

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Fourth Sunday of Lent – March 19, 2023

WE GATHER IN PRAISE

PRELUDE Change my heart, O God Jude del Hierro, 1982

OPENING HYMN Softly and tenderly, vv 1,2,4 LEVAS 101

RITE OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Presider Blessed be God, who forgives and renews.

People God's mercy endures forever.

Presider: Today in our penitential order we will go deeper into a necessary step - accepting forgiveness extended to us. Until we do that, we are not fully free, even if we've repented and asked for mercy. Today we will not only hear the words of forgiveness - we will remind each other. Let's begin:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But as we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8,9*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. *Silence.*

Most merciful God, we confess that 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. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Presider: May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Now I invite you to remind each other that you stand forgiven.

Please say to the persons near you:

As far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our sins from us.

The reply: **Walk in peace and freedom!** And then move to someone new.

The people stand and exchange words of assurance with their neighbors

SONG OF RENEWAL What a merciful God Randy Butler/Terry Butler, 1992

What a mer-ci-ful, mer-ci-ful, mer-di-ful God; What a mer-ci-ful, mer-ci-ful, mer-ci-ful God; What a mer-ci-ful, mer-ci-ful, mer-ci-ful God you are, you are. You are so gen-tle, you are for-giv-ing, you hold me close to your heart. When I am dis-tant, you show me mer-cy, You bring me close to your heart What a

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever, **Amen.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT Ephesians 5:8-14

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."

Reader For the Word of God in Scripture; for the Word of God among us:
People **Thanks be to God!**

PSALM 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; **I shall not be in want.**
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures **and leads me beside still waters.**
- 3 He revives my soul **and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.**
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

GOSPEL CHANT Bless the Lord, my soul Taizé

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.

5 Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

THE GOSPEL John 9:1-41

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ!**

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made

mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jewish leaders did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Presider The Good News of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ!**

SERMON

Seeing the Unseen

The Rev. Dr. Kate Heichler

PRAYER SONG

Come into the quiet

Diane Davis Andrew

Come in-to the qui-et, be one with God's breath. Rest in this
wait-ingplace peace will be there. Rest, rest, peace will be there.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please add your prayers aloud so we might share in them.

Father, we thank you for...

What are we grateful for today?

Jesus, please bless....

What/who is in need of healing, strength, hope, renewal?

Holy Spirit, give us...

What spiritual gifts do we need to be God's people in the world?

The Presider offers a closing prayer.

THE PEACE

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The people exchange a sign of Christ's peace with their neighbors.

OFFERING OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

You may give online at <https://christchurchlaplata.org/donate/> or text "CCLAPLATA" to 73256, and follow the prompts, or use the offering plate.

OFFERTORY SONG

Forgive our sins as we forgive

Hymnal 674

THE HOLY MEAL

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The people are invited to pray the words in bold type.

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right to give you thanks, Almighty God, you who were before all worlds began, **who is outside of time; who will be for all eternity.**

You are our beginning, and in you we find our perfect end.

All our years and moments are hidden in you;

Through you all things were made; **in you all things are sustained.**

So we lift our voices will all creation in praise of your goodness:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (Sanctus)

Kate Heichler, 2000

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might. Hea-ven and
earth are full of your glo-ry, ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed, bless - ed,
bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Ho - san - na in the
high est, Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy God, you made us for relationship,
to live in harmony with you and all creation.

Whenever we walk away from you, that harmony is broken;
Our intimacy with you becomes fractured and strained;
Our relationships are marked by tension and strife.
The very creation becomes broken and disordered, with storms and tumults.
Peace becomes the exception; “not-peace” our daily bread.

Into this “not-peace” you sent your beloved Son, Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
He came as one of us, and saw how we lived with each other and the earth,
And he said, “Why are you afraid?”
He stilled storms, banished evil, healed diseases, overcame death.
He said, “Peace be with you,” and breathed upon his disciples his Holy Spirit.
He gives us peace in unpeaceful times;
he makes us agents of peace in an unpeaceful world.

On his night of greatest sacrifice, our Lord had supper with his friends. He took bread,
and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to them, and said,
“Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them,
and said, **“Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, poured for you
for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this to remember me.”**

And so we stop, to remember him:
We remember him in the breaking of the bread.
We recall his suffering and death; we celebrate his rising and ascension.
We look forward to his eternal reign of peace.

Come upon this bread and this wine, most Holy Spirit:
Feed our spirits with the very life of Christ himself.
Come to us, Lord Jesus, by your Holy Spirit:
Give us your peace in all circumstances; the joy to trust you.

