

*Liturgy*  
The Fourth Sunday in Lent  
Year A

GATHERING

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

**O LORD my God, You are very great.**

**You are clothed with honor and majesty,  
You wrap Yourself with light as with a cloak,  
and spread out the heavens like a curtain.**

May our meditation be pleasing to Him;  
for we rejoice in the LORD.

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the Heavens,  
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

**Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;**

**Your judgments are like the great deep;**

**O LORD, You preserve man and beast.**

How precious is Your steadfast love, O God!

The children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

**They feast on the abundance of Your house,**

**And You give them drink from the river of Your delights.**

**For with You is the fountain of life;**

**in Your light we see light.**

Oh, continue Your steadfast love to those who know You,

And Your righteousness to the upright in heart!

—Scripture weaving from Psalms 36, 89, 104

*Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

Great is Thy Faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;  
As thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

*Chorus:*

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided —  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

*Verse 2*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest;  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Verse 3*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

CCLI Song #18723

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Text: Thomas O. Chisholm | Music: William M. Runyan

*LECTIONARY for the fourth Sunday  
in Lent, Year A:*

*1 Samuel 16:1-13*

*Psalm 23*

*Ephesians 5:8-14*

*John 9:1-41*

*The fourth Sunday in Lent is traditionally devoted to the theme of Healing and Conversion. In much the same way as in the season of Advent, this mid-season Sunday brings a lighter note to our observance of the season. The color, as with the third Sunday of Advent, is changed from purple to rose, and we focus on the joy of the healing and restorative power of Christ. In Year A, as we've noted, the lectionary texts invite us to contemplate what may be thought of as portraits of the Lenten soul. This week, John's narrative of the man born blind wonderfully reflects the theme of healing, restorative power, and conversion. Jesus graciously and miraculously healed him, with mud He made from His own saliva and the dust of the ground, opening not only the man's physical eyes but also his spiritual eyes—revealing to him that He, Christ, is the light of the world (John 9:5). The newly-healed and sight-filled man declared his testimony boldly, while others around him were left "in the dark" because of their rejection and refusal to believe in Jesus. In 1 Samuel, we find another story of sight restored—or, in this case, corrected. Here, God has sent the prophet to the home of Jesse to anoint as king His choice to rule in Saul's place. Samuel assumed that God's choice must be one of Jesse's older sons. But the LORD instructed him not to judge by appearance or stature, for "the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." Psalm 23 is that anointed king's most familiar and beloved poem. In it, David also reflects on the truth behind appearances: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me . . ." Finally, in Ephesians 5*

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

*Open My Eyes That I May See*

Open my eyes that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready, my God, Thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine.

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PROFESSION OF FAITH

**In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.**

**He was in the beginning with God.**

All things came into being through Him,  
and apart from Him nothing came into being  
that has come into being.

*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.  
The Light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.  
He came as a witness, to testify about the Light,  
so that all might believe through him.

*He was not the Light,  
but he came to testify about the Light.*

**The true Light,  
which gives light to everyone,  
was coming into the world.**

He was in the world,  
and the world was made through Him,  
and the world did not know Him.

*He came to His own,  
and those who were His own  
did not receive Him.*

**But as many as received Him,  
to them He gave the right  
to become children of God,  
even to those who believe in His name,  
who were born, not of blood  
nor of the will of the flesh  
nor of the will of man, but of God.**

**And the Word became flesh,  
and dwelt among us,  
and we beheld His glory,  
glory as of the only begotten from the Father,  
full of grace and truth.**

**No one has seen God at any time;  
the only begotten God  
who is in the bosom of the Father,  
He has made Him known.**

*Paul writes of the blessings and responsibilities of our position as God's beloved children: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. . . ."*

*As we step through this fourth week of our Lenten journey, walking with Christ that we may be increasingly more like Him, on what are you focusing your heart and thoughts? How are you seeing? What is the Light of the world illuminating in your life?*

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

O LORD, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath,  
keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to Your servants  
who walk before You with all their heart.

– 1 Kings 8:23

Most holy and merciful God, You have loved us  
with a love beyond our understanding,  
and You have set us on paths of righteousness for Your name's sake.  
Yet too often we have strayed from Your way.

**Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me;  
for in You my soul takes refuge.** (Psalm 57:1)

[Silence]

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.

**Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me;  
for in You my soul takes refuge.** (Psalm 57:1)

[Silence]

**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.**

*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*

My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine.  
Now hear me while I pray; take all my guilt away;  
O, let me from this day be wholly Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart  
Strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire.  
As Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee,  
Pure, warm and changeless be, a living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,  
And griefs around me spread,  
Be Thou my Guide;  
Be Thou my Guide....  
Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,  
Nor let me ever stray from Thee aside.

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Text: Ray Palmer, 1830. Hymn tune: OLIVET (MASON), Lowell Mason, 1830

*This simple, traditional prayer of confession and repentance is adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, Morning Prayer, rite two. A useful and user-friendly resource is The (Online) Book of Common Prayer [www.bcponline.org].*

*Ellen's setting of this classic hymn of confession—so fitting for a Lenten sung prayer—is available by request. Its harmonic structure and development mirrors, in musical form, the course of the Lenten journey. You may email us at: Clerestorynotes@gmail.com*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The word of the Lord, the good news of His salvation:  
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
on them light has shined.

– Isaiah 9:2

*God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"  
has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge  
of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

– 2 Corinthians 4:6

## Thanks be to God!

*Passing of the Peace*

## TIME OF OFFERING

Words and expressions of devotion and thanksgiving. . .

### *Psalm 23*

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me lie in pastures green.  
He leads me by the still, still waters;  
His goodness restores my soul.

