



Sunday
March 3, 2002

THIRD SUNDAY
IN
LENT

Pastor
Reverend Gary L. Miller

Assistant to the Pastor
Reverend Thomas Soltis

“Are you saying we are blind?”

St. Mark Lutheran Church
4464 Pearl Road
Cleveland, OH 44109
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Worship Services:
Sunday 9:30 a.m. & Wednesday 7:00 p.m.

WELCOME! ... Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Prepare for worship** in stillness and prayer. **Enjoy worship** by lifting your voice and your heart to God. **After worship**, enjoy the company of one another. Then, when the worship is over, the service begins. **Go in peace, serve the Lord!**

Guests: A very warm welcome to you.

Please make your self at home. We're happy to have you with us and hope you will join us often as we gather around the Word. You are invited to stop after the service to get more information about our different areas of ministry from the usher with a brown box. We want to know how we may serve you. Please be sure to sign our guest book and introduce yourself to others and to Pastor Miller as you leave.

Nursery, for infants through 3 years of age, is located in the back of the church. If you are not sure where the Nursery is, just ask an usher.

Worship Times:	Sunday School for Adults and Children	8:30 A.M.
	Sunday Worship	9:30 A.M.
	Wednesday Worship	7:00 P.M.

Today's Message:
“Are you saying we are blind?”
Rev. Gary L. Miller

How to become a part of St. Mark Lutheran Church family-----

Basic Christianity class started on February 7th. If you missed it and would like to have more information about our faith, watch this space for the date of the next session..

St. Mark Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. Gary L. Miller
Pastor
Rev. Thomas Soltis
Assistant to the Pastor

Mrs. Darlene Miller
Director of Music
Mrs. Naomi Schiffrik
Principal

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

In today's Gospel, the gift of sight to a blind man was granted to him by the Giver of every perfect gift--Jesus Christ. The gift to know Christ by faith exceeds even the gift of sight for this blind man. Today we contemplate the gifts we have been given in Word and Sacrament that nourish and increase our faith in Christ. Furthermore, we earnestly pray that God's name might be glorified through the talents and skills we share in our families and vocations.

OPENING HYMN #82 stzs 1 & 2 "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"
(Different melody)

INVOCATION

Pastor: We're bold to call upon the Triune name of God--Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: True God! There is no other.

People: The Holy Trinity, has revealed Himself to be our Creator, Redeemer, and Life Giver. Thanks be to God!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

For grateful hearts that acknowledge God's goodness, Lord in Your mercy,

People: help us to cling fervently to Your grace and mercy.

Pastor: That we might use our possessions and material wealth for the work of the Lord, caring for those whom the Lord has given us responsibility, including the poor and needy, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: grant us wisdom and compassion.

Pastor: For our faith, knowledge, and understanding of God's Word, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: grant us spiritual growth that we may lead holy and pure lives.

Pastor: For the courage to daily reflect upon our sin and Your mercy, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: help us to forgive others as You have forgiven us.

Pastor: For all pastors of the Church and for all baptized people of God, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: may we serve You faithfully speaking and acting according to Your will.

Pastor: For peace in our world, an increase of justice, and for the preservation of freedom, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer and grant us peace.

Pastor: For all who privately endure family secrecy and heartache, Lord in Your mercy,

People: guide us in Your truth and fill us with Your love.

Pastor: For the ill and those who suffer in any way...(especially...) Lord, in Your mercy,

People: bestow Your miraculous healing and genuine comfort.

Pastor: For those who serve in the armed forces, and protective service agencies including police, fire fighters, paramedics, and all rescue workers. Lord in Your mercy,

People: increase their skill, strength, and courage. May they persevere in the face of adversity, experiencing significant success in their efforts.

Pastor: For public servants, the government, and for all agencies designed to protect those who are vulnerable and in need, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: protect them and grant Your consolation, comfort, wisdom, and compassion.

Pastor: For our enemies, for terrorists, for evil empires, and tyrants, Lord in Your

mercy,

People: remove their hatred, frustrate the ways of the wicked, and resolve the conditions that fuel their cause.

Pastor: We lift before You, O Lord, the tremendous burdens that weigh heavily upon us, seeking Your intervention, and encouragement.

