

Ask

a Lenten series

Sunday, March 19, 2023
Fourth Sunday in Lent



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, March 19, 2023 ~ *Fourth Sunday in Lent*

Prelude

Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, op. 122, no. 5
(Adorn yourself, O dear soul)

Johannes Brahms
(ELW 488)

Children of the Heavenly Father

Swedish folk tune
setting, Michael Burkhardt

Announcements

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please join me as we confess our sins together. Consider: Where have you gone wrong this week? How have you harmed your relationship with God, with your neighbor, and with yourself?

Silence for reflection

We confess our sins together.

We know we have harmed each other and damaged our relationship with you. We create distractions to hide what we have done. We point our fingers at the faults of others. We interrogate those who have no reason to lie. And we avoid you. What have we done? Is it too late to receive your forgiveness?

Friends, † Jesus died to reveal the limitless depth of God's love. You can doubt this love. But you can never change the truth of it. God knows all and forgives all.

We embrace your mercy, and we thank you, God.

GATHERING HYMN Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness ELW 843

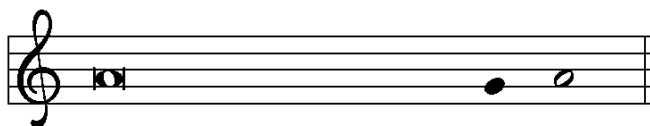
GREETING

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

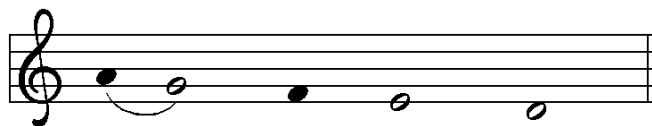
And also with you.

KYRIE

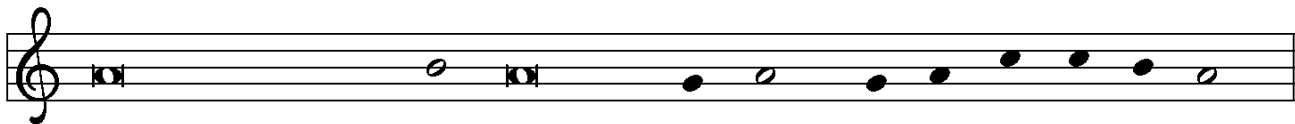
assisted by Hans Walter-Peterson, cantor



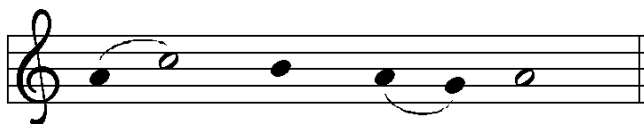
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



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.



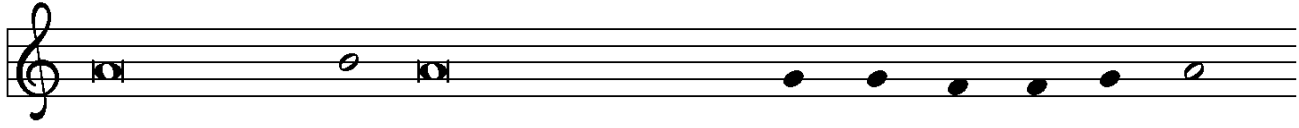
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



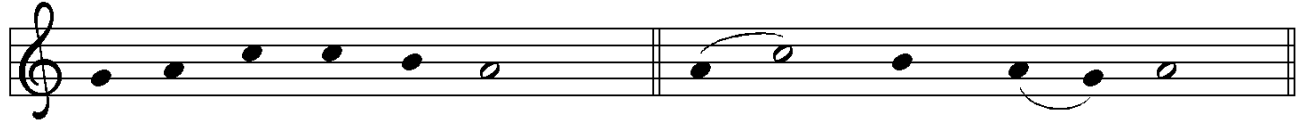
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



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

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

There Is a Balm in Gilead

African American spiritual
arr. Rich Towsley

The Folk Group

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

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.

