

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
 Sunday, July 6th, 2025
 Rev. Gerry Gallant

Spiritual Blindness
 Proper 9
 John 9:17-41

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

In Christ, the God of heaven has made his home on earth.
Christ dwells among us and is one with us.

Highest of all creation, he lives among the least.
He journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary.

Come now, all who thirst,
and drink the water of life.

Come now, all who hunger,
and be filled with good things.

Come now, all who seek,
and be warmed by the fire of love

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O LORD, God of Israel,
 there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath,
 keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants
 who walk before you with all their heart.
 Blessed be the LORD,
 who has given rest to his people Israel
 according to all that he promised;
 not one word has failed of all his good promise,
 which he spoke through his servant Moses.
 The LORD our God be with us,
 as he was with our ancestors;
 may he not leave us or abandon us,

but incline our hearts to him,
 to walk in all his ways,
 and to keep his commandments,
 his statutes, and his ordinances,
 which he commanded our ancestors
 We pray this in the name of his only Son,
 Who died upon the cross for the debt of our sins,
 Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Children's Hymn #378: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the Morning" (V 1,2,5)

Jesus, Jesus,
 Jesus in the morning, Jesus in the noontime;
 Jesus, Jesus,
 Jesus when the sun goes down!

Love him, love him,
 Love him in the morning, love him in the noontime;
 Love him, love him,
 Love him when the sun goes down!

Praise him, praise him,
 Praise him in the morning, praise him in the noontime;
 Praise him, praise him,
 Praise him when the sun goes down!

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

**Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD,
 and of your steadfast love,
 for they have been from of old.
 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
 according to your steadfast love remember me,
 for your goodness' sake, O LORD!
 Good and upright is the LORD;
 therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
 For your name's sake, O LORD,
 pardon my guilt, for it is great.
 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
 for I am lonely and afflicted.**

Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me out of my distress.
Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Your sins are pardoned.
The penalty is paid.
Thanks be to God.

The 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: "Change My Heart oh God"

Change my heart oh God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart oh God,
May I be like You.

Change my heart oh God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart oh God,
May I be like You.

You are the potter,
I am the clay.
Mold me and make me,
this is what I pray.

Change my heart oh God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart oh God,
May I be like You.

You are the potter,
I am the clay.

Mold me and make me,
this is what I pray.

Change my heart oh God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart oh God,
May I be like You.
May I be like You.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 145:8-14

⁸ The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ **The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.**

¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your saints shall bless you!

¹¹ **They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,**

¹² **to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The LORD is faithful in all his words
and kind in all his works.]

¹⁴ **The LORD upholds all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down**

Prayer for illumination

(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

John 9:17-41

¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews 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 ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he

now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”²⁵ He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ 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?”²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.”²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.”³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.”

³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Sermon

Last week we studied the healing of the man born blind.

As a reminder, that man had been begging just outside the temple, when Jesus and the disciples encountered him. The disciples were more interested in what had caused the man’s blindness than the man himself.

However, Jesus corrects their focus to the man himself, when Jesus heals him by spitting on the ground and making mud by kneading the dirt and spit between his fingers which he rubs over the man’s eyes. He then sent the man to the pool of Siloam to wash the mud from his eyes, and the man sees.

When the religious leaders learn of this they are angered, yet again Jesus is a Sabbath Breaker, he did work by kneading on the Sabbath when he rubbed dirt between his fingers to make the mud.

The Scripture ended with there being a division in the opinions of the religious leaders, some who could not see the miracle and focused only on the way he broke the Sabbath laws that the religious leaders had created, even though he had not violated God's command. And the others who saw the miracle and began to question if their own understanding of the Sabbath and the laws that they had create around keeping the Sabbath may be wrong.

And in the midst of this debate, they ask the man who had been blind what had happened again.

John 9:17

¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

Notice that the man refers to Jesus as a prophet. He is evolving in his understanding of who Jesus is in his life. He started last week's Scripture by referring to Jesus as a man who told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, he now thinks he is more than just a man, now he is a prophet.

