

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



John 9:1-41
February 27, 2022



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



- **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome**

Pastor Mel Musser

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Jesus shows us all the ways that we fall short. He also provides a way out of the holes we dig ourselves into. Forgive us our sins, and show us how to make better choices, be better friends, parents, kids, partners, and co-workers. Let Christ's light shine through us, for the sake of Jesus we pray. Amen.

L: Jesus does, indeed, forgive. Jesus cleanses us of our sin and recreates us in God's image. Receive the entire forgiveness of all your sins. Go, and walk free of guilt, shame, and sin. You are made new! In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Be Thou My Vision”

ELW 793



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Healing Lord, when Jesus healed the man born blind, the Pharisees didn't know how to interpret the signs. Open our hearts so that we may receive what you offer—healing, faith, and new life.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

February 27, 2022

Page 3 of 17

• **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Theme: Glorifying God Always

Scripture: John 9:1-3

Object: Hymnal Songs: ELW 638, Blessed Assurance

Today I brought a hymnal to help us understand how we give God glory always and at all times, even when we're sad or angry. Music had always been an important way people offer praise to God. Did you know the entire book of the Psalms was originally the hymnal used by the Church in the time of Jesus? People have used music to give God glory since the ancient of days...

One of my favorite hymns is in our Cranberry colored hymnal. It's called Blessed Assurance. The chorus of this song says This is my story, this is my song.

Praising my savior all the day long... this hymn was written by Fanny Crosby.

When Fanny was a little girl about 8 years old she got sick with an eye infection.

The town doctor was out of town. Another man pretended to be a doctor and gave Fanny the incorrect medicine. Instead of healing her eye it made her go completely blind.

Instead of being bitter and feeling sorry for herself, Fanny used the gifts that God had given her to write over 8,000 hymns and poems to praise and glorify God.

One day Jesus was walking with his disciples when they passed by a blind man. When they saw him, the disciples asked Jesus who was to blame for the man's blindness. Was it because of his sin or was it because of his parent's sins? Jesus answered them and told them that no one was to blame, but now that we've come upon this blind man, God's works will be shown through him. Then Jesus healed the man and the people praised and glorified God for his goodness. The disciples wanted someone to blame for the man's suffering, but Jesus wanted the people to see how much God loved him and how much God loves you.

What about Fanny Crosby? God didn't heal her blindness. Perhaps if God had healed her, she might never have written all of those beautiful hymns -- and the world would never have heard of Fanny Crosby. God used the tragedy of her blindness to do good in the world. I pray that suffering will never come into your life, but if it does, remember that everything that happens can be used to praise and glorify God, even the stuff that's bad!

Let's pray... Dear Lord, the difficulties in our lives seem small when compared to what others may be facing. Help us not to grumble and complain, but to praise and glorify you in every situation our highs and our lows. Amen.

• **SCRIPTURE READING: John 9:1-41**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the Gospel according to Saint John, the Ninth Chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

9As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

⁸The 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?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He 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.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then 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.” ¹⁶Some 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. ¹⁷So 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.” ¹⁸The 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 ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but 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.” ²²His 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. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask

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him.” ²⁴So 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.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He 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?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

³⁹Jesus 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.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

- SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the light of the world who brings light into our darkness, Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord, amen.

This isn’t the first time I’ve preached on this story of the man born blind. I’m really familiar with this story. In seminary I took a class on the Gospel of John and

* Please stand if able

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this was the story I picked to do my in-depth Exegetical paper on. I first encountered this story about the man who was born blind shortly after Melanie was born. I was seeking answers about why God allows innocent babies to be born with disabilities. So, it's not surprising I was drawn to this story. I mean the disciples even asked Jesus who sinned, the man or his parents. That was the ancient mindset. Those who had wealth and health were considered blessed by God. They had obviously led a sin free life and were reaping the rewards set aside for them from God. On the other hand, the poor and those whose health had prematurely failed them must have sinned in some way and this was God's way of punishing them. When someone was born with a debilitating condition, the only question was whose sin caused the trouble the infant or the parents... In case you have a hard time relating to a man born blind, we can modernize this story. Let's say the disciples were watching CNN or Fox News over the past 5 days. They ask Jesus, "Who sinned, these Ukrainians or their parents?" ...