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
And He anoints my head with oil.  
And my cup, it overflows with joy;  
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,  
I will not fear the evil one;  
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust in You alone,  
And I will trust in You alone.  
For Your endless mercy follows me;  
Your goodness will lead me home.

CCLI Song #1585970 ©1996 Thankyou Music. Stuart Townend.

## THE WORD

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

## THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you!

**And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!**

*There are many wonderful settings of Psalm 23. Hymn versions include The King of Love My Shepherd Is (Words: Henry W. Baker, 1868; Tune: St. COLUMBA, ancient Irish melody), and My Shepherd Will Supply My Need (Words: Isaac Watts, 1719. Hymn Tune: RESIGNATION). A contemporary classic setting by Keith and Melody Green is The Lord Is My Shepherd (CCLI Song #180857. ©1982 Universal Music, Brentwood Benson Publishing, Birdwing Music). A newer setting is Surely Goodness Surely Mercy (Shane Barnard, CCLI Song #7054930. ©2015 Songs from Wellhouse).*

*The Lord's Prayer (sung)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heav'n.  
Provide each day our daily needs;  
Forgive our sins as we forgive others' wrongs;  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom, forever and ever;  
And Thine is the power, forever and ever;  
And Thine is the glory, now and forever. Amen, amen, amen.

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*Yet I Will Praise You*

I will praise You, Lord, my God;  
Even in my brokenness I will praise You, Lord.  
I will praise You, Lord, my God;  
Even in my desperation I will praise You, Lord.  
And I can't understand all that You allow,  
I just can't see the reason.  
But my life is in Your hands,  
And though I cannot see You, I choose to trust You.

*Chorus 1*

Even when my heart is torn, I will praise You, Lord.  
Even when I feel deserted, I will praise You, Lord.  
Even in the darkest valley, I will praise You, Lord.  
And when my world is shatter'd, and it seems all hope is gone  
Yet I will praise You, Lord.

I will trust You, Lord, my God;  
Even in my loneliness I will trust You, Lord.  
I will trust You, Lord, my God;  
Even when I cannot hear You I will trust You, Lord.  
And I will not forget that You hung on a cross,  
Lord, You bled and died for me.  
And if I have to suffer I know that You've been there,  
And I know that You're here now.

*Chorus 2*

Even when my heart is torn I will trust You, Lord.  
Even when I feel deserted I will trust You, Lord.  
Even in the darkest valley I will trust You, Lord.  
And when my world is shatter'd, and it seems all hope is gone,  
Yet I will praise You, Lord.

CCLI Song # 3033258 ©1999 Vineyard Songs Canada; Andy Park.

*Blessed Be Your Name*

Blessed be Your name,  
When I'm found in the desert place;  
Though I walk through the wilderness,  
Blessed be Your name.  
Blessed be Your name,  
On the road marked with suffering;  
Though there's pain in the offering,  
Blessed be Your name.

CCLI Song #3798438 ©2002 Thankyou Music; Matt Redman and Beth Redman

*Music for The Lord's Prayer is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet and scored for voice and piano. It is also available in the music collection, Singing the Liturgy, Volume 1.*

*Link:*

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/lords-prayer>

*You can hear The Lord's Prayer in the Audio Media Studio.*

*Link:*

[https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music\\_library/lords-prayer-clip](https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/lords-prayer-clip)

*This is an interesting and poignant medley, particularly appropriate for Lent but also fitting and meaningful for expressions of Lament throughout the liturgical year. We sing these two verses of Blessed Be Your Name in a slower tempo than the song is usually sung, then return to Chorus 2 of Yet I Will Praise You.*

SENDING FORTH  
The Life of the Body

*Blessed Be Your Name*

Ev'ry blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise;  
When the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say –

Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your name.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your glorious name.

CCLI Song #3798438 ©2002 Thankyou Music; Matt Redman and Beth Redman

**Benediction:**

Brothers and sisters, as you go forth from this place,  
do so remembering that Jesus is the Light of the world;  
in Him there is no darkness at all.  
It is He who faithfully guides, protects, comforts, and sustains us.  
His steadfast love restores our souls.

**Amen.**

Now may the Lord direct your hearts  
into God's love and Christ's perseverance,  
as you walk in Christ's own footsteps,  
taking on His likeness,  
in this journey of Lent.

**We remember, and we go with grateful hearts  
into the world to love and serve the Lord.**

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

*A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –*

“We, whose spiritual eyes have been opened by the Word, Jesus Christ, and who see the difference between light and darkness, prefer to take our stand ‘in the light.’ We won't have anything at all to do with darkness. In addition, the true Light, endowed with life, knows who to reveal His full splendor to, and to whom His light. For He doesn't just display His brilliance due to the weakness in the recipient's eyes. And whose eyes are affected and injured if we must speak of them at all? Those who are ignorant of God and whose passions prevent them from seeing the truth. Christians, however, aren't blinded by the words of those who opposed worshiping God. But let those who know they are blinded by following crowds who are in error and groups that keep festivals to demons, draw near to the Word, Jesus Christ. He can give the gift of sight. Like the poor and blind whom . . . Jesus healed because they said to Him, ‘Son of David, have mercy upon me,’ those who draw near to Him will also receive mercy and recover their eyesight, created fresh and beautiful by the Word of God.”

– Origen

**Lectionary for next week:** Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Psalm 130  
Romans 8:6-11  
John 11:1-45

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*You will notice that our usual closing of the benediction, “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” is missing. That is because it’s customary during Lent to refrain from saying “Alleluia!” In a sense, we fast from this exuberant expression of praise, which makes it all the more meaningful and glorious when we declare on Resurrection Sunday, “Christ is risen, Alleluia!”*