Can you see how he has almost no real knowledge about who Jesus is, yet he is making his way to Christ. He has a rudimentary understating, and trust and obedience and it is leading him to God.

Once again showing how you do not have to have an intense understanding of theology to Find Christ. You do not need to understand the doctrines of the church to be a Christian. In fact, the bible is summed up beautifully in the verse, 'Jesus loves me this I know, because the bible tells me so!' That is all the knowledge of God you need to place your faith and trust in him and find your eternal salvation in his love, grace and mercy.

Jesus will work in your life the moment you come to him; there is no Bible knowledge quiz that you need to pass to be a Christian. Jesus will meet you where you are and begin his work though the Holy Spirit in you, as long as you humbly submit your life to him.

John 9:18-24

¹⁸ The Jews 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 ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be

Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

Can you believe this, the religious leaders found it easier to believe that the man had been faking his blindness his entire life, rather than to admit that the miracle had taken place. So, they call his parents to stand before them.

They confront them, is this your son, and was he really born blind?

To which the parents respond, yes, he is our son and yes, he really was born blind, yet somehow now he sees.

That should have been the end of the conversation.

He was blind, now he sees. Fact, truth, miracle.

However, notice how the parent's say that if the religious leaders have any more questions they should go to the man himself. They do not want to stand in front of the religious leaders and answer questions because they know that they are putting their whole lives at risk in doing so.

The religious leaders had already decided that anyone who admitted that Jesus was the Messiah would be excommunicated, cast out, of the temple. That might not seem like a big deal, but in Jesus's day that meant being cast out of the culture. Jews did business with Jew's. The whole social and economic culture was built around temple life and to be kicked out was one of the most severe forms of discipline that could occur.

Excommunication from church was a powerful tool that the church held, one that was meant to help keep people in accordance with the moral, ethical and spiritual teachings of God. And it was very effective in doing so.

In the modern context, excommunication means nothing, if someone is asked to leave the church, they just walk a few blocks over and join a new church pretending like nothing happened. In fact, some churches have become so worldly, so far from God's Word that people can leave a church and go join a church that affirms all of their incorrect beliefs about God and the Bible.

However, for the health of a Bible believing Church, church discipline is a necessary component of church life. The Bible describes for us how to go about church discipline for a reason. And excommunication is still necessary; it may no longer have the power to influence the person who is excommunicated; however, it does benefit the believers who see that the church takes the Word of God seriously within its community.

So, the fear of being excommunicated did have power in the days of Jesus, and the parents did not want to risk answering the questions of the religious leaders for that reason. For this reason, the religious leaders are forced to once again go to the man who now sees and ask him about Jesus.

John 9:24-25

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

They tell him the answer they are looking for, '**Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.**' They are saying to the blind man, tell us Jesus is a sinner.

The man's response is perfect, 'I don't know if he is a sinner or not. What I do know is that I was born blind and now I can see!'

He did not really know anything about Jesus, but he knew the truth, the irrefutable fact that Jesus had spoke to him, touched him, rubbed mud on his eyes and told him to go wash, and now he could see.

'Once I was blind, now I can see!'

Irrefutable Truth. The truth of what God had done in his life.

The power of personal experience with God is undeniable.

Our foundation of faith is in the Word of God, but the work of God in our lives, the personal experiences we have with God's hand, are a powerful testimony to who He is.

Every one of us has a personal testimony, every one of us should be able to say to someone this is what Jesus Christ has done and is doing in my life.

For some of us it is that incredible story of transformation, some of us might have a dramatic story about how far from God we were and how much the Holy Spirit has changed us.

However, the truth is that even the simplest testimony is just as powerful.

If your testimony is just that you once lived your life focused on yourself and your own personal pleasures, that you lived in proud self-reliance, that you lived as a slave to the sins of this world, and that you did not look to God in your life at all, until the day that Jesus came into your life, and now you no longer sit on the throne of your life, but humbly bow your knee to the One True Living God.

