

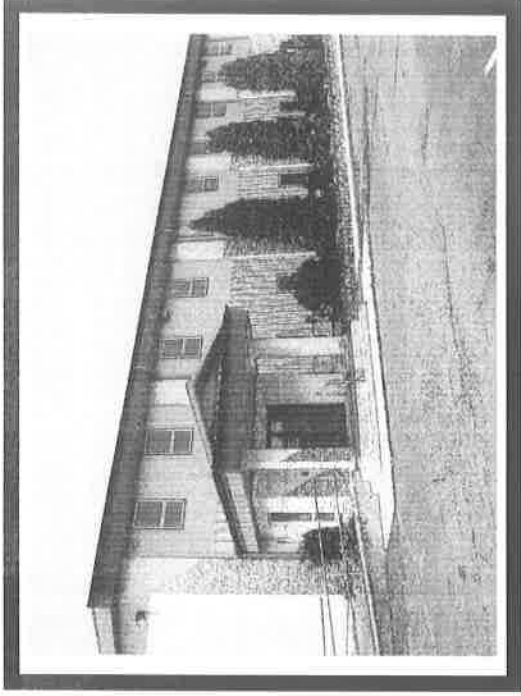
Many in our world have decided to follow leaders and ways that they know go against God, seeing the evil but justifying it for it brings them things they have long sought after. They say, "We see," but their actions show that they do NOT see the ways of God, and they do not hear his Word. Therefore, their sin remains. Open your eyes. Follow the Messiah. Receive the stranger, love the oppressed, bring healing to the sick, comfort to the afflicted, share the Good News. You will SEE the glory of God!

+++++

When reading the story of Jacob and his wives, one would have to conclude that they were not quite walking in full light. Yet, God answered these sinners' prayers, as we see with Leah and the mandrakes, in order to accomplish his own purposes. Later, we see Dan and his brothers enter into acts of awful darkness. It is no wonder the disciples asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?"

Let us confess our own proclivity for sin. For, if we lie about our sinfulness, we are darker still. Though we sometimes stumble into the darkness of sin, it does not mean we do not walk in the light. If you walk in the broad sunlight today but sometimes step into shadow, it does not mean you walk in darkness, for in the next step, you emerge into the sunlight again. Walking in the light includes confessing to the darkness in you and being cleansed from sin.

Get back in step with your Savior and keep walking with him. In doing so, the mightiest work of God is displayed in you; his ultimate purpose is accomplished: you walk with him, in the fullness of his light.



Prayer on entering the Lutheran Church of the Cross
Our Father, help us to be silent; Help us to be thoughtful of You and other worshippers; Help us to be reverent; for this is Your House. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Lutheran Church of the Cross

PO Box 612, Mansfield, PA 16933

Service of Word and Sacrament

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 22nd, 2020

Minister: The Rev. Raymond Dean Forsythe

PO Box 13, Covington, PA 16917

Office Phone: 570/659-0241

Pastor's Cell Phone 570/439-5609

Web Site: www.lutheranchurchotc.org

We are a member congregation of the:



A SPECIAL WELCOME!

We welcome you our friends in the name of our Risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ to **Lutheran Church of the Cross** where God's name is honored, God's word is heard, and God's presence made real and the Cross of Christ lifted high. Here may the sorrowing find comfort; the weary find rest; sinners find forgiveness; the troubled experience peace; the stranger needed friends; and to all people: God's abiding love.

Let's enter our worship in Silent Prayer

Opening Thoughts

Themes of light and darkness, sight and blindness pervade the lessons for this Sunday. As humans mired in the sin that holds us captive, we fail to recognize our blindness. Christ calls us into the light of his life, love, and mercy as he beckons us to come and follow him. In that following, we come to see things in ways we have never seen them before, and the light of Christ shines through us.

Our Service starts on page 21 of the Reclaim: Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, with the brief order of

Confession and Forgiveness.

Opening Words

Confession of Sin and Absolution

Hymn 32

Oh, Worship the King

Kyrie Eleison page 22

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS page 23 and 24

SALUTATION page 24

Two of today's scriptures follow the same line. Isaiah 42:14-21, is God looking on his children Israel, knowing they have gone after foreign gods and against his way. He proclaims that they go after these false gods as though blind and deaf, and yet he knows they both see and hear, but they do not receive the message. And our Gospel, John 9:1-41, tells a similar story from the ministry of Jesus.