Fill us now, we pray, as we come to your table to enjoy in part the feast of perfect peace
we will one day enjoy in fullness, through Christ. By Him, and with Him, and in Him, in the
unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

AMEN!

THE LORD’S PRAYER *(Traditional language)*

**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.
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.**

AT THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD *(Fraction)*

Kate Heichler, 2006



Je - sus, La- mb of God, have mer- cy on me; Je - sus, Bear- er of our sins, have mer- cy;
Je- sus, Light and Re - deem- er of the world, Gra- nt us your peace; gra- nt us your peace.

THE COMMUNION

*All are welcome to the Altar rail for communion, coming up the center aisle,
returning by the side aisles, disposing of the wine cup in the basket on your way.
If you do not wish to receive today, you are welcome to come for a blessing.*

COMMUNION MUSIC Let your Spirit come/More love, more power

PRAYER OF THANKS

**Most Holy God, thank you for feeding us with the life of our Lord Jesus in these signs
of his body and blood, poured out for us. Thank you for refreshing us, restoring us,
renewing us deep in our spirits.**

**As you fill us with that peace that only comes from you, make us bearers of peace into
the divisions of this world, that those who are frenzied and fearful may find rest in You.
In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray: Amen.**

BLESSING

BLESSING OF EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

Almighty God, this meal does not end here – you continue to nourish us, and to feed others through us. Bless these elements and vessels, and the lay eucharistic visitors who carry them out, that your Body and Blood may nurture those members of our family unable to worship with us today.


PRAYERS FOR BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

COMMUNITY NEWS

CLOSING SONG

I saw the light

Hank Williams, 1947



I wan-dered so aim-less, life filled with sin; I would-n't
Just like a blind man I wan-dered a-long, Worr-ies and
I was a fool to wan-der and stray; Straight is the
let my dear Sav-ior in. Then Je-sus came like a strang-er in the
fears I claimed for my own. Then like the blind man that God gave back his
gate and nar-row the way. Now I have trad-ed the wrong for the the
night; Praise the Lord, I saw the light. I saw the light, I saw the light,
slight;
right;
nomore dark-ness, nomore night. Now I'm so hap-py, no sor-row in sight;
Praise the Lord, I saw the light.

SENDING

People **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Softly and tenderly

Will L. Thompson

MUSIC AND WORSHIP NOTES

*Our music today has been recorded by our music team, featuring
Alicia Cordelle, Kate Heichler, Tim Illick, Mary Kercher, Cheryl Reckeweg.*

*Hymns are found in the hymnals in our pews, and words are provided on slides.
Those worshiping online can click the link on the hymn name and find the tune there.*

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OUR PRAYERS

We give thanks for: The faithful prayers and kindnesses of this community.

We pray for: Refugees and immigrants and all seeking a safe place to live.

Those in need of healing – Katie, Bob Clark, Bill Cook, Louise Turner, Barb Palko

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLY WEEK IS APPROACHING – Save these dates:

Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 2

Maundy Thursday Supper and Service – Thursday, April 6, 6 pm in La Plata

Good Friday Worship – Friday, April 7, noon at Wayside; online at 7 pm

Great Vigil of Easter – Saturday, April 8, 8 pm in La Plata

PROPANE NEEDED – We try to watch out for people forced to live in encampments outside by providing tents, tarps and propane as needed. Please make a donation to the Giving Fund if you'd like to help with this effort, or bring a 6-pak of small propane bottles.

CAP 5K APRIL 29 - The Center for Abused Persons (whose board Neal Bankenstein chairs) is holding its annual fundraiser that Saturday, the "STEVE" (Steps To End Violence Everywhere) 5K run/walk along the rail trail starting in White Plains. Your support will help them continue their mission to provide services to victims and to eliminate violence in our community. Go to [STEVE5K\(runsignup.com\)](http://STEVE5K(runsignup.com)) to sign up or sponsor.

ONLINE GIVING – La Plata: You can text a donation - text "CCLAPLATA" to 73256, and follow the prompts. You can give to Open Plate or toward your pledge. You can also give online - go to www.christchurchlaplata.org and scroll down to the "Donate" link.

GIVING FUND – Our Giving Fund is getting many requests – please give as you're able.

APRIL 29 is a long way off, but there are two events we'd like you to know about:

Maryland House and Garden Tour - this comes to Charles County every three years and this year Christ Church is the place people will come to register, pick up their info, etc. We would like to have people trained and ready to give tours of Christ Church in two-hour shifts. If you are interested, please speak with Jane Hobbs.