



***Lent 4***  
***Conversations that challenge our truths:***  
***the man born with blindness***

*Sunday, March 15, 2026*  
*Fourth Sunday in Lent*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)



## PRELUDE

Prière  
(Prayer)

Francois Benoist

## 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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,  
**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**  
**Amen.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

**Amen.**

<b>GATHERING HYMN</b>	In the Cross of Christ I Glory	ELW 324
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**GREETING**

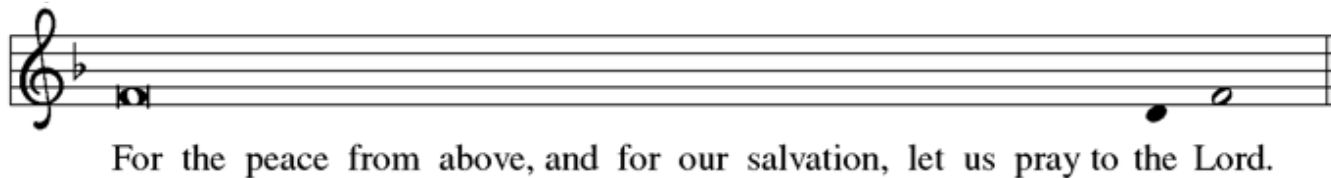
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**KYRIE**



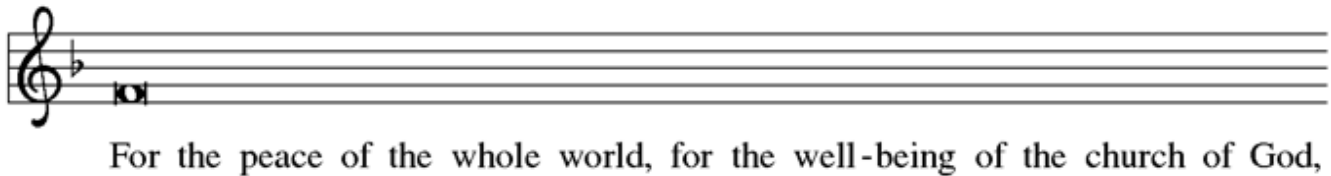
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



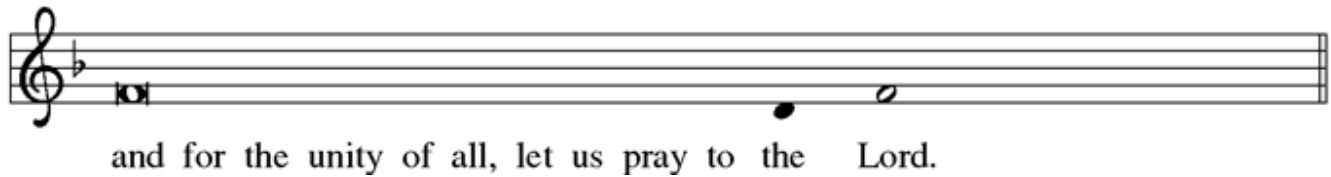
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



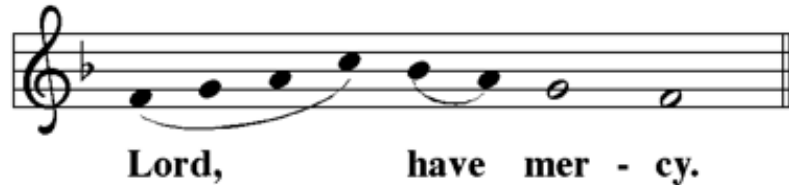
Lord, have mer - cy.



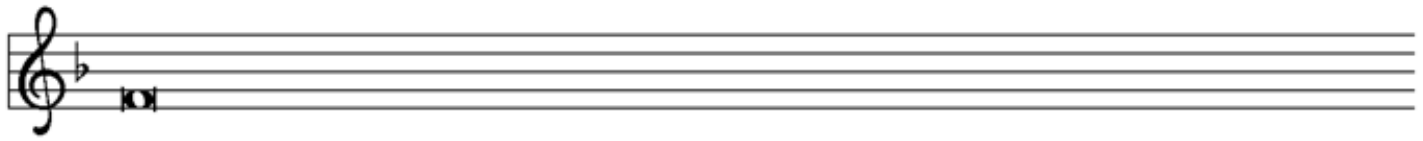
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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



Lord, have mer - cy.

