

First United Methodist Church of Hanford
March 22, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

GOD
so loved
the world that he gave
his only son,
so that everyone who
believes in him
won't perish
but will have
eternal life.

John 3:16



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.



Opening Prayer

As I come before you Jesus, open my eyes that I might truly see you as my shepherd, comforter, and redeemer. I want to be with others worshipping you but this is not possible, yet I know that I am being prayed for as part of the community of faith. Thank you for this time where I remember you are with me. Amen.

Hymn: Amazing Grace

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4qbmPpfG6s>

- 1 **Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.**
- 2 **God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**
- 3 **Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**
- 5 **And, when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.**
- 6 **When we've been there ten thousand
years bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.**

Let us pray:

Lord, I worship you today. Help me to see your calling in my life.

Open my eyes to what is possible when I see things through the eyes of your Son.

Forgive what is passed, protect me from all that is to come

Today's Gospel Reading: John 9: 1-41

“Jesus heard that they had thrown him [the blind man] out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man? “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him
“ John 9:35-38

Time to Reflect

Isn't there some blindness in each of us?

This story reminds us of the need to check our assumptions and, if necessary, to revise our thinking and action. It invites us to be open to seeing differently or from a new perspective. Jesus' disciples, the parents of the man born blind, his neighbours, the religious authorities all operate out of unchecked assumptions. They mostly come to the wrong conclusions. Only those willing to admit that they have it wrong have any chance of coming to faith. And from a gospel perspective, it is a sign of real strength.

The man was blind, so he or his parents must have sinned. Not so, according to Jesus. From the perspective of the authorities, Jesus heals on the Sabbath and is therefore a sinner. Not so, from Jesus' point of view.

The man was born blind and so needs others to speak for him. Not so, say his parents, he can speak for himself. He does speak for himself and quite eloquently, to the irritation of the religious authorities. He presents them with the truth about Jesus but they refuse to accept the word of an outcast. Their reaction is violent: they drive him out. But Jesus goes in search of him and leads him to yet deeper levels of faith and understanding.

You may like to read the story once more and put yourself in the place of the different characters. There is a little bit of each character in every one of us.

Other Questions for reflection:

No one seems to fully understand, and yet the life change is undeniable. In this present circumstances that all of us are:

What healing of sight might God be offering to you?
To us?

What realities are we unable to see?

Where are we blind to the deeper truths of our lives?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

All seeing, all knowing God I call on you today. May your Spirit give your world a sense of calm and peace in these difficult times.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty:

For those people who are worried about leaving their home and those who cannot.

***For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other.
We pray for carers, doctors and nurses.***

We continue to pray for those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend and act of worship today.

I especially want to pray for

Holy God,

**Present with us now, guide me in all I do and say –
that it might reflect your love for the world.**

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9F4hP2AZAw>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Lord, I commit myself to you today. At the end of
this day, may I see you more clearly and love you
more dearly, and follow you closer. **Amen.**