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,

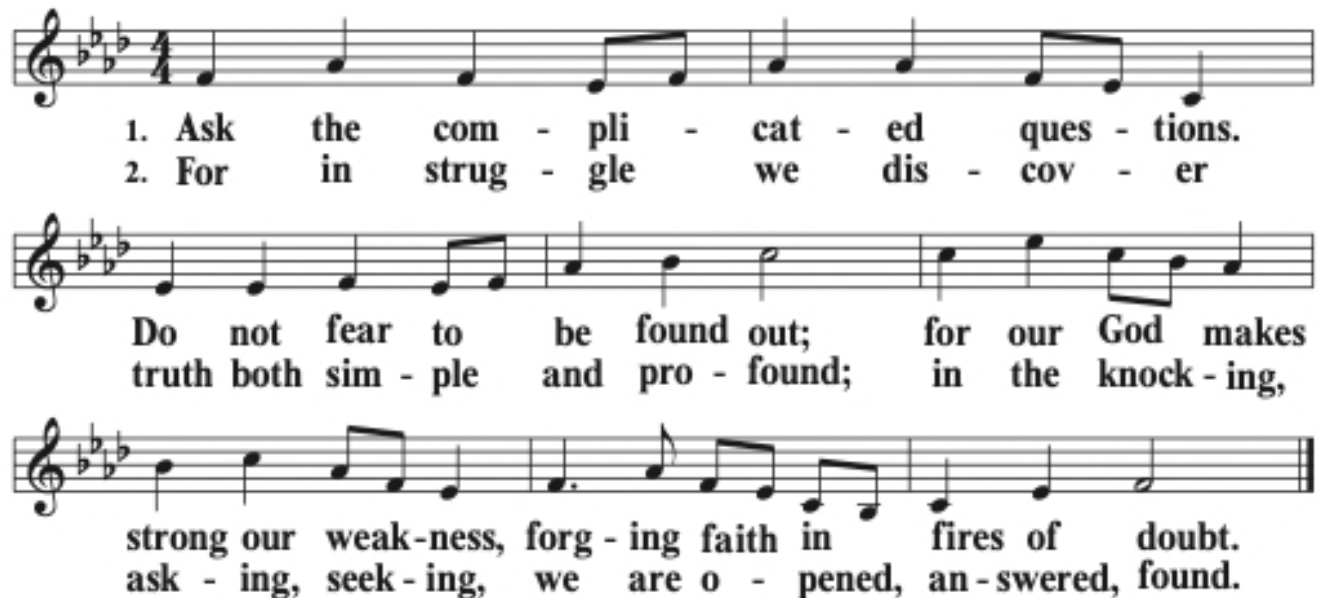
“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



1. Ask the com - pli - cat - ed ques - tions.
2. For in strug - gle we dis - cov - er

Do not fear to be found out; for our God makes
truth both sim - ple and pro - found; in the knock - ing,

strong our weak - ness, forg - ing faith in fires of doubt.
ask - ing, seek - ing, we are o - pened, an - swered, found.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

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

Listen to this narrative and participate as instructed during worship.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	Baptized and Set Free	ELW 453
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SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

p. 227

We welcome McKinley Alyse into God's family through the Sacrament of Baptism. McKinley's parents are Carley and Eric Pries, and her sponsors are Caitlin Hummel and Andrew Pries.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

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

A brief silence.

#1 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.

#2 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.

#3 God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip feeding ministries, especially the Perinton Food Shelf, as well as Bethlehem's Second Sunday Dinner Ministry and Pines of Perinton Food Distribution. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We give thanks that in baptism you form us into community. We give thanks for the baptism of McKinley Alyse and pray for her parents, Carley and Eric, and sponsors, Caitlin and Andrew. We also pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Bob & Cheryl, Penny, Craig & Susan, Hays & Karen, and Heidi. We also pray for our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of compassion, you know our needs better than we ourselves. Hear the prayers that we offer you now.

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Bob C., who is recovering at home after a fall
- Sherry Cook, who is recovering at home after a fall
- Those who are caregivers for loved ones
- Those who are ill from Coronavirus and all who care for them

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting

blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Amazing Grace

text, John Newton
music, William Walker
arr. Keith McCutchen

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



4. Cre-ate in me a clean and right-eous heart, O God, put a
will-ing spir-it in my soul. Let me sing with joy a-new the sal -
va-tion found in you, sing-ing praise to you who made me whole.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

We join in prayer:

God, what will you do with these gifts? We may never know. But we carry a faith passed to us through generations. We set the table with food and drink harvested by many hands. We break the bread of answered prayers. Use the gifts we give today to grow tomorrow's mercy. Amen

HOLY COMMUNION

Where is our God?

God is here in this place.

Where are your hearts?

We have given them to God.

What shall we do in the presence of our God?

We shall give our thanks and praise.

The night before Jesus died, the people who knew Jesus best were hungry for answers.

They wondered where they should prepare the meal. They wondered what would happen next.

And as Jesus spoke of impending betrayal, each of them wrestled with a personal question:

Is it me?

But what Jesus did around a table that night meant they never had to worry about those questions again. Jesus' answer was to take bread.

He 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.

When we eat this bread and drink this cup

we never have to question your love for us, Great God.

Now send the Spirit into this meal and into our hearts.

Blend this food and drink with holiness.