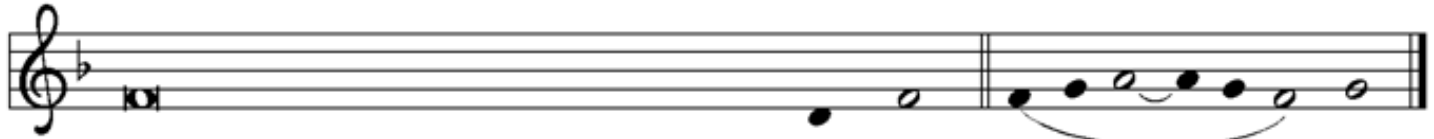


For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend 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.**

### **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

#### **DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS AND JOY!**

*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 designated spaces. **Worship for Kids** (Ages 3 – Grade 2) meets across the hall from the sanctuary and **JOY!** (Grades 3 – 5) meets downstairs. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.*

## Psalm 23

*This Lent, we join with our ancestors in faith in praying and singing the Psalms in worship. While written for a specific time and particular situations, the Psalms remain a powerful source of language that expresses the depth of human emotion and experience. The Psalm is read responsively with the congregation reading the bold text.*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;**

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

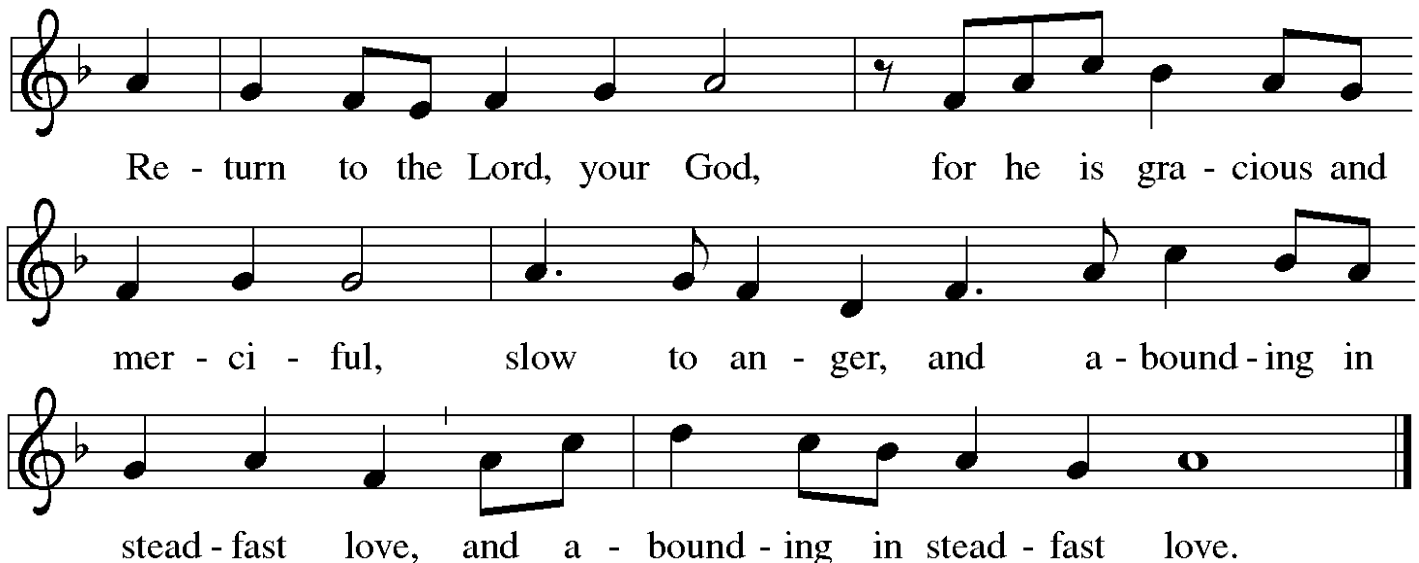
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

**<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

**<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

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.*

**Narrator:** As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth.

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

**Jesus:** “Neither he, nor his parents. This happened so that God’s mighty works might be displayed in him. While it’s daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

**Narrator:** After he said this, he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smeared it on the man’s eyes.

**Jesus:** “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.”

**Narrator:** So the man went away, washed, and returned seeing.

**The Neighbors React**

**Neighbors:** “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?”

**Other Neighbors:** “Yes, that’s him!”

**Neighbors:** “No, it just looks like him.”

**Man Born Blind:** “I’m the one! I am the man!”

**Neighbors:** “**Then how are your eyes opened?**”

**Man Born Blind:** “The man they call Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes, and said, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went, washed, and now I see!”

