**Canon Davis Memorial Church**

*Anglican Church of Canada*

***Fourth Sunday in Lent***

**19th March, 2023**

***Healing of the Blind Man***

Officiant:  Rev’d Paul Woolley  Organist:  Dorothy Miller

Acolyte:    Tom Brown​

Intercessor:  Bill Graham

380 Russell St. North (at Maxwell St.), Sarnia, Ontario, N7T 6S6

Tel: (519) 344-9531 Email:canondavis@gmail.com –[http://www.canondavis.com](http://www.canondavis.com/)

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

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

 **Gathering Hymn  # 341**

***God of Mercy, God of Grace***

**Greeting**​​p. 185

**Kyrie Eleison**​p. 186

**Collect of the Day: Almighty God, through the waters of baptism your Son has made us children of light. May we ever walk in his light and show forth your glory in the world;through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. AMEN**

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

**1st reading**​1 Samuel 16: 1-13

**A READING FROM  THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL**

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.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Psalm 23**​REFRAIN ***The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.***

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

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

He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake. 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.

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

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. 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.

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

**2nd reading**​Ephesians 5: 8-14

**A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS**

For 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."

The Word of the Lord
**Thanks be to God**

**Gradual Hymn # 606**​

***There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy***

**Gospel**​​John 9: 1-41

**Sermon**

**Healing of the man born blind**

This is another of the ‘Signs’ in John The healing of the man born blind.  If I could give it a subtitle, which I guess I can, I would call it,‘Based on what I know (and see) right now.’

This is similar to the story of the healing of the paralytic – Jesus comes to him, but the man doesn’t know who He is.  This time Jesus gets caught again healing on the Sabbath, but this time he goes even further as Jewish teaching at the time said you shall not heal with saliva or dirt.

So, what’s worse –

A. someone throwing dirt in your eyes

B. someone spitting in your eyes?

C. – All the above.

If someone spits in dirt and rubs it in your eyes, you’d be motivated to wash it off – he washes it off and then – He can see.  Another Miracle and more scrutiny from the religious leaders.  We use the term Pharisees, and that’s what they were, but remember that they were the religious leaders at that time.  Like Bishops and Archbishops.

People see that he’s no longer blind, and they bring him before the religious leader

Then it’s like the original Dragnet.  Just the facts, ma’am.

How did you receive your sight?  “He put clay on my eyes, I washed it off, and I could see.”

Some discussion ensues, some say the person who did this couldn’t be from God because He wouldn’t have done it on the Sabbath.  Others disagreed and said if He wasn’t from God, how could he heal a blind man?

I know, maybe he wasn’t really blind!  It’s like a snake oil salesman.

Where are his parents?  They bring them in and ask, Is this your son, was he born blind, and if so how does he now see?

The parents are afraid – They don’t want to get kicked out of the synagogue.  It wasn’t like they could go to the synagogue down the street.  This was THE synagogue.  If you’re out, you’re out.

The parents say we can tell you this much, it is our son, he was blind, and now he sees.  Don’t ask us how, ask him.

So they call him back in, and tell him to give God the glory.  And admit Jesus is a sinner.

Even though the blind man doesn’t know who healed him, the Pharisees know who it was.

By this time, they’re all too familiar with Jesus.  What the Pharisees don’t see is that the man who used to be blind IS giving God the glory!

I don’t know if He’s a sinner.  I know I was blind and now I see.

So the Pharisees again ask, what did He do to you, how do you see?

If he had a lawyer, the lawyer would raise an objection.  Your honour, they are badgering the witness,.

The guy doesn’t need a lawyer, I told you already.  Why are you asking me again?  Do you want to be his disciple?

They know who they follow, they followed the teachings of Moses.

And the formerly blind man makes his closing argument.

He says, I for one, think it’s pretty awesome that He opened my eyes.  We know God doesn’t hear sinners, and He definitely heard this man, so this man can’t be a sinner.  Nobody’s ever restored sight to the blind.  He must be from God.

