Feb. 11, 2018 The Man Born Blind John 9:1-41 (Psalm 27:1-4) Liturgical color: White

PRAYER OF THE DAY God of miracles, Sometimes we are slow to believe in your power, even when your miracles occur all around us each and every day. Open our eyes to see and our hearts to believe. Amen. HYMNS I’ve just come from the fountain (trad.) On my heart imprint your image ELW 811 Go, my children, with my blessing ELW 543 CHORAL There is a balm, trad.

NRS Psalm 27:1 <Of David.> The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

 2 When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh-- my adversaries and foes-- they shall stumble and fall.

 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

 4 One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

Children:

Seeing Jesus

**Announcements Prayers**

~~{maybe use no bulletin today… if blind would do things differently}~~

~~Healing service?~~ Also

Transfiguration, God is revealed in Christ Jesus our savior who brings us together with brothers and sisters around the world; in the Olympics and here at St. Daniel’s today!

Special guests Johnson-Agiri family

and also I Love You Feast focus on people with asylum and refugee status.

Active Social Ministry Appreciation

First, a confession: I have been blind; maybe you have too.

All around are people with troubling issues.

* People who can’t pay fuel bills
* People facing significant changes at home due to physical limitations
* (What to do with your Sunday afternoon and evenings now that football is over) Olympics/bball
* People displaced from their homes by epidemics, and violence

Yet, it is more comfortable to turn a blind eye. It is more comfortable to argue about government shut-downs than to address ways to resolve- how and when, to welcome people to live in our country. It is more comfortable to blame others than to see our connections and responsibilities relating to our neighbors… God’s other children.

Here’s an example from John’s gospel… a full-grown man was begging by the side of the road. Jesus and his disciples had just left Jerusalem where Jesus was teaching in the Treasury that his fellow believers were sinful and would die in their sins unless they believed that he, Jesus was the Savior. Instead of listening and wrestling with this truth… the people of faith in the Temple, were confused so they called him a Samaritan (remember that’s a bad name among them), they told Jesus that he was possessed by a demon, and ultimately they tried to kill Jesus by throwing stones at him. (Jesus hid and then escaped.)

Now Jesus and his disciples were walking along the road - and - seeing a man in need - the disciples did not offer money. The disciples did not offer food. The disciples did not offer healing. Instead the disciples offered judgement. In fact the disciples did not even talk directly to the man who was blind… in fairness Jesus did not talk to the man at first either.

Jesus spat saliva into the dust of the road, made mud and spread the mud on the man’s eyes (what a shocker if you can’t see this coming! The man would have heard the different voices discussing whether he was blind because of a sin of his parents, or a sin of his own doing. The man would have heard a different voice; with a totally different message… not one of judgement but rather one of miracle and divine redemption… This is how the Word of God sounds… a voice of compassion, a voice of care, a voice of hope, a voice of promise, and many times it is a voice speaking into our darkness, a voice breaking into our despair. A divine voice making demands that seem to make no sense…

Think about it… a stranger puts mud on a guy’s face, tells him to go and wash in a public pool… (HOW on earth is this blind man going to find his way? I’ll bet he looks like a sight for sore eyes.) and Jesus made NO promise at all… just go wash. And the man Did! And he came back able to see for the first time in his whole life! {When others see weakness, one sees strength (Olympic advertisement)}

And how did the religious scholars, the Pharisees, celebrate this miracle? Well it was a mixed response; some recognized that a healing this miraculous could only come from God… but others saw that this healing happened on a Sabbath when no work was to be done. That was illegal… so the miracle that happened on the Sabbath could not be from God; the timing was all wrong. Then the Pharisees seemed to try and trap the man’s parents who feared being removed from the faith community.

After entering into conversation with the man who was born blind… the Pharisees witnessed to their blindness. Judging that the man was blind because of sin, and that he was healed by the sinner named ‘Jesus’ these people of faith blinded themselves to the truth of the savior in their midst. In fact they drove him away from them.

Jesus went and found the man who could now see… the man who wanted to believe… and he did. Outside of the worship building; outside of the faith community; and inside the gracious embrace of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Where else is God speaking to us? Through whom?

The flag of Nigeria was designed in 1959 and first officially hoisted on 1 October 1960. The flag is a vertical 1:2 triband of green, white, green. The two green stripes represent Nigeria's natural wealth, while the white band represents peace.

Notes while listening to Working Preacher narrative podcast:

Man born blind – didn’t know who Jesus was but he believed anyway

Mud like a new creation

Jesus referred to the man as a sheep by the end of the passage

Sin is not the only cause for deformity or misfortune

7 scenes in this chapter

Progression of sight – who Jesus becomes for this man ‘Jesus’ to worship

Sight is more than vision of eyes

Transfiguration JC 8:12 and here = light of the world in words & actions

What does faith look like? When do you become a believer? Blind man, there and listening at the beginning. Wordlessly responds to JC command to go wash (without promises) just went and watched! Willing to obey… when does responsiveness become faith?

Only says I believe at the end. Encounter a Christ he has never seen until the end

What does it mean to encounter the life-giving of Christ?

Sign – dialog ch 5 & 6 & 9… then JC interpret the sign

Man hears first before seeing JC