

Community Presbyterian Church

open hearted, open minded



March 19, 2023

Welcome to worship this morning!

Bulletin Cues: **Bold** indicates congregational response, * indicates please stand, if able.
Bathrooms are located down the hall, around the corner to the left. A family bathroom is located in the hallway on the right hand side (next to the Kidz Klub).

seeking: Who sinned?



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

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Words for Worship "Seeking." Adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed |
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Paraphrased Lord's Prayer by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light*.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Scripture is full of questions...

Where are you?

Am I my brother's keeper?

Whom shall I send?

Who do you say that I am?

Who sinned?

How many times shall I forgive?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Scripture is full of questions: some are asked by God, some are asked by people.

Like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

Query: What question would you like to ask God today?

What question is God asking you?



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
 4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?
 Will you set the pris - oners free and nev - er be the same?
 Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?



Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen,
 Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round,



will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"
 and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?"
 through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"

CALL TO CONFESSION

In today's text, the disciples ask Jesus, "Who sinned?" They want to know who around them could be blamed for suffering. The disciples want to identify who around them had done wrong.

In the prayer of confession, we stop pointing fingers at others. In confession, we turn our attention toward ourselves and invite God into that honest and vulnerable space.

Let us pray:

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Who here has sinned?

We have sinned. We put our heads in the sand. We ignored people in need. We make false assumptions and fail to be kind. We are in need of forgiveness.

Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running. Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Have you sinned?

I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness.

Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score.

When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running. Thanks be to God for a love like that. **Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE

The Lone Wild Bird

tune: Prospect, GTG 807

**The lone, wild bird in lofty flight
Is still with thee, nor leaves thy sight.
And I am thine, I rest in thee.
Great Spirit, come and rest in me.**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

God of Good news, there is reading your Word, there is hearing your Word, and then there is tunneling ourselves into your Word—wrapping ourselves in your Word, planting ourselves like a garden in your Word. God, we could listen to scripture like we listen to the news, or we could cocoon ourselves in your Word and it could change us entirely. Give us the latter. We want to know you. With hopeful hearts we pray, **amen.**

RESPONSIVE READING Ephesians 5:8-14 (*paraphrased*)

Once you were darkness, but now in Christ you are light.

How can I walk as a child of the light?

The light shines in all that is good and right and true.

How will I know what is pleasing to God?

Don't be tempted by lies that hide in the dark, but expose them for what they are.

How can I avoid making myself judge over what other people do?

When you shine the light of truth in the darkness, everything becomes clear.

**My Beloved God, please wake me up into the brightness of life,
so I may see the world in the light of Christ.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Lord, Listen to Your Children
by Ken Medema, arr. Jack Schrader

CPC Choir

GOSPEL of the DAY *told in three parts* John 9:1-41

Part 1: *Clear as mud*

Part 2: *Not such private eyes*

Part 3: *Seeing each other*

SERMON

Pastor Jan Wiersma

*HYMN OF THE DAY GTG 215

What Wondrous Love Is This

vs. 1, 3, 4



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my
3 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will
4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What
sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to
on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this that caused the Lord of
God and to the Lamb who is the great I
when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful



bliss to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my
AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will
be, and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!
sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!
on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

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.

JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God, our Savior,

hear our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Mother and Father in heaven, holy be your name.

Impose your reign that we may do your will, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today this one day's bread.

Forgive our wrongs as we forgive those who do wrong against us.

Save us from our temptations and keep us from doing evil,

For the Realm, the power, and the glory are yours,


Now and forever. Amen.