That might not seem as powerful as the story of the gang leader who walked away from a life of violence, drugs and evil to walk with God. But it is just as valid.

Just admitting that you were caught up in the sins of this world, that you had idols like; fame, wealth, or power; and now you do not is a powerful testimony.

‘Once I was blind, now I see’

The fact that you changed is a powerful testimony. There is power in even the simplest testimony of a Christian.

When the world confronts you about your faith you may not always have the answer. When they ask you about political issues, social issues, sin issues, trying to prove that God does not exist.

‘Once I was blind, now I see’

I may not know the answer to your questions now, I may not be able to explain everything right now. However, this is a truth I know, ‘Once I was blind, now I see’ Jesus changed me and changed the way I see the world and live.

John 9:26-27

²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ 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?”

The religious leaders so not stop badgering him.

And the man who was blind just responds with rational logic. Remember he is a formally blind man who was a beggar, and he is now in a deep theological debate with the top educated leaders of the Jewish religion.

He is telling them if you keep asking me the same question you will always get the same answer. It seems so simple to him.

Yet isn’t it fascinating that even though it is so simple, so clear, so easy to understand, Once I was blind, now I see’ that the religious leaders are completely blind to the truth.

A miracle had taken place and instead of rejoicing in it, they were looking for ways to deny it and to deny Jesus as the Messiah.

They were blind, spiritually blind. The Son of God was there in their presence and even with all of the education they had, all of the training they had, all of the Scripture they had memorized, they could not see Him.

They were blind.

And that blindness is still prevalent in this world. Our world is filled with people who are spiritually blind, people who deny God, who deny Jesus in every aspect of their life.

However, there are also many people who are blind in only one particular area of their lives. I think about this often, am I blind to any sin in my life. To which I am thankful that God has given me a wife who will point out my blindness.

However, as a Christian we should always be asking Jesus to help us see the sin that exists in our life.

The truth is that we can all be spiritually blind to the sin that exists in our life, sin that we want to deny is sin because it would be too hard for us to admit it and have to deal with it. Yet the truth is that God calls for us to face through truths, even when they are painful and call for us to change.

We should always be praying for Jesus to touch our lives, to show us those parts of our life we might be blind too. Praying for God to search our hearts, search our thoughts, see our wicked ways and lead us away from them and into his presence.

Psalm 139:23-24

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

**²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!**

We all need to be doing this every day.

The man who was formerly blind was no longer spiritually blind, and in a way, he points it out to the religious leaders when he asks them if they, **'also want to become his disciples?'**

Notice he went from Jesus just being a man, to Jesus being a prophet, to now he is one of Jesus's disciples.

John 9:28-34

²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." **³⁰ The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does**

not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

What an exchange. They deny Jesus is the Messiah, they say they know nothing of him, even with the almost three years of ministry he has been doing, even with the almost two years of miracles he has been performing, the religious leaders say, ‘We do not know this man!’

The blind man is amazed by their ignorance, by their inability to accept simple truths. That their spiritual blindness is so powerful that despite all of the proof that he is the Messiah is right there before them, the prophecies fulfilled, the miracles performed, the profound depths of teaching on the Scriptures, they deny it all in their spiritual blindness. That is amazing.

So, the religious leaders do what the world does! In their blindness they refuse to accept the truth, they attack him personally, they insult him, and they reject him, they cast him out.

This is how the world responds to Christians. When the truth is spoken, this who speak it are abused, are attacked, are insulted and ultimately are rejected.

Just look at the current culture. When you share the truth of God’s Word, people look at you differently, they treat you differently. When you share the truth of God’s Word on what is sinful, it starts with looking at you differently, then they attack the sin that is in your life and finally they reject you and cast you out.

If you call anything a sin nowadays you get labeled with that (SIN)-phobe label. One that is meant to cast you out of society, much in the same way that people were excommunicated from the temple.