(silence for personal petitions)

Pastor: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

† WORD †

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 42:14-21

(A great irony: God will lead the blind into the light, but God's own servant, Israel, persists in blind idolatry.)

God will say, "I have long been silent; yes, I have restrained myself. But now I will give full vent to my fury; I will gasp and pant like a woman giving birth. I will level the mountains and hills and bring a blight on all their greenery. I will turn the rivers into dry land and will dry up all the pools. I will lead blind Israel down a new path, guiding them along an unfamiliar way. I will make the darkness bright before them and smooth out the road ahead of them. Yes, I will indeed do these things; I will not forsake them. But those who trust in idols, calling them their gods— they will be turned away in shame. "Oh, how deaf and blind you are toward me! Why won't you listen? Why do you refuse to see? Who in all the world is as blind as my own people, my servant? Who is as deaf as my messengers? Who is as blind as my chosen people, the servant of the Lord? You see and understand what is right but refuse to act on it. You hear, but you don't really listen." The Lord has magnified his law and made it truly glorious. Through it he had planned to show the world that he is righteous.

Is 42:14-21 NLT

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Pastor: Let us pray: O Lord, through Your prophet Isaiah, You have said to us, "Hear you deaf; look, you blind, and see!"

People: Lift all spiritual blindness from our eyes and show us Your ways, that we may follow You in all things by faith,

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

People: Amen.

GRADUAL Hebrews 12:2 *(spoken by the congregation)*

**Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus,
the author and perfecter of faith,
who for the joy set before Him endured the cross,
scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus.**

EPISTLE Ephesians 5:8-14 *(God encourages us to live in the light.)*

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SONG "Open our Eyes Lord" *(sung twice)*

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus
To reach out and touch Him and say that we love Him.**

Open our ears, Lord, Help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus

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GOSPEL John 9:1-14; 35-41 (*Jesus gives both physical and spiritual sight.*)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. “Teacher,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it a result of his own sins or those of his parents?”

“It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him. All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, because there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end. But while I am still here in the world, I am the light of the world.” Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smoothed the mud over the blind man’s eyes. He told him, “Go and wash in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means Sent).

So the man went and washed, and came back seeing! His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, “Is this the same man—that beggar?” Some said he was, and others said, “No, but he surely looks like him!” And the beggar kept saying, “I am the same man!”

They asked, “Who healed you? What happened?”

He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and smoothed it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash off the mud.’ I went and washed, and now I can see!”

➡➡➡➡

“Where is he now?” they asked. “I don’t know,” he replied.

Then they took the man to the Pharisees. Now as it happened, Jesus had healed the man on a Sabbath. The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them .. Then the Pharisees questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “This man who opened your eyes—who do you say he is?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.” ... “I don’t know whether he is a sinner, but I know this: I was blind, and now I can see! ... God doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Never since

the world began has anyone been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he couldn’t do it.”

“You were born in sin!” they answered. “Are you trying to teach us?” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

The man answered, “Who is he, sir, because I would like to.”

“You have seen him,” Jesus said, “and he is speaking to you!”

“Yes, Lord,” the man said, “I believe!” And he worshiped Jesus.

Then Jesus told him, “I have come to judge the world. I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.”

The Pharisees who were standing there heard him and asked, “Are you saying we are blind?”

“If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.” Jn 9:1-10:1 NLT

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON “Are you saying we are blind?”

In the dark, but not blind.

The relevant question of the day, “Are you saying we are blind?”

Was the man blind?

Did the man receive The Miracle of Sight?

The Pharisees, were they blind?

Did the Pharisees receive The Miracle of Sight?

You and I today, "Are you saying we are blind?"

We obviously need The Miracle of Sight.

God sees our sin!

God loves the sinner.

Spiritual sight came at a great cost.

The Miracle of Sight is ours.

Make it a point this week to respond to God's gracious gift by

SHOULD YOU COMMUNE WITH US TODAY?

