

ECHO PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Service of Worship for March 22, 2020 The Fourth Sunday in Lent UMCOR Sunday



*As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.
(John 9:1)*

WE GATHER AS COMMUNITY TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE

For the Bread
(Music by V. Earle Copes)

Ms. Mina Rhee, Music Director

OPENING PRAYER

(Based on Exodus 13:21; Psalm 23:4; Psalm 91:5, John 9:1; Ephesians 6:12)

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

God of light, come to us in our darkness that we who stumble blindly through the uncertainties of existence may trust that we are never alone. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death... though we fear the terror of the night... though we are surrounded by the cosmic powers of this present darkness, let your pillar of fire shine forth to lead us along the way that leads to life eternal. In your light, may we clearly see that you are indeed a God of life, and that we are a people of resurrection.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

- Today is UMCOR Sunday, one of six Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, provides assistance for people around the world in times of disaster. Our special offering today keeps UMCOR open and ready so that it can respond on our behalf at a moment's notice. You can make a contribution for our special UMCOR offering in one of three ways:

- Make out your checks to “Echo Park UMC,” write “UMCOR” into their memo lines and mail them to the church office at 1226 N. Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, California 90026.
- Go online to: <https://echoparkumc.wordpress.com/donate-here/>. Click the “Donate” button, and follow the instructions. In the field labeled “Add special instructions to the seller,” indicate that you are making a donation to UMCOR.
- Go online to www.umcor.org, click on the “Give Today” button, and follow the instructions. Where invited to do so, please indicate that you are a part of the Echo Park United Methodist Church.
- Please join us for “Called to Be the Church,” our online Lenten Bible study from 7:00-8:30 p.m. this coming Tuesday, March 24. Our theme for this week is “I’ve Had Enough,” based on Psalm 23. You can join us online at <https://zoom.us/j/7184544317> or by calling in to 1-669-900-9128 and using meeting id 718 454 4317#.
- All in-person meetings and worship services are suspended until at least April 19. In the meantime, we will continue to have online worship services (including Holy Week services) through Facebook. We will hold a celebratory Easter service on the first Sunday we are able to come back together.
- If you need help during this time of staying at home – whether it be people who can pick up and deliver your groceries and prescriptions, people who can drive you to medical appointments, or just people with whom you can talk and pray – please feel free to contact the church office, call me on my cell phone, or send me an email. I’ll respond as quickly as I am able.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

HYMN

We Gather Together

Ms. Mina Rhee, Music Director

Words: *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*; Music: 16th Century Dutch Melody

**Verse 1: We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing;
 he chastens and hastens his will to make known.
 The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing.
 Sing praises to his name; he forgets not his own.**

Verse 2: **Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining;
ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
so from the beginning the fight we were winning;
thou, Lord, wast at our side, all glory be thine.**

Verse 3: **We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
and pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free.**

SCRIPTURE

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
John 9:1-41 (*New Revised Standard Version*, alt.)

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

¹As Jesus 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 the one 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, Jesus 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 religious leaders did not believe that the man 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 religious leaders; for they 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.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He 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?”

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

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Human One?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is that one, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in that one.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen the Human One, and the one speaking with you is that one.” ³⁸He said, “Sir, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

³⁹Jesus 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.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

WE RESPOND WITH THANKSGIVING TO GOD'S WORD**PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS*****Invitation to Offering***

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

During this difficult time when COVID-19 seems to have brought the world to a standstill, Echo Park United Methodist Church needs your financial support more than ever. We invite you to make your donation to the church in one of two ways:

- Make out your checks to Echo Park UMC and mail them to the church office at 1226 N. Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, CA 90026.
- Go online to <https://echoparkumc.wordpress.com/donate-here/>, click on the “Donate” button, and follow the instructions provided.
- You may combine your offerings to the church and your donations to UMCOR in a single transaction. Please indicate how you wish to divide your offerings by using the check’s memo line or by clicking on the link labeled “Add special instructions to the seller.”

Offertory Hymn**My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less**

Ms. Mina Rhee, Music Director

Words: Edward Mote; Music: William B. Bradbury

Verse 1: **My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.**

Refrain: **On Christ the solid rock I stand,
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

Verse 2: **When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil. *(Refrain)***

Verse 3: His oath, his covenant, his blood
 support me in the whelming flood.
 When all around my soul gives way,
 he then is all my hope and stay. *(Refrain)*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

God of light and hope, you have invited us to follow you in the way of your salvation. We thank you for all that you have given us. And we pray for your guidance in how best to be stewards of the resources with which you have entrusted us. Take these gifts as a sign of our faith and trust in you. Use them to accomplish your good purposes in our world. Amen.

WE ARE SENT FORTH FOR SERVICE IN GOD'S WORLD

BENEDICTION

Rev. Frank Wulf, Pastor

God is our light and our hope. In the darkest and most difficult of times, God goes before us like a pillar of fire to show us the way that leads to life. God heals our blindness, overcomes our ignorance, and guides us to the truth that is salvation.

So let us go in peace to do the work of justice, to proclaim a word of grace, and to love with a love that surpasses all understanding. And may blessing of God go with us now and always. Amen.

POSTLUDE

For the Bread
(Music by V. Earle Copes)

Ms. Mina Rhee, Music Director

Thank you to all who took part in this online service of worship!

***We invite you to join us again next week as we continue to experiment
and grow in this new way of being community during this season
of the COVID-19 pandemic.***