Fuse our searching souls with your perfect friendship,

and we will become people who delight in what you have done

and joyfully wonder what you shall make of us today. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus, you asked us to ask you for anything we need. So we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Your questions are welcome. You are welcome. God wants you at this table.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



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.

COMMUNION HYMN
In This Feast of Love

ACS 962

In This Feast of Love

Täs - sä pöy - däs - sä, täs - sä
1 In this feast of love, in this
2 In this bread and wine, in this
3 Grant us peace, O Lord, grant us

pöy - däs - sä syn - ti - sil - le
feast of love, Lord, you share your
bread and wine, you have prom - ised,
peace, O Lord; fill us with the

it - se - si an - nat, Ju - ma - lan Ka - rit - sa!
blood and your bod - y, Je - sus, Lamb of God.
Lord, to be with us, Lamb . . of God div - ine.
joy of your Spir - it, ev - er - liv - ing Word.

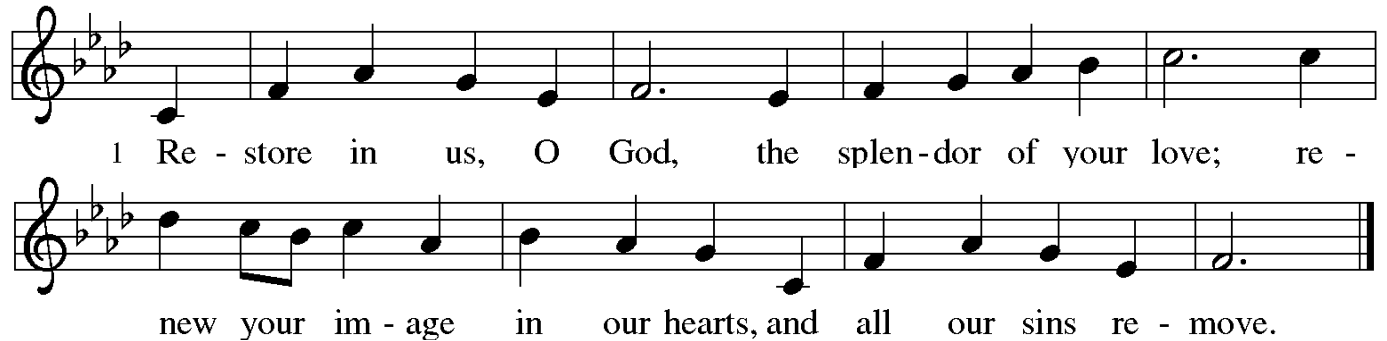
COMMUNION HYMNS

Jesus, the Very Thought of You
Precious Lord, Take My Hand

ELW 754
ELW 773

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen-dor of your love; re -
new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

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 HYMN

Lead Me, Guide Me

ELW 768

DISMISSAL

Go now from this place to serve Jesus, the eye-opening God.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

New Songs of Celebration Render

RENDEZ À DIEU and *FREU DICH SEHR*
setting, Michael Burkhardt
(ELW 478 and 783)

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Fill out the survey on the table in the narthex and place it in the basket or speak with a pastor.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585)223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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[Adapted by Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson and Pastor Abigail Hoffman.]

In This Feast of Love: Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954

Music: TASSA POYDASSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio Text and music © 2017,

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God's Eyes Are Not Our Eyes

One heresy in the early church was called Donatism. The Donatists held that the sacraments were only efficacious if presided over by priests who were sinless. It didn't take the church long to realize that if it held to this policy there would be no sacraments for anyone. So if the gospel can be proclaimed through the preaching of a sinner, then we must allow for the possibility that God's healing may be accomplished through extraordinary means. In 1 Samuel 16:1-13, God chooses a boy too young to be taken seriously to anoint as one chosen to lead Israel. When the prophet Samuel is sent by God to find the new king who will replace Saul, Samuel goes through a long line of all Jesse's tall, strapping, competent-looking sons of appropriate age. When none of them are chosen, finally Jesse sends for young David. All of the obvious-to-us choices were declined in favor of a boy. What we may see as authoritative, respectable, and trustworthy may not always align with God. Scripture reminds us that "the Lord does not see as mortals see" (1 Sam. 16:7).

This theme of sight runs throughout today's texts, both in terms of how God does not see as we see and also in Jesus' healing of a man born blind. Jesus chooses to heal a blind man on the sabbath with dirt and saliva, much to the dismay of the good religious people who were certain they knew better than to display such questionable judgment and behavior. Lent is a time to reevaluate. Let it also be a time to examine the ways in which we do not see what God is doing around us because we too think we know better. Bottom line: God often uses the unexpected to accomplish redemption.