



seeking: Who sinned?



"Insight" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

4th Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

SEEKING: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith
Who sinned?

*THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

*SONG OF RESPONSE

Glory to God

Hymnal, No. 582

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

World with-out end, with-out end. Amen (x3)
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Larry Upton

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

Page No. 951

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalms 23 (paraphrased)

Gentle Shepherd,

you have freed me from my desires.

All that I need is at hand.

You rest me.

In the green pasture of your grace I lie down.

I surrender all.

You lead me beside clear, deep waters.

You are my dawn, my spring, my birth.

You are my path.

I follow you, and the way is good.

You walk before me, and within me.

Even when the way is dark and impassable—

the canyons of death—

your Presence is my path,

and a way through,

and I am not afraid.

You make of this life a feast for me,

and everything a gift,

and even my enemies companions.

You have marked me with your joy;

I cannot contain your blessing.

What I receive and what I give are beyond me.

You've given me to goodness;

you've married me to mercy for the rest of my life.

Each moment is my own house;

**and you are my dwelling, my home,
forever.**

ANTHEM

Like A Shepherd

SCRIPTURE READING

John 9:1-41

Page No. 871

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

Who Sinned?

Tracy L. Evans

*SONG OF FAITH

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

Hymnal, p. 803

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a merciful God,

a God who does not keep score,

a God who wants good for us.

We believe in a creative God,

a God who would heal with mud,

a God capable of seeing what we cannot.

We believe in a saving God,

a God who heals,

a God who greets our questions with patience,

a God who sends us out with hope in our step.

What wondrous love is this. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, page 35

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

God of All Living

Hymnal, No. 713 vs 4

God of all living, God of all loving,

God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,

Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,

Using us gently and making us one.

*DEDICATION PRAYER

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

Longing for Light We Wait in Darkness

Hymnal, No. 314

*TAKING LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

As you leave this place,

may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry.

Seek the weary.

Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful.

Seek the faithful.

Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder,

may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God,

who is always seeking us,

go now in peace. **Amen.**

*Please rise in body or spirit.

Lectionary Readings for March : Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

The Food & Shelter items of the month for March **are crackers and peanut butter. Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.**

Insight

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by John 9: 8-41

Silk painting with digital drawing and collage

In seven verses, the gospel writer tells us that a man born blind is given sight. But after that, the narrator devotes thirty-three verses to the details of disagreement that swell after the healing takes place. I used to find this second part of the story tedious and exhausting. In a world with constant conflict, I'm tired of listening to endless bickering.

However, this second half of the story makes me realize that this encounter is hardly about physical healing or literal blindness. It's about how harmful theology can prevent us from seeing people—truly seeing them. It's about how our narrow imagination can harden into accusation and blame. It's about how we can be threatened by new ideas or shifts in someone's identity. It's about how our doctrine can lead to exile. Ultimately, it's a story about our resistance to change. Can this be a cautionary tale for us?

In this image, hands expressing denial and exclusion press in on the man. In the background, I wrote a barrage of questions I imagine emerging from the crowd: Why did God heal you? What did you do to cause this? Who sinned? Alongside those questions, I wove in contemporary statements I've heard spoken in situations when we think a tidy rationale will comfort us: Everything happens for a reason. God only gives you as much as you can handle. Pray harder.

I wonder what this story would look like had better questions been asked. What if his neighbors had instead asked the blind man, "How do you feel?" What if the man had asked the crowd, "What are you afraid of?" What if the Pharisees had asked one another, "What if it's time to change?"

Surrounded by remnants of narrow vision, the man has new insight. He looks beyond the words, beyond the crowd, beyond the accusations driving him out of town. Can we seek understanding without denigrating or objectifying humans in the process?

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

we come with questions

LOBE DEN HERREN ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty")

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Erneuerten Gesangbuch (1665); harm. W. Sterndale Bennett (19th cent.)

We come with
Here is the
God help us

ques - tions as
mys - t'ry we
live in - to

sum - ing that
claim as the
mys - t'ry be

there will be
fol - lowers of
yond com - pre -

an -
Je -
hen -

- swers
- sus:
- sion

Set - ting the
Christ has died,
Qui - et our

world
Christ
minds

in an
is raised,
al - ways

or - der that
Christ dai - ly
clam - or - ing

o - beys our
comes to re -
for some di -

gram
- deem
- rec -

mar
us
tion

We want to
Grace free, not
Give us your

know
earned,
peace

where Spir - it's
whe - ther or
with all that

riv - er will
not we de -
we can't per -

flow
serve
ceive

Frus - trat - ed
God works be -
Hold - ing us

by her me
yond rules and
with - in the

an -
boun -
ten -

- ders
- d'ries
- sion

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need 803

(Psalm 23)



1 My shep-herd will sup - ply my need; Je - ho - vah is his name.
2 When I walk through the shades of death your pres-ence is my stay;
3 The sure pro - vi - sions of my God at - tend me all my days;



In pas - tures fresh he makes me feed, be - side the liv - ing stream.
one word of your sup - port - ing breath drives all my fears a - way.
O may your house be my a - bode, and all my work be praise.



He brings my wan - dering spir - it back when I for - sake his ways,
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my ta - ble spread;
There would I find a set - tled rest, while oth - ers go and come;



and leads me, for his mer - cy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.
my cup with bless - ings o - ver - flows; your oil a - noints my head.
no more a strang - er, or a guest, but like a child at home.



Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness 314

Christ, Be Our Light

Em Am7 Bm7 Esus Em

1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for
 2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for
 3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for
 4 Long-ing for shel - ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the

Am7 Bm7 Esus Em Am7

truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants

D G C Am Dsus D

your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.

Refrain G C G Em Bm Em

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the

Am7 D G Dsus D Em Em7

dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your

C Am7 D G Am7 G

church gath - ered to - day.