



March 22, 2020
Fourth Sunday in Lent

Prelude

Of All the Birds That I Do Know
From "Three Pieces by Gordon Jacob"

Greeting

Unison Call to Worship: Psalm 23 (*King James Version*)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

**He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.**

**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with
me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**

**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with
oil; my cup runneth over.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of
the LORD for ever.**

Hymn #792

There Is A Balm in Gilead

Unison Prayer of Confession (*Inspired by John 9:1-41*)

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 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...

Pause for silent reflection

Responsive Assurance of God's Forgiveness

Behold and believe in the wondrous power and love of God!
It is poured out for you and for God's beloved world.
Rejoice in this good news,
for it is given especially to you. **Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination

A Word with the Children: John 9:1-12 (*The Message*)

Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?"

Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world's Light."

He said this and then spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, "Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "Sent"). The man went and washed—and saw.

Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, "Why, isn't this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?"

Others said, "It's him all right!"

But others objected, "It's not the same man at all. It just looks like him."

He said, "It's me, the very one."

They said, "How did your eyes get opened?"

"A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' I did what he said. When I washed, I saw."

"So where is he?"

"I don't know."

Musical Offering

Wade in the Water

Paula Rivera-Dantagnan

Sermon

Clear As Mud

Rev. Judith A Dwyer

Responsive Blessing of Mud (inspired by John 9: 1-41)

Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the dirt.

**Lest we think
the blessing**

**is not
in the earth
beneath our feet.**

Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the dust

**like the dust
that God scooped up
at the beginning
and formed
with God's
two hands
and breathed into
with God's own
breath.**

Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the spit.

**Lest we think
the blessing
is not in the mud.**

Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the mire,
the grime,
the muck.

**Lest we think
that God
cannot reach
deep into the things
of earth,
cannot bring forth
the blessing
that shimmers
within the sludge,
cannot anoint us
with a tender
and grimy grace.**

Lest we think
that God
will not use the ground
to create us
once again,

to cleanse us
of our unseeing,
to open our eyes upon
this ordinary
and stunning world.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on **The Painted Prayerbook**.
<http://paintedprayerbook.com/category/gospel-of-john/page/2/>

Musical

I Sing the Love That Dreamed Creation

John Carter

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer ~ written by David Adam in "*The Open Gate*" SPCK 1994

Lord, help us to relax.

Take from us the tension that makes peace impossible.
Take from us the fears that do not allow us to venture.
Take from us the worries that blind our sight.
Take from us the distress that hides your joy.

Help us to know that we are with you,
that we are in your care, that we are in your love,
that together we are one.

Take our relentless anxiety and help us use it for good:
To reach out to those in distress; to heal those without hope;
to comfort those who mourn. Remind us that you hear our prayers
for all, even ourselves. We lift up to your healing grace those experiencing
turmoil, disorientation and chaos right now:

May we witness to your love for us in new ways that enable others
To see as they have not been able to see before.
Give us enough mud to open the eyes of the world to one another.
We pray all of these things in the name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ:

**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 evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Hymn #39

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Blessing

May God, who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes and be in your seeing.

May Christ, who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit, who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three bless your eyes
and cause you to see. **Amen.**

~ from In the Sanctuary of Women, copyright © Jan L. Richardson

Choral Amen

Postlude