The world has not changed, and spiritual blindness is just as powerful and just as common as it was in the days that Jesus Christ walked on this planet. It wants to cast out the truth of God from its presence.

John 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.”

The religious leaders cast him out, they excommunicated him from the social world of the Jewish nation, and what happens?

Jesus seeks him out. Do you see that, Jesus sought him out, Jesus went looking for and found this man so that he could take him into his family.

When you are cast out of the culture because of your faith, know that you are welcome into the family of Jesus Christ, you are adopted as a son or daughter of the One True Living God.

Jesus finds the man and deliberately calls the man to faith. Jesus quite plainly tells the man that he is God.

To which the man replies.

John 9:38

³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

Jesus tells this man that he is God, and he receives this man's worship. You want proof that Jesus is God. Look through the entire Bible and you will see every time that a person worships a person or an angel they always say do not worship me, worship God.

Yet here as this man worships Jesus, Jesus allows him to worship, because he is God!

The man has gone from a man who just knew that Jesus did something to him, to a man that thought he was a prophet, to a disciple, to belief that he was the Son of man, to the Knowledge that he was God.

All because he stayed true to Jesus. He had ample opportunity to change his mind, he had a lot of pressure from the religious leaders to change his mind, he had the threat of being cast out of his social structure to change his mind, and through all of it he held onto Jesus.

And because of that he grew closer and closer to God. In the end more of Jesus was more valuable than anything that this world could offer him.

John 9:39-41

³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

Yet again Jesus offers a dire warning to the religious leaders.

He tells them that he came for judgement, this is a shock to many people who only think of Jesus being love. Jesus is love, he is full of grace and mercy, however, he is also here as a just and righteous judge. He will examine everyone's life not according to the law of man, but according to the Word of God.

He quite plainly says I came to judge, to divide, to be the sword that separates the saved from the lost. Whether you accept Jesus or reject Jesus determines your eternity.

The religious leaders cannot accept this; they cannot admit their spiritual blindness. They cannot accept the truth that even though they think they are walking with God, they are in fact embracing the world.

To which Jesus responds, **'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.'**

This is a dire warning to us as Christians. The truth is that we are all blind in some ways to the sins in our life. That we might even be aware that something is sinful, but we deny it because we do not want to have to deal with it in our lives.

We are saying to Jesus we see, we see, we need to be right, we need to deny the truth because we like the way we are.

This is why we need to be willing to go to Jesus and say we need your help, we need your Holy Spirit to see the sin in our lives, and when we see it, we need to confront it and deal with it.

Because if we do not, we are like these religious leaders, the truth is right there before our eyes, so we close our eyes and deny its existence.

And when we do that, Jesus is saying that denying the truth once you know it is condemnation.

The truth is that you fully accept Jesus Christ and the Word of God, from beginning to end, or you do not have Jesus Christ, you have a god of your own creation.

So, I hope and pray that each of you will ask God to search your hearts, know your thoughts, find those grievous ways in you and open your eyes to the spiritual blindness in your lives so that though the transformative power of the Holy Spirit you can walk closer to God each day as the Salt and Light of his Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

By Your Word You Have Brought Us out of Darkness

Lord God, heavenly Father,
we most heartily thank you
that by your Word
you have brought us out of the darkness of error
into the light of your grace.
Mercifully help us to walk in that light,
guard us from all error and false doctrine
and grant that we may not become ungrateful

and despise and persecute your Word,
 as your people did long ago,
 but receive it with all our heart,
 govern our lives according to it
 and put all our trust in your grace
 through the merit of your dear Son,
 Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn #526: “Lift Up Your Hearts/Sing Hallelujah”

Lift up your hearts unto the Lord;
 lift up your hearts unto the Lord.
 Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah;
 lift up your hearts unto the Lord!

In Christ the world has been redeemed,
 in Christ the world has been redeemed.
 Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah;
 in Christ the world has been redeemed.