**Neighbors:** “**Where is this man?**”

**Man Born Blind:** “I don’t know.”

**The Pharisees Investigate**

**Narrator:** They brought the man born blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made the mud and healed him on a Sabbath day.

**Pharisees:** “This man can’t be from God, because he breaks the Sabbath.”

**Others among them:** “How can a sinner do miraculous signs like these?”

**Narrator:** So they were divided.

**Pharisees:** “What do you have to say about him, since he healed your eyes?”

**Man Born Blind:** “He’s a prophet.”

## **Fear and Avoidance**

**Narrator:** The Jewish leaders didn't believe he had been blind, so they called his **Parents**.

**Pharisees:** "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How can he see now?"

**Parents:** "We know he's our son and that he was born blind. But we don't know how he now sees or who healed him. Ask him; he's old enough to speak for himself."

**Narrator:** They said this because they feared the Jewish authorities, who had already decided that whoever confessed **Jesus** as the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue.

## **The Second Interrogation**

**Narrator:** So for the second time, they summoned the man who had been born blind.

**Pharisees:** "Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner."

**Man Born Blind:** "I don't know whether he's a sinner. Here's what I do know — I was blind, and now I see!"

**Pharisees:** "What did he do to you? How did he heal your eyes?"

**Man Born Blind:** "I already told you, and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

**Pharisees:** "You are his disciple, but we're disciples of Moses! We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't know where this man comes from."

**Man Born Blind:** "This is incredible! You don't know where he's from, yet he healed my eyes. We know God doesn't listen to sinners — God listens to anyone who worships him and does his will. No one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. If this man wasn't from God, he couldn't do this."

**Pharisees:** "You were born completely in sin! How dare you teach us?"

**Narrator:** Then they expelled him.

## **Jesus Returns**

**Narrator:** Jesus heard they had expelled him and found him. He said:

**Jesus:** "Do you believe in the Human One?"

**Man Born Blind:** "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

**Jesus:** "You have seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you."

**Man Born Blind:** "Lord, I believe."

**Narrator:** And he worshiped Jesus.

## **Closing Reflection**

**Jesus:** “I have come into the world to exercise judgment so that those who don’t see can see, and those who see will become blind.”

**Pharisees:** “Surely we aren’t blind, are we?”

**Jesus:** “If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

**Narrator:** The man born blind walked into light, while those who thought they saw remained in darkness — and the truth began to shine.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*We take a moment to reflect on God’s word before singing the hymn of the day.*

<b>HYMN OF THE DAY</b>	Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	ELW 779
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## **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

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

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

#1 God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#2 God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#3 God our friend, we praise you for the talents of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for our siblings in Christ across the world and especially those who worship in different denominations, seeking your strength to engage in the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbors; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We know that all people matter in your eyes and you know their cares and concerns, their hopes and joys. We pray for those whose needs are known to us.

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- Ritva H, godmother to Marja R, who died on 2/26
- David, friend of the Moragne family, who died in February

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Karen A, who is hospitalized
- Bob P, who is recovering from surgery on 3/10
- Erika P, partner of Brian K, who is recovering from multiple fractures following a fall

Hear the names of those we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**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

*Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. 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](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry) or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.*



## OFFERING OF MUSIC

The Lord Is My Shepherd

text, Psalm 23  
music, Howard Goodall

The Chancel Choir

## OFFERTORY



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,  
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray. God our provider,  
**you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

United in baptism, we pray as Jesus taught:

**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

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

**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.*

## 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.

*Communion is served at the rail. The ushers will direct you forward by the center aisle. You may kneel or stand, remaining at the rail as long as you desire and return to your seat by the outer aisle. Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.*

## HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

ELW 335

### Refrain: sung by All

In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;  
till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

### Cantor:

- 1 Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;  
free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain. *Refrain*
- 2 Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;  
there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me. *Refrain*
- 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;  
help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. *Refrain*
- 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,  
till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river. *Refrain*

## HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Holy, Holy, Holy

*sung 5 times*

ELW 473

San - to, san - to, san - to, mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra.  
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you.

Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de - cir: San - to e - res Se - ñor.  
My heart is glad to say the words: You are ho - ly, God.

The musical score consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The lyrics are written below the treble clef staff. The first system covers the first two lines of lyrics, and the second system covers the next two lines. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with chords and single notes.

## TABLE BLESSING

### LEAVING TO SERVE

## CHORAL BENEDICTION

O God, You Search Me

text, Psalm 139, adapt.  
text / music, Bernadette Farrell

*O God, you search me and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down you are before me:  
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.*

*Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
You have known its meaning through and through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God my present, my past and future, too.*

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*During the season of Lent we omit the Postlude and provide space for reflection following worship.*

## **BLC Pastors**

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

### **Additional musical leadership provided by:**

Cantors: Donna Berner, James Berner, Madeleine Hoffman, Kathy Moragne

Guitar: Glen Zagorski

Harmonica: James Berner

Violin: Jane Morale

**Special Thanks** to Susan DePasquale, organist/pianist, for assisting us with today's worship.

**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? Talk with one of the pastors following worship or send an email to [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org) and we'll follow up!

**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](http://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](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Sandy Squires holds office hours on Wednesdays from 9-1 and is responsive to phone and email Monday through Friday during usual business hours. Please communicate your needs through the church office by phone (585) 223-0634 or by email [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org). Our co-Pastors are available Sunday – Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling the church office or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org)

## *Lent and Holy Week at Bethlehem*

### *Wednesdays in Lent*

#### **6 – 6:45 pm – Simple Supper**

Each Wednesday in the Fellowship Hall we host a simple supper of one-pot dishes. If you would like to contribute to a meal, a week of clean-up, sign up online, or on the kiosk in the Narthex . . .or just show up to enjoy the meal and fellowship.

#### **7 pm – A modified version of Holden Evening Prayer, in person and livestream**

Share in worship, prayer, and listen in on conversation.

### *Holy Week and Easter*

During Holy Week we follow Jesus' journey from his triumphal entry into the city to a desolate cross to an empty tomb.

*Check out the weekly Star and Ready for Worship emails for more information about Holy Week worship.*

**Palm/Passion Sunday, March 29 at 8:55 am** (in person and livestream)

**Maundy Thursday, April 2** (in person and livestream)

**Noon** (in person and livestream) – Individual Absolution and Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

**6 pm** (in person only) – Remembering Jesus' last supper with his disciples, we will begin worship with a shared meal at tables in the Narthex and end in silence in the sanctuary after the altar is stripped

**Good Friday, April 3 at 7 pm** (in person and livestream) – **Tenebrae Service**

**Easter Sunday, April 5 at 8:55 am** (in person and livestream) **and**

**11 am** (in person only)

**Easter Breakfast served 9:45 – 10:45 am**

# Cottage Meetings

*with the Sanctuary Refresh Team!*

SIGN UP AT: <https://blcfairport.org/cottage-meeting>



**Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> - 10:30 In Person**

**Hybrid Conference Room**

**(Activities planned for children on March 15<sup>th</sup>)**

**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm In Person**

**Hybrid Conference Room**

**Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> - 9:00 In person**

**Hybrid Conference Room**

**Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> - 10:30 In Person**

**Living Room**

**One ONLINE ONLY Meeting will be set up - Watch STAR for date and time**

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**JULY 20-23, 2026**

**AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN IN PITTSFORD**

BLC is partnering with St. Paul's, Pittsford again  
for this **FREE** summer's VBS program!

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“Create in Me a Clean Heart”, Music: J. A. Freylinghausen

“O God, You Search Me” Text and Music: Bernadette Farrell © 1992, Bernadette Farrell (adm. Oregon Catholic Press)

“Prière” – Prayer Music: Francois Benoist © 1981 Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp.

“The Lord Is My Shepherd” Text: Psalm 23

Music © 1994, 2000 Howard Goodall (adm. Faber Music Ltd.)

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross” Words: Fanny Crosby; Music: William H. Doane; Arranger: Jonathan Rea and Paul Campbell

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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. 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. Today's first reading 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.