 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, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He 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.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly 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, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some 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. So 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.”

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, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “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.” 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, “He is of age; ask him.”

So 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.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He 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?” Then they reviled him, saying, “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.” The man answered, “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.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus 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.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

***Leader:*** The Gospel of the Lord.

***People:* Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**The Apostles’ Creed**

*All say together*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He 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,**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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.**

***Leader:*** The Lord be with you.

***People:*****And also with you.**

***Leader:*** Let us pray.

*All say together*

**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,**

**for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

by Kerry Weber <http://interfaithccc.org/prayers-from-many-faiths-in-an-age-of-fear-and-pandemic/>

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

**Jesus Christ, heal us. Amen.**

**The Collect of the Day**

***Leader:*** Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Prayer**

***Leader:*** Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before

you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**The General Thanksgiving**

*All say together*

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,**

**we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks**

**for all your goodness and loving-kindness**

**to us and to all whom you have made.**

**We bless you for our creation, preservation,**

**and all the blessings of this life;**

**but above all for your immeasurable love**

**in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;**

**for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.**

**And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,**

**that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,**

**not only with our lips, but in our lives,**

**by giving up our selves to your service,**

**and by walking before you**

**in holiness and righteousness all our days;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,**

**be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

**A Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

***Leader:*** Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

***Leader:*** Let us bless the Lord.

***People: Thanks be to God.***

*The Leader concludes with the following*

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus

for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

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