Therefore, we celebrate the feast,
 therefore we celebrate the feast.
 Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah;
 therefore we celebrate the feast.

Sing hallelujah to the Lord,
 sing hallelujah to the Lord.
 Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah;
 sing hallelujah to the Lord.

Communion

Invitation to the Table

As we prepare to celebrate holy communion, let us remember that Scripture calls us to examine ourselves before God. We are taught that eating and drinking unworthily brings judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-29). Let us therefore ask God for the proper spirit in which to celebrate the sacrament.

Let us Pray,

Almighty God, before whom can be neither secret thought nor hidden deed,
grant us your Spirit that we may know our hearts, our lives, and our inmost
thoughts as you know them.

Grant us your grace that we may repent sincerely of all sin, find peace with you
through our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in assurance of salvation in him.

May the celebration of our Savior's infinite love in his redeeming death bring joy
to us and glory to you. **Amen.**

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

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 God thanks and praise.

It is truly right to glorify you, Father,
and to give you thanks,
for you alone are God, living and true,
dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever.
Fountain of all life and source of all goodness,
you made all things and fill them with your blessing;
you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.
Countless throngs of angels stand before you
to serve you night and day,
and, beholding the glory of your presence,
they offer you unceasing praise.
Joining with them,
and giving voice to every creature under heaven,
we glorify your name
and lift our voices in joyful praise

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of
power and might, heaven and earth are full
of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Heavenly Father, show forth among us
the presence of your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit,

to sanctify us and your whole church through this sacrament.
 Grant that all who share the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ,
 may be one in him and may remain faithful in love and hope.
 And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf
 and these grapes from many hills into one cup,
 grant, O Lord, that your whole church may soon be gathered
 from the ends of the earth into your kingdom

Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in
 all places:

The Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. AMEN.**

Communion

When the hour had come for him to be glorified
 by you, his heavenly Father,
 having loved his own who were in the world,
 he loved them to the end:
 at supper with them he took bread,
 and after giving thanks to you,
 he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,
 "Take, eat. This is my body, which is given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me."
 After supper he took the cup, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do it for the remembrance of me."

Holy God, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead,
proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand,
awaiting his coming in glory,
and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us,
this bread and this cup,
we praise you and we bless you.

Taking of the bread

Take and eat.
This is the body of Christ, which is [given] for you.
Do this, remembering him.

Drinking of the cup

This cup is the new covenant
sealed by Christ's blood,
which was shed that the sins of many
might be forgiven.
Drink from it, all of you

Prayer after Communion

Loving, glorious, gracious God,
you have fed us at your table.
In your mercy you have nourished us,
and we are grateful.
This day, in this time and place,
we connect through the centuries
with the church everlasting,
those who before us broke bread and took the cup.
Help us now, as we leave this place,
to continue the work of the holy catholic church,
to practice the communion of the saints,
and, with hearts and souls refreshed, to seek your will.
Help us, now that we have been fed,
to feed those who are hungry,
invite in the stranger,
and visit the imprisoned.
You have met us where we are, O Lord,

and filled our needs yet again.
 May we do the same for all of your children;
 may we leave this place to love abundantly.
 May we love you with all our hearts.
 May we love our neighbors as ourselves.
 In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer **(Congregant Prepared)**

Closing Hymn #687: "Blessed Assurance" (V 1, 2, 3)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
 Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
 born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain:

This is my story; this is my song:
 praising my Saviour all the day long;
 this is my story; this is my song:
 praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
 visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
 angels descending bring from above
 echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest;
 I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
 watching and waiting, looking above,
 filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life,
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

Benediction

May God go before you to lead you.
May God go behind you to guard you.
May God go beneath you to support you.
May God go beside you to befriend you.
Do not be afraid.
Let the blessing of God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—
come upon you today and settle in around you.
Do not be afraid.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord you God. **Amen.**