

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

306 N. Division Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 • (734) 663-0518 • www.standrewsaa.org

Sunday, March 22, 2020

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Dear Friends:

For a city of its size, Ann Arbor is richly blessed with extraordinary medical facilities and services. It has been an honor to get to know several of the professionals in the medical community through their involvement at St. Andrew's and through pastoral visits at local hospitals.

Among our parishioners we have nurses, technicians, physicians, surgeons, therapists, researchers, administrators, even a hospital chaplain. They are all dedicated individuals who give of their knowledge, talents and passions to promote the health of the community and further the cause of medicine. It can be a stressful vocation in the best of times. Right now, and for the foreseeable future that stress level will grow dramatically. Keep these people in your prayers.

If you encounter someone working in the medical field thank them for their dedication and tell them you are praying for them.

A passage from the Apocrypha speaks for all of these people: "Honor physicians for their service, for the Lord created them; for their gift of healing comes from the Most High." (Ecclesiasticus 38:1-2)

God bless,

Fr. Alan

Left: St. Andrew's Christ the Divine Physician Stained Glass Window



The Collect

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Old Testament

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Response

Psalm 23: *Dominus regit me*

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; *
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who
trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Epistle

Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

The Gospel

John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on

the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

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 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 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?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes

of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

Anthem

Open Thou Mine Eyes

John Rutter

Open thou mine eyes and I shall see: incline my heart and I shall desire: order my steps and I shall walk in the ways of thy commandments.

O Lord God, be thou to me a God and beside thee let there be none else, no other, nought else with thee.

Vouchsafe to me to worship thee and serve thee according to thy commandments, in truth of spirit, in reverence of body, in blessing of lips, in private and in public.

Hear the anthem as performed by the Cambridge Singers: <https://youtu.be/dMKqrAmAon8>

CLICK TO LISTEN

The Prayers

Almighty God, who sent your blessed Son to be the great physician of the souls and bodies of your people: Look upon those who have dedicated their lives to the ministry of healing. Bless and strengthen them in your service; use their skill and all such means as they shall employ for the relief of suffering and the restoration of health; and help them ever to remember that in ministering to others they minister to you.

Sermon

Fr. Charles Witke

“He was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.”

Undeserved suffering like that of the blind man in today’s Gospel is often still being questioned by us, and it remains especially true now that no so-called “explanation” of innocent human suffering in terms of past events can relieve human concern about it. Jesus here does not even attempt such an

explanation. Only one thing can make that undeserved suffering tolerable: what God makes of it, what he does with it, what he works upon it. He says: “We must work the works of him who sent me.” And that is what he does in this Gospel narration.

The disciples, noticing the blind man, but not addressing him (as is often the pattern of interaction between the abled and disabled), asked our Lord about him. Disabilities were seen as the result of moral flaws in those days, so that is the approach they took, as we have just seen. It still lingers among us even today. Jesus immediately responded: “It is no one’s fault. The man’s blindness is, in fact, a window through which the world will see and know I am the light of the world.” The blind man himself asks nothing of the Lord and does nothing to merit Jesus’ notice and intervention. But as Jesus says of the sometimes convoluted and paradoxical workings of God, “He was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.”

John doesn’t tell us that the blind man was praying or expecting a miracle to happen. Jesus is walking along, his disciples ask their question, and up to now the anonymous blind man’s life is without consequence. It is after the healing that he becomes significant. A simple life spent in darkness suddenly became very complex, now that God’s works are revealed in him. All of a sudden he was an interesting person. He is a very good example of many of us: enlightened on first encountering the divine, but he comes only gradually to see Jesus more fully active in his life.

The formerly blind man attracts official attention, never welcome to the marginalized, and undergoes interrogations and trials, and is cast out of the synagogue by the official theologians of Israel. They cannot overlook that the Sabbath law has been broken, even to do a good deed, and therefore Jesus the healer is a sinner. But the man cannot forget that he has been healed, and that Jesus, to have done that, must be special, even a prophet. By rejecting him, the Pharisees have made their choice with which Jesus was confronting his world: to follow the old Moses who came through the Law, or the “new Moses”, Jesus, through whom comes grace and truth, God’s new gift to his people, his new testament and promise.

