

## Order of Service for March 15, 2026

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn:** *“Christ the Life of All the Living”* – Hymn #420

### Confessing Our Sins and Receiving God’s Forgiveness

#### Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 42:14-21

R: For a long time I have held My peace; I have kept still and restrained Myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, "You are our gods." Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as My dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the LORD? He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. The LORD was pleased, for His righteousness’ sake, to magnify His law and make it glorious.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

P: Who are the blind and deaf?

**ALL: Is it not us, for though we know You, O God, we go our own way ingoring Your commands and doing what we want to do. No, we don’t worship statues carved into idols, but we worship the things we have, our wealth, our “toys,” our work, our feeling of success, our comforts. We place them before both You and the people in our lives that You call us to love. We fall before, helpless sinners. Lord, have mercy!**

P: God promised, “I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.” He has done all this for us blind sinners through His Son, Christ Jesus, by whom all our sins are forgiven. In Jesus; name I forgive you all of your sins.

C: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## Service of the Word

### Entrance Psalm:

P: My eyes are ever toward the Lord,

**C: for He will pluck my feet out of the net.**

P: One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:

**C: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,**

P: to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord,

**C: and to inquire in His temple.**

P: For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble;

**C: He will conceal me under the cover of His tent;**

**He will lift me up high upon a rock.**

P: And now my head shall be lifted up,

**C: I will sing and make melody to the Lord.**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: My eyes are ever toward the Lord,

**C: for He will pluck my feet out of the net.**

P: The Lord be with you...

**C: and also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray . . . Almighty God, our heavenly Father, You allow

**C: Amen.**

### Hymn of Praise: *"Word of God, Come Down on Earth"* - Hymn # 545

### Holy Gospel: John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

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

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: As [Jesus] passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed 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." Having said these things, He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. 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. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such

signs?" And there was a division among them. 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." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is He who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

**Sermon Hymn:** "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" – Hymn #765

**Sermon:** "Blind or Seeing?" - John 9



Are these two people's faces sharing an intimate moment, or is it a fancy cup? It is a matter of perspective—seeing the same thing, but seeing it in two different ways.

In our text the same Jesus appears both to a blind man and to the Pharisees. The man is healed and sees Jesus to be from God. The Pharisees see it otherwise because Jesus healed on the Sabbath, the day of rest. The Pharisees' attitude about Jesus is expressed this way:

The man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath . . . We know this man (Jesus) is a sinner . . . We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from!

The blind man, on the other hand, says this:

He (Jesus) is a prophet . . . Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing, I do know, I was blind, but now I see! . . . I have told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too? . . . Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opens my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does His will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not sent from God, he could do nothing.



What perspective do you have in life? How do you view this?

It might be obvious to us that this is a cross, the symbol of the Christian faith. And it is only smart, as Jesus told us in John 3:16, to believe in Jesus so that we have eternal life. But are we really looking at the cross?

Jesus tells the former blind man and some of the Pharisees, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” It really doesn’t matter in our daily lives if we believe if the sun goes around the earth and not vice versa or that the earth is flat, not round. But it does matter what perspective we have about Jesus. Either we see Him as the blind man did or as the Pharisees.

So how could we ever not see Him as the blind man did? How could we be so foolish as to doubt Jesus? We can when we look from our positions as humans. The Pharisees were so focused on keeping the Sabbath that they didn’t care about the good of having blind man healed. We get so focused on getting good grades or making more money or enjoying what we can see on a screen that we fail to see the good of how God heals us from spiritual blindness. For us as sinful humans it cannot make sense to limit sexual relations to one man and one woman in marriage or to say the value of a person’s life comes from God, not his/her value to society, or to give when others are not giving, or to be more concerned about love than “fairness.”

The German writer Goethe used the words of Jesus about it being worse to gain the whole world and lose one’s soul as the basis of his book Faust. The book is about a man, who though brilliant, makes the choice to give us God for everything else. He learns the hard way the foolishness of his choice.

So it is to see things our way, rather than God’s, to, as Jesus told the Pharisees, “To see and become blind”?