The Pharisees cast him out, basically excommunicating him.  You’re no longer welcome in the synagogue.

Jesus hears this, meets up with him, and introduces Himself.  I’m the Son of God, and you are??

And the man believes and worships Jesus.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the subtitle of this message is,‘Based on what I know (and see) right now.’

Our judgment is always influenced by what we already know.

For example, We know not to drink water out of a dirty creek.

We base just about everything on what we know.  The disciples were doing this in the beginning of the scripture.

This alone would make a great lesson: The disciples are asking whose fault it is the man was blind.

Exodus 20:5 says the sins of the father will be punished to the 3rd and 4th generation.  So the disciples want to know if it was the man’s fault or the parents.

You see, the disciples already know what the Old Testament says.  Based on what they know, it’s probably the parent’s fault.

Which one does Jesus say it is?  It’s neither.  The man has been blind from birth for this moment so that Jesus can heal him and God can be glorified. Sometimes bad things happen and it’s not our fault and it’s not a punishment.  At the very least, things might  happen so God can be glorified. You may not think it’s right for this man to be blind his whole life for God to be glorified in this moment.  Do you know what the bible says about that kind of thought process?  Tough.  When Job asks God what He’s doing, God turns it around and asks Job “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”  It doesn’t matter if we agree.  Jesus makes it clear: When bad things happen, it’s not necessarily a punishment.

In other words “You do the best you can do at the time.” –

That’s what I see here. You may see things differently later – and maybe you would have done it different if you knew what you know now, but you can’t beat yourself us over the way things went down based on what you knew then.

The disciples were learning.  They only knew what they’d been taught.  It’s not the disciples’ fault that they asked whose fault it was, Jesus doesn’t rebuke them.

Jesus says this is not what you’re used to.  There’s a different reason.  The disciples were only basing their question on what they knew.

The man who used to be blind is doing the best he can do based on what he knew then as well. When he’s given vision, even before he knew who Jesus was, he was out witnessing for Him and defending Him.   He doesn’t know who Jesus is, yet he’s giving testimony about Jesus before the Pharisees even though he was a poor, blind beggar.

Then when Jesus reveals Himself to the man, things change again.  For the man who was once blind, things are different now.  He no longer sees things how he used to see them.  He can no longer act as if he’s still blind.  The same old excuses are no longer going to get it.  If he was married, he can no longer avoid the dreaded question, “Honey does this dress make me look big?”

When he didn’t see, he could say,”

Honey, you know I’m blind and I can’t see to answer your question.

God, expects our relationship with Him to be different all the time.  It’s not that God changes, but we change.

Here’s the thing, when you know better and don’t do better, that’s where the problem lies.  That was the problem with the Pharisees.  That’s what Jesus calls having sight but being blind. Some people just don’t know.  This is where I think of a person in a third-world country who has never heard the Gospel.

Skeptics like to ask, “Does the person who dies without Jesus go to hell if nobody told them about Jesus?”  God’s a just God and He’ll take care of that.  Maybe we were supposed to be the ones to go tell them or help support a missionary to go.  Who, spiritually, is in bigger trouble?

Jesus implies we are better off being blind and knowing it than to think we have sight and really be blind.  He’ll give sight to those who know they need it, but those who don’t think they need it are in trouble.

When the man who was formerly blind was given sight, he was testifying of the One he knew as he knew Him.  He obviously thought a lot of Him.  The man thought a lot of Jesus, whom he didn’t yet know was Jesus.  As Jesus revealed more of Himself to the man, he began to worship Him.  **This is the turning point.** This is the point we all need to get to.  This is the point the man who was formerly blind sees with his heart, not just his eyes.  Before he really knew Jesus, he did the best he could on his own standing before the religious leaders and testifying about what Jesus did.  Once he really knew Jesus, once he saw Jesus with his heart, he began to worship Jesus for whom He was, not just what He could do.

