

March 15, 2026

*FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT*

## Out of Sight

Blindness and sight. Today's gospel is about a man born blind who is given sight, and about others, who, though they possess physical sight, are blind. There is more here than what meets the eye.

Why was this man born blind? Why is there suffering, illness, and disease in the world? The accepted wisdom of the day said it was because someone had sinned, either the man or his parents. If something bad happened, the reasoning went, it was surely deserved, brought upon oneself.

Jesus rejects this way of seeing things. Maybe some good can come from our blindness, our disabilities, our vulnerabilities. When we are most "out of sight," so to speak, the eyes of our hearts are most open to light and healing.

We are blind when we believe we alone hold the truth, or when we are unable to see someone else's point of view. We are blind when our convictions about life, love, politics, or the world are so rigid that what people see in us is arrogance, pride, and hypocrisy. We are blind when we close our eyes to the suffering and injustice in the world.

Jesus anoints the man's eyes and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he regains his sight. You can see how this became a story about baptism. Like the blind man, we wash in the healing and cleansing waters of baptism and our eyes are opened.

The early church called baptism "enlightenment" and "illumination." Through baptism we are invited on a vision quest. Faith teaches us to see in new ways. Jesus is the source of our vision, the light of the world. Can you see it? You are a child of God, beautiful in God's eyes. Sent from this place, you will be the light of God's eyes, light for the world.

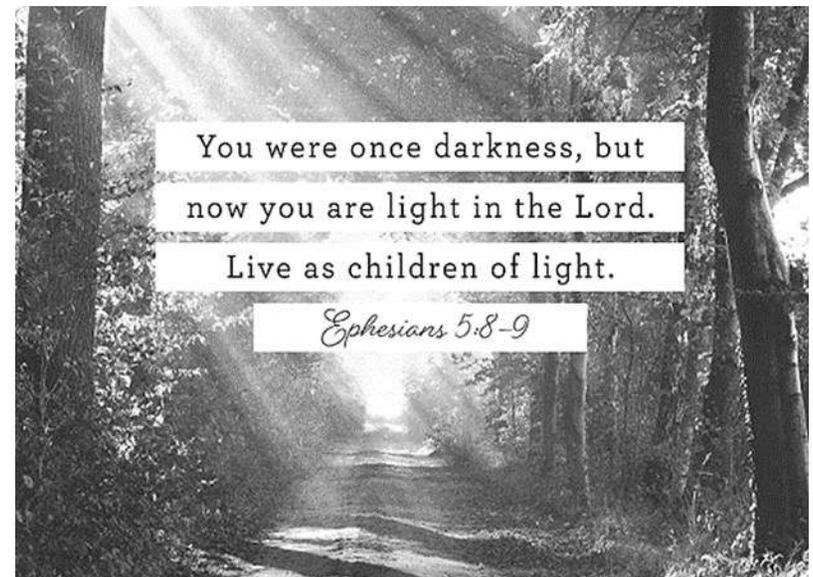
**First St. John Lutheran Church**  
2471 Seaman Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43605  
419-691-7222

[office@firststjohn.com](mailto:office@firststjohn.com)

[www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician  
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music  
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director  
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



**Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community**

**March 15, 2026 - 10:30 am**

**March 15, 2026**

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism (starting soon). Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion

*(2nd Sunday of the month)*

**LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP:** We livestream the service on our church website at [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com). Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

**SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA:** Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL & CATECHISM** JAM Sunday School (church basement) and Adult Sunday School (lounge) meet each Sunday at 9:15 am. First year catechism will start soon! If you have a child in 6-7th grade interested please let Pastor Rayl know.

**NURSERY** is in the church basement and is now available during 2nd Service each week; you are welcome to sit with your child as well. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

**RESTROOMS** are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

**FLOWERS:** If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

**MEMORIALS:** If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 2026 EASTER FLOWER SALE

SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



It's time to order the flowers that will decorate the church on Easter morning, April 5<sup>th</sup>. The price is \$15.00 per plant. You can choose a lily, daffodil, hyacinth, or tulip. Fill out the order blank below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. The final Sunday to order will be March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks out to: **First St. John Lutheran.**

**Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Number of plants @ \$15.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Type of plant: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of (Living) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am**

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ringling of the Bell

**Opening Hymn** “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty” No. 533

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**C: Amen**

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: God’s steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of (+) Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God’s love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

**C: Amen.**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

*The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “Peace be with you.” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:*

**LENTEN & HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

Here is the schedule for our upcoming Lent services.

Mar 11 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 18 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Maundy Thursday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Good Friday	12:00 pm
April 5 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am

“Lord I Lift Your Name on High” No. 857

**“Lord I lift your name on high;  
Lord I love to sing your praises,  
I’m so glad you’re in my life,  
I’m so glad you came to save us.  
You came from heaven to earth to show the way.  
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,  
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;  
Lord, I lift your name on high.”**

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray. Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

#### **Introduction**

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. “I was blind, now I see,” declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God’s beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

#### **FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

*Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord’s chosen successor to Saul.*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” <sup>2</sup> Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” <sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” <sup>5</sup> He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. <sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and

### **Pastoral Prayer** *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord,

**C: your mercy is great.**

P: Hear us as we pray:

### **The Lord’s Prayer** *(prayed by all)*

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.

### **Blessing**

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, (+) bless you now and always.

**C: Amen.**

### **Closing Hymn**

*“Be Thou My Vision”*

No. 793

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

\*\*\*\*

## ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY’S SERVICE***

### **ELDERS**

John Roth

Bob Haar

### **READER**

Toni Wilbarger

### **SOUND BOARD**

Mark Ackerman

## Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(Please be seated)*

## SERMON

Pastor Rayl

## Sermon Hymn

*“Amazing Grace”*

No. 779

*(Please stand)*

## Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*(Please be seated)*

## The Offering

## Musical Offertory

*“At Calvary”*

*FSJ Choir*

*Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director*

## Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

**C: Amen.**

thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the Lord.”<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.”<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.”<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.”<sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.”<sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 23

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> **He makes me lie down in green pastures;**

**he leads me beside still waters;**

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name’s sake.

<sup>4</sup> **Even though I walk through the darkest valley,**

**I fear no evil,**

**for you are with me;**

**your rod and your staff,**

**they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> **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.**

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

*Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.*

<sup>8</sup> Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

**Lenten Verse (sung in unison)**



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 9.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**GOSPEL: John 9:1-41**

*Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.*

<sup>1</sup> As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, <sup>7</sup> saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup> The 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?" <sup>9</sup> Some were saying, "It is he." Others were

saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." <sup>10</sup> But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup> He 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." <sup>12</sup> They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." <sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then 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." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. <sup>17</sup> So 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." <sup>18</sup> The 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 <sup>19</sup> and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> but 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." <sup>22</sup> His 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. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." <sup>24</sup> So 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." <sup>25</sup> He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." <sup>26</sup> They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup> 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?" <sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup> The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." <sup>34</sup> They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. <sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup> He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." <sup>38</sup> He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> 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." <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."