The Pharisees ask how a man of unknown origin, and a man who is not properly certified, could heal anyone of anything. The healed man is the only one who gets the point; he was blind and now, thanks to Jesus, he isn’t. He wonders, aloud, what any of the questions he is hearing have to do with that marvelous fact. He even ventures a little theology of his own, “We know that God does not listen to sinners. This man healed my blindness. Therefore, God must hear him when he asks for healing.” The Pharisees cannot follow this

reasoning because it is counter to all they believe, but actually, they remain unconvinced because they cannot see themselves as God sees them. They are the ones who are truly blind. It would be all too easy, at this point, to ridicule those Pharisees and hold them up as rigid, narrow-minded religious teachers, unwilling to see something new that could change their outlook on others, indeed as blind as the healed man had been. It would be easy to see them that way, and it would be dangerous. If we choose to judge them in those terms, we ourselves run the grave risk of falling into the very same trap that held them. We too have our ways of writing off people who are not one of us, in various ways different, unlike us and therefore unworthy of our notice, or worthy of our rejection or fear. After all, blindness comes in many forms, and we are by no means immune to it.

When Jesus finds the formerly blind man, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The healing of the blind man is now complete with this, his answer: "Lord, I believe." This relationship of the Son of Man and the man with healed sight is his complete restoration, his complete healing. The healing has set the healed man apart from the crowd, from the synagogue, and, even from his parents. But he has been given so much; he now had the one thing that he needed; God incarnate had revealed love and mercy and peace. "Lord, I believe," is the real miracle of this miracle. The formally blind man, an innocent child of God, has been given his sight, but also profoundest insight as well. His life will never be the same.

Blindness still comes in many forms. And we are by no means immune to it. And we are unable ever to see ourselves just as God sees us. Affliction can come, as we see around us now. And like the blind man in the Gospel, we are not left on our own. May this narration of healing be our story too.

Amen.

Anthem

Ad Te Levavi Oculos Meos

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

*To thee have I lifted up my eyes, who dwellest in heaven.
Behold as the eyes of the servants are on the hands of their masters,
As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress:
So are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us.
Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us: for we are greatly filled with contempt.
For our soul is greatly filled: we are a reproach to the rich, and contempt to the proud.*

Hear the anthem as performed by the Sistine
Chapel Choir: <https://youtu.be/ktG1kndbZIQ>

CLICK TO LISTEN

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Please stay home and stay healthy!

03.22.20

From Bishop Perry:

Due to concern about the COVID-19 virus, the Bishop has directed that **ALL WORSHIP be CANCELED until May 10.**

This includes all weekday and Sunday services, weddings, funerals, and memorial services. *You can read Bishop Perry's directive [HERE](#)*

From Fr. Alan:

All events and activities at St. Andrew's have been **CANCELED until May 10.**

If you are one of the many people whose income has been affected by closures and layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and need to adjust your pledge, please contact the finance office (ktuckergray@standrewsaa.org or ext. 207) and your records will be adjusted.

At the Breakfast:

The Breakfast continues to operate but is **now carry-out only.**

We are still serving hot oatmeal, hard boiled eggs, cereal bars, fruit, juice, and coffee; however, these items are packaged for each guest to take with them. Food will continue to be available from 7:30 – 8:30 am daily.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US!

To be added to the church's email list, please contact Kathy McPherson at kmcpherson@standrewsaa.org.

The Church Office is closed until May 11.

Our staff is working remotely to ensure that St. Andrew's is able to maintain it's ministry to the parish as best we are able. Any news or updates will be communicated via email and at standrewsaa.org.

If you have questions or need assistance, we urge you to connect with our staff via email or by leaving them a voicemail at (734) 663-0518.

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