Before we laugh off the attitudes of the ancients, let's examine our own attitudes when it comes to blessings and curses. For many Christians, a windfall of cash is said to be a blessing even though in many cases it turns out to be the opposite. What about the curses? When something bad happens do we still blame the victim? Maybe not as overtly as they did back in Jesus' day or my example of

the current war raging in Europe, but the attitude that someone must have done something to deserve all the bad stuff that's happening is still prevalent today.

When Melanie was an infant, she developed a large cyst on her backside, right in the area of her tail bone. We took her to the largest hospital in the region, the University of Wisconsin, at Madison Wisconsin. They decided it was caused by an infected diaper rash. Imagine how that made these new parents feel. The doctors, without pointing fingers directly at us, basically said we did a poor job cleaning our baby's bottom. PJ and I both knew this wasn't the case, but who were we to contradict what all those highly educated doctors had diagnosed. Well, sure enough after healing up, it came back again about 6 months later. This time our local pediatrician called the university hospital and after being told they would treat it the same way, he decided he could take care of it in his office. Even he didn't want to question the authority of the university-trained specialists. Well, you guessed it, after another 6 or 8 months it came back again. This time our local pediatrician called the head of the university hospital, and they finally took notice. After exploratory surgery, they discovered the core of the problem wasn't poor hygiene, but a tumor called a teratoma. This type of tumor can go undetected for many years if it's located deep in the body, but because this one was so close to the surface, it kept coming back and causing all kinds of problems. We never did get

an apology from those highly educated doctors for the year and a half we spent blaming ourselves for what scientists say is a tumor that is believed to be an undeveloped twin. So yes, sometimes the parents are still blamed for the problems of their children...

As I said, when I first encountered this story as an adult it was in my search for meaning and truth. If you go back and re-read the answer Jesus gives the disciples, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; *he was born blind* (emphasis mine) so that God’s works might be revealed in him...”, you would be led to believe God either caused or allowed the man to be born blind so that people could see God in action when Jesus healed him. It seemed to me that God was using this man like a pawn in God’s game of “See How Great I Am!” So, I began praying for God to work His healing miracle on Melanie. God did send us a miracle in healing Melanie’s tumor after a long while and God even sent a lightening Bolt to strike outside of Melanie’s bedroom window which apparently fixed her backwards heart as well. To this day, she hasn’t had to undergo the open-heart surgery all those university doctors predicted she would need before she could survive. Because she seemed to have had her major physical disabilities healed, for a long time, I was satisfied that God allowed some bad things to happen so that we would eventually see God’s glory. Gradually, I began reexamining my

thoughts on this matter and realized it must be a pretty cruel, sadistic, or totally uncaring God who would do such things.

As I reflect on my life, I can now say that this story and my search for meaning led me to seek a seminary education. I was still, after all those years, trying to understand why God allows the seemingly innocent to suffer. I'll be honest with you, reading the Book of Job was no help. Taking almost every class in the Old and New Testaments offered by the Seminary was no help. Even an entire year studying Systematic Theology, where I studied every Christian doctrine we hold as true didn't help. I was ready to give up and admit there was no answer, until my last semester and the final class I took on the Gospel of John.

One of our tasks as we did our deep dive into the story for our paper in that class was to go back to the Greek text and translate it into English for ourselves. We were not to look at any of the several English translations already in print, but to do our own translating, word for word. When I did this I discovered our New Revised Standard Version, that we use in the ELCA, has added something that's not in the Greek text. When Jesus says, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; *he was born blind* so that God's works might be revealed in him..." The "*he was born blind*" is nowhere in the Greek text. The Greek actually says "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; but this happened today so that God's works might be

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revealed in him...” Jesus was talking about the fact that he and the disciples had met this man, born blind, while walking along the road, not the fact that he was born blind. You see Jesus had already addressed the question of who sinned. His answer, neither the parents nor the man, but now that I’m here, I will do God’s work and heal him. When talking about suffering and all the bad stuff that happens, Martin Luther had three favorite enemies, sin, the world, and the devil. Saint Paul attributed all the evil in the world to what he called “The Flesh.” The point is they never referred to the evil as being caused by or even allowed by God, who they believed to be loving, kind, and merciful. God is love and God’s loving kindness endures forever.

