

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Introduction to the day

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.

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.

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

A reading from 1 Samuel.

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord’s chosen successor to Saul.

PSALM: Psalm 23

You anoint my head with oil. (Ps. 23:5)

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from Ephesians.

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.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Unbelievable!

This story from the Gospel of John captures the religious leadership in Jerusalem in a struggle to understand this Jesus who restores sight to a person born blind. This miraculous healing is so unbelievable, so contrary to the leaders’ understanding, that they reject it altogether, even accusing the man of lying. Their quest for a certainty that feels familiar forces them to reject the miracle in front of them and closes them off to a greater truth—that the Messiah has come in Christ Jesus.

Certainty and its pursuit often disrupt our ability to see reality, which is at its core a mystery. *Mystery* in the Christian tradition refers to that deep truth that surpasses our understanding, as in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or the efficacy of the sacraments. We know them as true, but not how or why they are so. Mysteries transcend the world of certainty, and our efforts to possess certainty, like those of the religious leaders in John 9, can cut us off from something miraculous happening right in front of us.

How much conflict and division in our church and in our world is amplified by our pursuit of certainty? How many possibilities have we missed in our commitment to the way things are? How often in our pursuit of certainty do we use it to hoard power and keep others on the outside looking in? Certainty is the enemy of community because it rejects the very notion that God may be doing a new thing.

Embracing mystery in our life of faith looks like learning to say “I don’t know,” “Maybe,” and “What if . . . ?” It asks us to let go of our need to control and understand, and to trust God’s promises more than our evidence. Mystery requires a posture of humility and curiosity, a willingness to look for God in inexplicable and unbelievable places and events. After all, we preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), an unbelievable notion if ever there was one.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community (*here local congregations may be named*) and across the globe (*here international companion churches and synods may be named*) in right paths for your name’s sake. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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.**

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.**

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day *especially* Chris Burchat, Natasha Gagnon-Burchat, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Doug Sell and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity 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.**

God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements:

Sunday, March 15st – 4th Sunday of Lent

9:00 AM – Bonnechere – Holy Communion

10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion

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Monday, March 16th

9:00 to 3:00 – Grace Quilters

7:00 PM –Property Committee

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Tuesday, March 17th

10:00 AM – Grace Bible Study

Wednesday, March 18th

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM – Cuddles and Hugs

1:00 PM - Music and Worship Committee

Thursday March 19th

9:30 – Grace Choir

12:00 – 7:00 - Blood Donor Clinic

Friday, March 20th

12:00 – Funeral Reception Maureen Hoffman

Saturday, March 21st

1:00 - Fairfield Worship

Sunday, March 22nd – 5th Sunday of Lent

9:00 AM - Bonnechere – Service of Word

10:00 AM – Bonnechere AGM

10:30 AM – Grace – Service of the Word

Looking for someone to organize: Readers, Greeters and Communion Assistants.

Contact Edna Neitzel or Pastor Ralph for more information.

Easter Breakfast

Easter Breakfast will be served on Sunday, April 5, 2026 starting at 8:15 am until 10:15 am.

We are currently looking for volunteers and food donations for the upcoming breakfast. If you are able to help in any way, please sign up on the sheets in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Nagora at 613-735-1732 or janice.nagora@gmail.com.

Thank you from the Ladies Aid.