

20200322bltntnts      What would have been sent for the Bulletin for Sunday, March 22, 2020 – Lent 4

With added 'Kernels of Thought'

Scripture Passages

1 Samuel 16:1-11

Samuel as God's Agent

Ephesians 5:81-4

Live in the Light of God

Psalms 23

A people who are under God's care

John 9:1-41

Jesus heals a man born blind

Picture this: Read each Scripture passage and then draw a picture in your mind's eye (or on a piece of paper if you would like) of what you would envision happening in a passage.

Invitation to Worship

Come into the Presence of the One who made this earth and all in it. Come and celebrate that Care which God provides to us as our caregiver, caretaker and Shepherd.

Opening Prayer

Dear God help me/us to celebrate life even in difficult times. While I/we feel separated one from another may we find ways to commune and communicate with a new sense of purpose. Help us to know since I/we am/are always a part of your Kingdom you are always with me/us. [Continue with the Lord's Prayer (optional).]

Clergy Kernels of Thought:

If you read beyond the Old Testament lesson in terms of the life of Samuel, you would remember that with the aging process his 'eyes grew dim'. And yet God was Samuel's eyes when he had to meet all of Jesse's sons to discern on God's behalf which should be anointed. (The word 'Messiah' translates to 'anointed one'.) The Old Testament people remember David as the greatest king of Israel. This passage is really our first introduction of the person named 'David'.

I remember – especially when I was a child – we had tri-lighted lamps in the living area of our home. Every once in awhile an incandescent light bulb would have its more powerful filament give out (most used part of the bulb). While waiting for the bulb to be replaced we would have to practise piano or read with the lamp on the 'dim' setting. Paul is virtually telling the people in this passage to keep their lights operating on the setting only God can provide.

Thinking of having our lamps on the 'dim' setting, look at the passage from John. Others, especially Jesus' own disciples, seem not to understand where he is coming from (probably psychologically and physically and most definitely spiritually). That's because the people in the crowd have their personal lamps set on dim. Even when this 'blind person' has his physical lights turned off – his spiritual light is on full blast – like a flood light (not so with the others)! There's the contrast. Thus those with their lights set on dim have questions about who the man is after he receives physical sight – still failing to remove their own blinders.

Older members of our community of faith often look to the Psalms for strength, vision and spiritual light (energy or synergy). Psalm 23 is the one people turn to most often. Think of 'even though I walk through the shadow of death' and think of how we are being challenged, not just as a *faith* community but as a *world* community. Then read on . . . there's more to the story. God provides. God provides for our every need. We have our shepherds, whether we agree with them or not they are trying to do their best to keep us all safe, hardy and productive. And so even as our feasting in the presence of our 'enemies' (think 'virus') we may not really liken it all as a 'feast' and yet it is the 'care' of others – first line responders and decision makers upon whom we may actually be 'feasting'. But more than that we are feasting on what comes to us from the very hand of God who lifts us out of our day by day struggles to face what lies ahead in our journey.

So on the journey of life may we always have the high beams of our faith fully engaged and when the bulbs are dim or even burned out may we remember God is with us now and always.

Godspeed. Amen.

In our own prayers may we recall others in our world we often neglect and may we also remember those who are physically unwell or more under the threat of the current virus than we ourselves may be. May we pray for the world.

Closing

God is always with us. We take so much God provides for granted. We are blessed by God our Creator, Jesus our Shepherd and the Holy Spirit our Comforter.

We are not alone.

Amen.

Hymns we could sing this Sunday

Precious Lord, take my hand

I have called you by your name

The King of Love my Shepherd is

A light is gleaming

Open my eyes that I may see

Jesus, Teacher, brave and bold