

Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church

310 First Avenue South 715-423-0180 www.wrmoravian.org

“Sharing Christ, Serving People”

Sunday, March 19, 2023

4th Sunday of Lent

PRELUDE: “In the Morning When I Rise”

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP- Psalm 23 (adapted)

L: The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want.

C: He makes us lie down in green pastures; he leads us beside still waters; he restores our souls.

L: He leads us in right paths for his name’s sake.

C: Even though we walk through the darkest valley, we fear no evil; for you are with us; your rod and your staff— they comfort us.

L: You prepare a table before us in the presence of our enemies; you anoint our heads with oil; our cups overflow.

C: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord our whole life long.

WELCOME & NEWS OF THE CHURCH ALIVE

(Please sign Welcome Pad)

*HYMN #662

“Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PASTORAL PRAYER

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

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything

exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

John 9:1-41

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

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus 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.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

*A LITURGY FOR LENT – by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Kay Ward

(Standing)

We come to worship as we are Lord, full of those feelings which would keep us from loving ourselves and others.

Receive us as we come and may our hearts be turned away from those feelings.

(#762)

**Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

(Sitting)

Our misunderstandings often lead us to make snap judgements of others.

Our fear and uncertainty make us build walls to keep others from getting near us.

O Lord, help us to understand the kind of love that can break every barrier down – each wall that would separate your people.

Help us to be givers and receivers of that kind of love.

Even though we are persons with walls built against our neighbors, may we meet them as friends, as we all come before your grace and mercy.

Join us, O Living Christ, by becoming the cornerstone of our lives.

Just as you overturned the tables of old, O Lord, overturn the barriers that we place between ourselves as your people.

Make the stranger like a friend, the widow and widower like a mother and father, the convict like a child and the hero like a neighbor.

We struggle with our differences. Our world is wounded, O Lord, and we need your passion to be a sign for us.

The wounded world is in need of your balm. Help us to be healed. May our barriers be overturned as we minister in your home.

(Standing)

(#672)

**By your reconciling love ev'ry stumbling block remove;
each to each unite, endear; come and spread your banner here.**

**Let us each for others care, each the other's burden bear.
to your church a pattern give, showing how believers live.**

**May it to the world appear that we your disciples are
by our loving mutually, by our Christian unity. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN #783: "Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound"

MESSAGE

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY: "Shine, Jesus, Shine"

*RESPONSE

**Praise God, who blesses from above;
Praise Jesus Christ, God's living love;
Praise God, whose Spirit in us lives;
We praise you God through what we give. Amen.**

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

*HYMN #586 “Mighty God, We Humbly Pray”

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: “I Saw the Light”

*Stand as able

IN OUR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

- Ministers..... All who serve Jesus Christ
- Pastor..... Rev. Beth Rohn-Habegger
- Liturgist & Scripture Reader..... Rhone Habegger
- Keyboardist.....Jan Baker
- POP Musicians.....The Guitars
- Tech Team.....Jody Werth, Seth Habegger, Milo Plante

IN THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION THIS WEEK

- MONDAY at 9:30 am..... Cardio Drum Class
.....*Newsletter Deadline*
- TUESDAY at 4:30 pm.....TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)
6:30 pm..... Board of Elders
- WEDNESDAY at 9:30 am..... Cardio Drum Class
6:00 pm.....Lenten Meal
6:30 pm.....Lenten Service
- THURSDAY at 9:30 am.....Alanon
6:30 pm.....Choir Rehearsal
- FRIDAY at 9:00 am.....Breakfast Bible Study
- SATURDAY 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Winter Farmers Market
- NEXT SUNDAY at 8:30 am..... Trombone Choir
9:00 am.....Sunday School
10:15 am.....Worship

WATCHWORD FOR THE WEEK

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Psalm 23:6

PRAYER CONCERNS

- Hospitalized: Paul Knipple
- Patty (Schoechert) Beyer, Jan Baker’s daughter (Natalie), Kolby Kelnhofer, Vince Voight, Marie Kaszuba, Alice Lavin, Vanessa (daughter of Pastor Tara Tetzlaff, UCC), Jim Laufenberg, Barb Keuntjes, Josh Uttermark, Lorraine Abbott, Bruce Nelson, Janet Hyams, David Szulczewski
- Nursing/Assisted Living Residents: Ella Scholze, Mary Lou Eklund, Mavis Newman, Dick Schoechert, Deb Maier