SENDING INTO THE WORLD TO LOVE AND SERVE


*CLOSING HYMN GTG 377

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

vs. 1 and 2




1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to fol - low
2 I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to look at



Je - sus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The
Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ-teous-ness, shine on my path, and

Refrain



star of my life is Je - sus.
show me the way to the Fa - ther. In him there is no dark-ness at



all. The night and the day are both a - like. The Lamb is the



light of the cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

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.**

POSTLUDE

Community Presbyterian Church

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Sunday, March 19

9:30 am **Worship- Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Monday, March 20

12:00 pm Newsletter Articles Due

6:00 pm Building Usage: Med City Tai Chi

Tuesday, March 21

12:00 pm Bulletin Information Due

5:30 pm Finance & Stewardship Committee

7:00 pm Building Use: Mission Aid Network

Wednesday, March 22

6:30 am Prayer Group at Church of Christ

12:00 pm Conference Call *

6:00 pm Confirmation

7:00 pm CPC Choir

Thursday, March 23

5:30 pm Building Use: Labranza de Dios

Sunday, March 26

9:00 am Deacons Meeting

9:30 am **Worship- Onsite and Online**

10:45 am Book Discussion Group

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Online Worship:

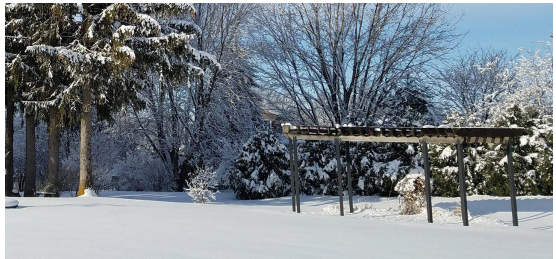
Sundays 9:30 – 10:30am

<https://meet.google.com/vao-wjef-cbe>

+1 575-305-4527 PIN: 652 821 468 #

* **Wednesday's Conference Call**

+1 413-889-2244 PIN: 433 818 991#



Judy Leal

Jane and Ed Burgstaler family,
especially daughter Jenny

Connie Holst

Vera Atkinson's daughter, Teresa

Shannon Cisewski

Ron Murray

Dick and Nancy Massaro

Nellie Brovold's grandma, Hilda

Lyal Powell's family, on the death of
his Uncle Larry

*To be added to the prayer list,
please contact Pastor Jan at
pastor@cpcrochester.org.*

*For emergency pastoral care,
call Pastor Jan at 763-219-2927.*



seeking: Who sinned?

And when one of them asks,
*Is this our fault? Are we here
because we sinned?*

Jesus does not wait
for the facilitator to speak.

He crosses the circle. He kneels down.
He grabs their hands
in his and says,

Child of the covenant, God loves you
too much to ever wish you pain.

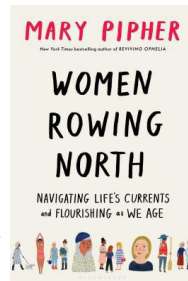
Bodies and minds crumble sometimes,
but God's love for you does not.

— Rev. Sarah Speed, from her
poem, "Jesus in the Psych Ward"
@sanctifiedart



The **Book
Discussion
Group** will read
and discuss

*Women Rowing
North: Navigating
Life's Currents and
Flourishing as We
Age*, by Mary Pipher this month.
The *New York Times* bestseller
from the author of *Reviving
Ophelia* is a guide to wisdom,
authenticity, and bliss for women
as they age.



“Women growing older contend
with ageism, misogyny, and loss.
Yet as Mary Pipher shows, most
older women are deeply happy
and filled with gratitude for the
gifts of life. Their struggles help
them grow into the authentic,
empathetic, and wise people
they have always wanted to be.”
([https://www.goodreads.com/en/
book/show/38884171](https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/38884171)).

**Join in on this interesting
discussion on Sunday, March
26, following worship!**

Church Staff

Pastor	Rev. Jan Wiersma
Choir Director	Meg Cain
Handbell Director	Judy Kereakos
Pianist	Glenna Muir
Custodian	Nancy Sanford
Office Manager	Stephanie Pasch

Serving in Worship Today

Liturgist	Sue Chipman
Special Music	CPC Choir
IT Support	Louis Bouchard