So are we the blind man who could see or the seeing Pharisees who became blind? What do we see in the cross? Yes, it is the symbol of Jesus. Many of us wear crosses. But do we see the cross as the way it did to people in Jesus’ time? Is it the symbol of shame and suffering?

In the early church Christians had to be careful using the sign of the cross because of persecution. Then when Christianity became legal in the Roman Empire Christians began to wear crosses that were empty. In the early 400's a wooden door on the new Santa Sabina Basilica was carved with this picture:



We see Jesus on the cross with the two criminals. But there are no crosses. Later pictures show Jesus on a cross, but in a serene state. Then in the 900's, Gero, archbishop of Cologne, commissioned a crucifix with Jesus suffering. Many Protestant churches got away from having crucifixes because they thought it was showing Jesus as an image. But in traditional Lutheran churches crucifixes are common because of the importance of what happened on the cross.

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We need the perspective of seeing the cross and seeing it with Jesus suffering on it. With that perspective we see just how serious our sin is. Then we can see even more just how serious God is about saving us from that sin. The blind man had that perspective because he was blind. He knew his life was a wreck. All he could do was trust completely in God's mercy. And he could see. The cross helps us to see our helplessness so we can clearly see all that Jesus did for us on that cross.

I remember my father recited this poem by Edward Rowland Sill called "Opportunity."

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —  
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;  
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged  
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords  
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner  
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.  
A craven hung along the battle's edge,  
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —  
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this  
Blunt thing!" — he snapt and flung it from his hand,  
And lowering crept away and left the field.  
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,  
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,  
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,  
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout  
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down,  
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

In the poem there are two different ways of seeing the sword. To the craven (a coward) it is a piece of junk. To the prince it is a weapon of victory.

How do we see the cross of Jesus? It is not just a matter of positive thinking. Either the cross is the awful means of how Jesus died or it is something we have to throw away and reject. Either it opens our eyes to see the reality of our sin and then the even greater reality of God's love. Or is it something that we have to be blind to and remove from our sight.

## **Apostle's Creed**

## **Offering and Voluntary**

## **Sharing Our Ministry**

### **Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 5:8-14**

R: For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern 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 speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **Prayers**

P: Lord God," at one time we were darkness":

**C: "We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead." (Isaiah 59:9-19)**

P: But "now we are in light" because You promised that You would not leave in dark blindness:

**C: "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy." (Isaiah 35:5-6)**

P: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'

**C: Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth--everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made. Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf." (Isaiah 43:5-8)**

P: "The LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous." (Psalm 146:8)

**C: “See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return.” (Jeremiah 31:8)**

P: You sent Your Son, Christ Jesus, to fulfill that promise:

**C: “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)**

P: “At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So He replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John the Baptist what you have seen and heard:

**C: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” (Luke 7:21-22)**

P: Bless us as we share Your light in this dark world:

**C: “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)**

P: Help us to “walk as children of light” knowing

**C: “the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.”**

P: Guide us “to discern what is pleasing to You.”

**C: “Expose that by Your light, so it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light in You.” (Ephesians 4)**

(special concerns)

P: All this we pray in Jesus’ name as You encourage us:

**C: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 4:14)**

## **Service of the Sacrament**

**The Words of Our Lord:**

**Lord’s Prayer:**

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

**C: Amen.**

**Distribution of Holy Communion.**

Hymn: *“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”* Hymn 411

**Dismissal:**

**Closing Prayer**

P: Open our eyes

**C: O loving and compassionate Jesus.**

P: That we may behold You.

**C: Jesus our Savior and Redeemer.**

P: Walking beside us,

**C: Walking beside us in our sorrow.**

P: Open our eyes, O loving and compassionate Jesus,

**C: That we may see to follow You, Jesus.**

P: Jesus, Jesus, our Savior,

**C: Jesus our Savior and Redeemer.**

P: Open our eyes.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing (Pastor)**

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “On My Heart Imprint Thy Image” Hymn 422**

**Postlude**