At home: Marlene Young, Paul & Marie Knipple, Laurol Ratelle
Servicemen: Paul & David Eklund, Mason Fellowes, Elias Thelemann
Those who are affected by Covid-19
The people of Ukraine, Honduras, Turkey and Syria

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Our **Joyful Noise** offering in March will go Jeremiah's Crossing.
- Just a reminder that a signup sheet for **Coffee Hour hosts** is located in the Social Room. Call the church office (715) 423-0180 or Kathy Plante (715) 459-1110 if you have any questions.
- **POP (Prelude, Offertory and Postlude) musicians** are needed. To schedule a date or check availability, you can call Diane Renner (715-325-5300) or just talk to her at church.
- Our **Lenten Denial** offering this year will be given to the **Moravian Unity Disaster Relief Fund**. The purpose is to be able to respond quickly to disasters around the Unity with funds that are available for speedy disbursement.
- The Board of Trustees has established a **Donation List** of items that we use around the church. You can find the list on our website or on the bulletin board in the south hallway. You are invited sign up for those items you would be willing to donate.
- Join us for our **Amazing Grace Lenten** series based on the beloved song that celebrates its 250th anniversary this year. In this week's service, we listen to Jesus teach a woman at the well of his amazing grace poured out for us abundantly, which satisfies our thirsting souls for all eternity. Taste and see that the Lord is good. There are sign-up sheets in the south hallway for readers at each of the Lenten services and also anyone willing to make a meal before the services.
- Our next week to volunteer at **SWEPS** is April 3rd thru 6th which is Holy Week. Shifts are from 11:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tuesday evening from 3:45 p.m. to 7 p.m. SWEPS will be closed Good Friday. Clients will again be allowed in the building. Reminder: no open toed shoes and please lock purses in car. Call Rosemary Mooney 715-423-8271 if you can volunteer.
- Keep your Administrative Assistant smiling! **Please submit your April newsletter articles by Monday, March 20!**
- **Joyful Noise Offering for CONVO 2023 = \$430.56**
February Offerings = \$9,905.19; Needed per month = \$15,755.00
Budgeted Expenses for February = \$16,897.08

**Mt. Morris
Men's Retreat
May 5-7, 2023**

reNOVAtion

“You heard it said...but I say to you...”

**A weekend of laughter, fun, great food, games,
Axe throwing, golf, relaxing, talking, yard games,
laughing & learning**

All guys 21 and over are welcome!

Sign up now!

Email or call for more info –

DAN@MT-MORRIS.ORG

920-787-2861

The Psalms of Lent: Psalm 23

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow [us] all the days of [our lives].”

Our modern Bibles offer us wonderfully seditious alternatives. Superscripted with notes at the bottom or in the margins, our Bibles give us access to alternative translations, and therefore, alternative interpretations and understandings. This gray area infringes on our quest for certainty. Surely God wills clarity rather than uncertainty.

I appreciate the personal promise Psalm 23 declares: Surely, the Lord will lead *me*, restore *me*, comfort *me*. I prefer the inclusivity of the plural: The Lord will surely lead *us*, restore *us*, comfort *us*.

If we read into verse 6 the Hebrew alternative, *surely* becomes *only*. Only goodness and mercy shall follow us. I believe in the fundamental goodness of God for all God’s creation and creatures. I believe in the fundamental mercy that God offers to *me*, to *us*, to *all*, to *each* and *every*. However, I have also experienced enough of life to know the empty promise that *only* goodness and mercy shall follow us. Living is too complex, too dangerous, too risk-filled for *only* goodness and mercy to follow us. Pain, doubt, alienation, grief, anxiety, bitterness, and despair follow us just as closely as goodness and mercy. To expect *only* goodness and mercy sets up a false reality of faith.

But, surely, we should expect goodness and mercy to come from a good and merciful Savior. With a degree of confidence, we should expect goodness and mercy to follow us. Through this Lenten journey, search for the goodness and mercy of God. It is here. It is there.

Surely.

Kerry Krause, pastor, Sister Bay Moravian Church, Sister Bay, Wisconsin

The Moravian Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