Please carefully consider the following questions:

1. Do you recognize the fact that you are a sinner, who fully deserves eternal punishment? (Rom. 3: 23; Matt. 25: 46)
2. Are you truly sorry for your sins and therefore desire, with the help of God, to change the way you think and act? (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 3:19)
3. Do you trust in Jesus who died on the cross to pay for your sins; then rose victorious? (Rom. 3:28; 1 Pet, 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:15)
4. Do you believe that the very Body and Blood of Christ are truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion? (1 Cor. 10:16 & 11: 27)
5. Do you intend to receive the Body and Blood of Christ with the full assurance that your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake? (Matt. 26:28)
6. Do you agree with the Biblical teaching of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that communing together is a public declaration of agreement in doctrine?

If you have sincerely answered, "Yes!" to all of the questions, please join us at the Lord's table. If you are uncertain, please refrain from communion today and speak with Pastor Miller.

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

CONFESSION AND GOD'S FORGIVENESS

PSALM Psalm 142 (Congregation sings bolded portion of refrain)

REFRAIN: I cry aloud to the Lord; **I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.**

Refrain Paul R. Otte

Cantor: I cry a-loud to the Lord. *All:* I lift up my voice to the Lord for mer-cy.

Pastor: I pour out my complaint before Him; *before Him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is You who know my way. *In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me.

Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. *I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, *"You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

REFRAIN: I cry aloud to the Lord; **I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.**

Pastor: Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; *rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.

Set me free from my prison, that I may praise Your name. *Then the righteous will gather about me because of Your goodness to me.

REFRAIN: I cry aloud to the Lord; **I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.**

Pastor: Heavenly Father, You have gathered us to hear Your unfailing Word of love and forgiveness.

People: You feed our faith with priceless treasures of Your grace--Your Holy Word, baptismal waters, and Your life-giving body and blood.

Pastor: Boundless is Your kindness; righteous is Your power.

People: We are frequently blinded by our sin in thought, word, and deed. Daily we sin much, and are in great need of Your forgiveness.

Pastor: In our brokenness, we dare to approach Your throne of grace, pleading for Your infinite mercy.

(Silence is observed for reflection on our sin.)

Pastor: O most merciful God, You gave to us Your holy Law that our sin might be clearly revealed to us.

People: You have shaped our consciences to recognize right from wrong.

Yet, we knowingly choose to do what is wrong, and have failed in Your sight. Since You have given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy on us. For His sake grant us forgiveness for all our sins. By Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will. Teach us true obedience to Your Word so that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Pastor: As God has revealed the consequences for breaking His Law, so also He has revealed the grace of the Gospel. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Therefore as a called and ordained servant of the Word, I announce the grace of God to all of you, forgiving your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY #351 stzs 1-3 "By Grace I'm Saved"

† **SACRAMENT** †

CATECHISM: LORD'S PRAYER

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

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

#96 "Come to Calv'ry's Holy Mountain"
Saxophone/Piano Duet: "Amazing Grace"
#168 "Holy, Holy, Holy"

DISMISSAL

SONG #11 "Lord, Now Let Your Servant Depart in Peace"

BENEDICTION

Pastor: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." To that end, the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and † give you peace.

People: Amen.

SENDING HYMN "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

**I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.**

Refrain:

**In Him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. Refrain**

**I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. Refrain**

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Pastor: Go in peace, serve the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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Preacher: **Rev. Gary L. Miller**
Organist: **Mrs. Darlene Miller**
Saxophone: **Cory Muscatello**
Ushers **Team 1**
Reader **Winnie Rathburn**
Altar Guild **Elsie Johanson & Judy Keil**
Code Out **Bill Miller**
Acolytes

Chili Supper tickets sold today after service.

This week's Soundbyte poem by Greg Asimakoupoulos

"A Dead End"

We probably should have known.
The barricades were a clue
that the end of the road
would be a dead end
for that missing Wall Street journalist.
But lest you think his death only a headline,
think again.
Cloistered in Karachi,
a grieving widow stares out rain-stained window
missing her Danny Boy.
And though the tide of joy in her life has gone out,
she is not alone on her private beach of pain.
Like an oyster indwelt with a priceless gem,
she envelopes a baby pearl.

Please, dear God,
may that boy or girl one day
discover your Father-like love
and, by your grace,
learn to forgive.