

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

March 30, 2014



I ONCE WAS BLIND

Gathering: *In the quietness of this place, surrounded by stained glass and reminders of days past: Keep fresh before us the wonder of the stories that delight, stories offering deep insight, stories of blindness to light, stories to which our lives are committed. Keep fresh before us the light of the world in whose name we pray. Amen.*

Hymn: Out of my bondage (vs. 1) **193**

Confession: *Holy Jesus, we confess that we fail to question our own sightlessness. Being so sure that we “see”, we miss the truths you would teach us. With the poultice of your love, cure this blindness. Open our eyes to our own misunderstandings, our own failures and our own faults. Make our “shadow side” known to us and help us to diminish it with the light of your grace, for it is only when we see ourselves clearly that we can worship you truly. In the name of Jesus, we pray.* (adapted - Sharing the Light: Service Prayers and Holy Communion for the Fourth Sunday of Lent)

Response: Nothing can trouble **617**

Assurance: *Holy Jesus, you do lighten our hearts. You do come to us where the night is deepest. You touch our blindness and restore our sight and restore our soul. All praise and glory be to your holy name. Amen.*

Hymn: Amazing Grace (vs. 1-2) **190**

Scripture: **John 9:1-41**
<https://www.lds.org/bible-videos/videos/jesus-heals-a-man-born-blind?lang=eng>

Context and questions: Let us start with the man born blind. We know more about him than we do about most of the people whom Jesus encounters in the gospels. We know he was born blind. We know that he was at least of an age to be considered an adult. We know both his parents were alive — they too appear in the text. We know that he begged for a living. We know that he was known to the community even though he was excluded from the community because he lived with blindness,

thus his need to beg. And we also know that through this encounter with Jesus this man had a spiritual conversion and came to understand who Jesus was. **But** there are also some important things that we do not know. We do not know if he had ever heard of Jesus before this event. We do not know if he wanted to be sighted - this is one of the few instances in which Jesus heals a person without first asking permission, or being asked, to do so - and we do not really know what happened to this man after he became sighted. For many people with disabilities today, the things we do not know about this man are very important to think about.

One of the mottos of the disability rights movement is "nothing about us without us." This means people with disability want to be consulted about the things that affect them. So we wonder how did the man born blind feel about becoming sighted? He was not consulted before hand. We do not know how it changed his daily life, the text does not tell us that we only know how it changed his spiritual life for he proclaimed Jesus a prophet to the council of Pharisees... which was a very bold thing for someone of his social standing to do. Some say his response to the Pharisees shows his wit and intelligence traits he had that were not related to his disability or that he developed as survival mechanisms living with blindness

Hymn: Amazing Grace (4) 670

Invitation: *On a journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus two disciples had their blindness removed and their eyes opened and they saw, really saw, Jesus. The bread was blessed and broken, Do this in remembrance of me.. The wine would have been shared. And the sacrifice of the new covenant would have been remembered. Our meal of the bread and the wine is our opportunity to have our eyes open and see him, really see him for who he truly is, and what it represents - communion with those far away, communion with those near and communion with those who will succeed us. Friends in faith and love, we are invited to this communion meal. Come and celebrate together.*

Hymn: O for a thousand tongues (3-5) 374

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.*

We thank you for all that makes life worth living—for the gift of five senses to experience the world around us. We thank you for providing for our every need. With all the senses we possess we experience this bread. For this community, it holds a story of dying and rising, of breaking and sharing, of nourishment and strengthening, of being more than enough. For this we give you thanks, gracious God.

This fruit of the vine we experience with all the senses we possess - it holds a story of dying and rising, of pouring and sharing, of refreshment and renewal, of being more than enough. For this we give you thanks, gracious God.

This sacrament reminds us that God can reach us in many way – though touch and taste, smell and sight, hearing again to this in remembrance of Jesus. For this we give you thanks, gracious God.

This is both the story of who and what we are and the greater story of which we are a part – the ongoing story of God's reign and life on earth. For this we give you thanks, good God.

Hymn: Come to us (2-3) 262

Communion

Prayer following communion:

Sending: *Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." Let us shine, Lord. Jesus said again: "Neither do you put your light under a bushel, where it cannot be seen." And they answered: No, Lord, we will put our light on a stand where it can give light to everyone in the house. "Let your light shine before all people" that they may come into the light.*

Hymn: The Lord bless you 619