What a weight lifted what a truth revealed! If you don’t have the time to learn ancient Greek, may I suggest you do what we were not allowed to do in seminary, invest in either several different English translations or a computer program that allows you to compare the different translations. If I had known to do that all those years ago, I would not have lost so much time loving the God who created and sustains me and everything else in all cosmos. Our loving God doesn’t cause suffering just so he can later show us his glory. Suffering is brought about by the effects of sin in the natural world. When sin entered the world it effected every aspect of the entire creation. God isn’t in the business of making more suffering,

there's already too much suffering and God is in the business of taking our suffering upon himself. That's why He became incarnate in the first place. Not to condemn the world, but to save the world.

Today the world is on the brink of yet another World War in Europe. Millions of innocent people are in the line of fire. God isn't causing or even allowing it to happen. That's on us. It's human sin and greed and fear of one another that's causing the war drums to beat once again. I pray we can all learn from our Lord and Savior how to pray for our enemies and how to love one another so that we can avoid more innocent bloodshed. We seem to always want to ask the question, "Why do these bad things happen to good or innocent people?" After all these years, my answer is why not... All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. So, why shouldn't bad things happen to all of us? I think I have a pretty good answer to that question. For God so loved... that He gave...

May the God of love intercede in our lives so that we can all see God's Works and glorify His Name. May the leaders of nations sit down with one another and learn to forgive the past and work toward a peaceful tomorrow. May the one who brought sight to a man born blind bring vision to our leaders and peace to our world. To quote another one of my favorite hymns, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

- **SPECIAL MUSIC**

- * **APOSTLES' CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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.

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

- * **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

L: When we close our eyes to your possibilities, we willfully remain in a prison of our own certainty. Flood our darkness, O God, with the brilliance of your freedom and mercy. Light of the World,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: With mud and water you restored a blind man's sight. Reveal to us the restorative powers of your created world, all that exists to make us whole and fill us with abundant life. Light of the World,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Forgive us for all the ways we blind ourselves to the truth: avoidance, willful ignorance, stubbornness, and delusion. Lead us away from harmful habits and perpetual self-absorption. Light of the World,

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February 27, 2022

• Please be seated

Page 13 of 17

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As you stirred up the healing waters of Siloam, so stir your spirit in us that we might also be restored. Bestow your healing hand upon all who need it, especially... Light of the World,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Like the saints who now walk in light perpetual, we seek a closer communion with you. Shine brightly through our lives as you did through theirs. Light of the World,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Heal us, teach us, embrace us, and hear the prayers of our hearts, O Lord. For your mercy is great and given freely to all. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

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

C: And also with you.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping online if you go to www.pitsburgtlc.org you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... We are grateful, Lord, for all that you have given to us. We celebrate all the ways you challenge us to learn, grow, and give. Today we rise to the challenge and bring the best of what we have to offer. Bless these gifts so we may continue to grow in understanding, and so that others may grow as well.

C: Amen.

* **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the “tie that Binds us together”, let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness, who rejoices over you, and who calls you by name, ✠ bless your going out and your coming in, today and forever.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN “Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound” LBW 448**



1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.

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February 27, 2022

Page 15 of 17

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

*** POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Chris Cassel
Acolyte	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	Given to the Glory of God by PJ Musser in honor of the birthday of her mother.

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Take a long bath/ use a bath bomb

MIND: Reread a favorite book

SPIRIT: Tell your coworkers that you appreciate them



Scripture readings for Ash Wednesday, March 2nd - John 10:1-18
Sunday, March 6th – John 11:1-44

* Please stand if able

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February 27, 2022

Page 16 of 17



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

This Week @ Trinity – February 27 thru March 6, 2022

Sun, Feb. 27	10:30 am	Worship Service
Wed, Mar. 2	12:00 Noon	Community Lenten Service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 131 E. Fourth St., Greenville
	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Worship Service at Trinity
Thurs, Mar. 3	6:30 pm	WELCA Meeting
Fri, Mar. 4	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, Mar. 6	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Holy Communion

AROUND THE PARISH

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

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