Jesus is the Son of God and He is God.  We can’t see this with our eyes, we can’t see this with our head, we can only see this with our heart.

So, based on what you know right now, are you doing the best you can?

The Apostles’ Creed​p. 189

**Prayers of the People**Let us pray for spiritual renewal in our church so that we may walk by the light of gospel faith.  Our prayer response today is:

Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.

For the pastors of the universal church, Bishop Todd and all bishops and priests who have been anointed for service; may their personal love for Christ bring spiritual refreshment to God’s people. We ask in faith:

**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.**

For those who are preparing for confirmation or baptism; may the Spirit of truth rush upon their hearts and minds and claim their futures for Christ.  We ask in faith:

**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.**

For Christians who have grown slack in faith and morals; may the Spirit renew within them the light of baptismal grace and remove any moral blindness to racism, violence, drug abuse, and gender discrimination.  We ask in faith:

**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.**

For all who proclaim the gospel; may the Spirit of knowledge and understanding bless their efforts to help the church in teaching about goodness, justice, and truth.  We ask in faith:
**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.**

For those who are ill or who suffer with pain and medical conditions; may the healing hand of Jesus bring them comfort. We ask in faith:

**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ. >>**

For those who have died in Christ; may the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead fill them with eternal light and life.  We ask in faith:
**Guide us by your Spirit, O Christ.**

God of eternal light, you have cast out the power of darkness through the life-giving death of Christ.  Continue to draw the church into the fullness of your divine life by the working of your Spirit.  Grant our prayers through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**Prayer for a Renewed Church**: **Almighty God, give us a new** **vision of you, of your love, of your grace and power, and then, give us a new vision of what you would have us do as your Church in this nation and at this time, and an awareness that in the strength of your Spirit, we can do it to your glory.  In Jesus’ name we pray.** **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution​p. 191

**The Peace**

**Offertory Hymn # 615**​

***Just As I Am***

**Offertory Response** ​**Doxology**(sung)

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow.**

**Praise Him, all creatures here below.**

**Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host.**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

**Prayer over the Gifts:** God of light, your Word brings to us a new vision of your glory. Accept our offering of praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer  # 5  ​p. 204

The Lord’s Prayer​p. 211

Breaking of the Bread  # 7​p. 213

Communion

**Prayer After Communion:**Father, through your goodness we receive your Son in word and sacrament. May we always have faith in him, Jesus Christ the Lord.  **Amen.**

Glory to God & Blessing​p. 214

**Mission Hymn**​**# 444**​

***Your Hand, O God, Has Guided***

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sung Benedictio​***Go Now in Peace***

*(in the back of the blue Hymn book)*

*The****Flowers on the Altar****today are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Andrew, a gift from his family.*

Please enter names in the**Intercessions Book each** week to be read in the service.

**News and Events**

·

Please send all announcements for the bulletin to Karen by **11:00 a.m. Tuesday** of each week. Call: 519-344-9531 or E-mail:canondavis@gmail.com.

·

If you would like a home visit with Communion or know of someone who would, please let Rev. Ray know as he and/or a Lay Visitor will be available in the coming weeks.

·

Please join us for **Coffee Hour**after service for a time of fellowship in the parish hall.

·

**To all the ladies of Canon Davis**. As I stated in my report to Vestry this year the Ladies Guild has not held formal meetings since the advent of COVID.  I thought perhaps you would enjoy holding a social get-together other than our lunch at Olive’s in June.  Please let me know if you would like to attend a lunch on **Wednesday, March 29 at 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall**(free will offering). **Carol Mercurio 519-491-9319**.  Hope to see you there.

·

**Easter Lily Memorial**:  If you have any changes or updates for our Easter Memorial list, please contact Karen at 519-344-9531. Thank you.

**Reminders**

**Mar 22**​ **Parish Council 10:00 a.m. in the Boardroom**

**Mar 25**​ **Sew Day 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All welcome**

**Mar 29**​ **Ladies Lunch – Parish Hall 12:30 p.m.**