

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God,

your Son is the Light of the World.

Open our eyes and open our hearts

that we might see you more clearly

and so become children of the light;

through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God,

through your Son Jesus Christ

you have given sight to the blind,

and we have seen your glory.

Now send us out into the world

to live as children of the light;

through the One who is the Light,

Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

A Reading from the First Book of Samuel.

God 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 *Beth-le-hem-ite*, 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." God said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to our God.' 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 God commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him, trembling, and said, "Do you come in peace?" He said, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to our God; so consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on *E-li-ab* and thought, "Surely God's anointed is now before us." But God said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for I do not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but I look on the heart." Then Jesse called *A-bin-a-dab*, and made him pass before Samuel. Samuel said, "No, God has not chosen this one." Then Jesse made *Sham-mah* pass by. And he said, "Nor this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "God has not chosen any of these."

Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" He answered, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; for we will not sit down until he arrives." So they sent for the boy and brought him in, a ruddy youth with bright eyes, and handsome to behold. God said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed the boy in the presence of his brothers; and from that day forward the Spirit of God came upon David and was with him.

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 23 *[based on a translation by Lynn Bauman]*

O God, you are like a shepherd to me;
therefore will I lack nothing.

In the meadows where you lead me to lie down,
or along the paths that lead beside still waters,
you revive my soul.

**I am refreshed once again
to follow in the pathways
that bear your name.**

Though the shadows of death surround me,
I shall fear no evil lurking there;
**for you are with me;
you guide me as with a rod and staff,
and they comfort me.**

Where my foes rise up to trouble me,
you spread a table before me, and lay a feast;
**you anoint my head with oil,
and fill my cup to overflowing.**

So I know that goodness and mercy
shall follow after me all the days of my life,
**and I will dwell in your house, O God,
for evermore.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

A Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians.

Once you were darkness; but now, in Christ, you are light. So live as children of the light. Light produces all that is good and right and true. Discern for yourselves what is pleasing to God, and take no part in the works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what some people do in secret; but everything that is exposed by the light of day becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore we read, "Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING: John 9:1-41

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

The Holy Gospel

of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to John.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

God be with you.

And also with you.

The Good News

of Jesus Christ

according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

As he walked along, Jesus 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 the One 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 off and washed, and came back able to see.

The man's neighbours 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 said yes, others said no, that it is someone like him. The man himself said, "No, I am the man." The people asked 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 have no idea."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it had been 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 assembly refused to believe that the man had been born blind, and that he had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man 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 religious authorities (for they had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus as Messiah would be put out of the synagogue). That is why 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 Jesus 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 hear sinners, but that if people are devout and obey God's will, God listens to them. 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 never have done such a thing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven the man out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in God's Chosen One?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him; he is the one speaking to you now." He said, "Master, I believe," and he worshipped him.

Jesus said, "I came into this world to set things right—so that those who are blind may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees nearby heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, there would be no sin in that. But since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.