A man born blind receives his sight as a gift from Jesus. The town's people argue that it cannot be the same man who only hours before had been a blind beggar in their midst, saying, "It is not him, but only someone like him..." The man once blind is taken before the leaders, who question both him and his parents. They have made up their minds that Jesus must be a sinner, since he healed on the Sabbath. They have also decided that anyone who declares Jesus to be anything other than an evil sinner must be put out of the synagogue. The testimony of the once blind man is an affront to these leaders who have already made their decision, and who do not want to hear anything from witnesses to the contrary, and do not want any logical laying out of the facts which might show them to be wrong. They finally drive the man out of the synagogue!

Jesus hears about the situation finds the man to reassure him that he is believing the truth, and even more! Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man and then adds, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and that those who do see may become blind."

Some Pharisees standing nearby heard this, and asked, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" To which, Jesus answers, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

such, he is always there, guiding us, leading us into the light. We may understand from this that, because God is both the Way and the Light, he cannot abandon us. This is how the blind receive sight: They walk in the Light who leads them in the Way.

Psalm - Psalm 142:1-7

When our spirits fail us and we do not know which way to turn, we need not despair altogether. God knows our way. He knows — not only our feelings of hopelessness, but also how to lead us out of troubles and back on the right path. He is our refuge; he is all we need in difficult times.

Second Reading - Ephesians 5:8-14

Not only are we led in the light — we also reflect that light. In a real sense, we become light to others. We “walk as children of light” because it brings glory to God, and also because it pleases him to use us as beacons for others. Where there is darkness, we are to expose, enlighten, and awaken by reflecting the Light.

Gospel - John 9:1-41

Go and wash in the pool called “Sent.” One may as well say, go and wash in the pool of the One sent into the world. Go and wash in Christ. How else will our darkness of spirit be lifted than by bathing in the Light? Go to Jesus and wash, and receive your sight.

Listening for the Promise

Weekly Devotional

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2020

“If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” - John 9:41 -

The PRAYER OF THE DAY

L. The Lord be with you. **C.** Almighty God, grant that we, who for our evil deeds worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of your grace, may mercifully be relieved; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The FIRST LESSON

is from the 42nd chapter of Isaiah

First Reading:

Isaiah 42:14-21

God Restores His People

God speaks to Israel, who cannot hear or see his holy presence but stoops to worship false gods and carved idols. The Lord has held his peace long enough; now he will cry out like a mother about to deliver a child. His word will create a new reality where darkness is turned to light and the rough places are made level.

Isaiah 42:14-21 (KJV)

14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: *now* will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. 15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. 16 And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. 17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, *Ye are our gods.* 18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger *that* I sent? who is blind as *he that is* perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? 20

Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. 21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Here ends the reading” C Thanks be to God

PSALMODY

Psalm 142

God Our Refuge

In the midst of trial, abandonment, and persecution, the psalmist has nowhere to turn — except to God. God will listen to the psalmist's cries for help, and he will be the source of refuge for the one in anguish.

Psalm 142:1-7 (KJV)

1 I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but *there* was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Our Police Forces, **Paul Young**, Bob Lyle and his wife, **Mrs. Nancy Forsythe**, **Pastor Forsythe**, Mertella Smith, Gene and Patricia, Tom Matczak, **Nicholas Wivell** 3 year old with leukemia, Lou Mitchelltree, Frank Williams, **Elaine Beller**, All the sick, Mabel Emerson, Joan McDougal, Joey Ketner, Rodney, Timothy, and Ricky Smith, Clifford Short, Ryan Bogaczyk, Larry Moran, Robert Gaylord, Jonathan P. Matczak, Dwayne Goodwin, Ruth Anne Machmer, Jeff Garges, Brandon Garges, Dylan, Ryan, & Madison Earl, Jesse, Victims of disasters, Gibson, Those in Nursing Homes, Our Children, Teens, and youth program

A Prayer for Each day of the coming week.

Holy One, you give sight to the blind and life to those who trust in your Son. May the light of your Christ pierce through our blindness and open us to your way of life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thoughts on the Readings

The Common Thread

There are sighted people with no insight. And there are the blind who see. "Look, you blind, that you may see!" This insightful vision involves being led, "looking to the right," and going in a new, previously unknown way. This is how "children of the light" walk: they follow Jesus. In following that glorious pool of brilliance, the Light of the World shines upon them.

First Reading - Isaiah 42:14-21

This is the life of the faithful: though blind, being led by God. We do not know the way we are going. We do know, however, that he is the Way (John 14:6). He will not and cannot forsake us as we go, because he is the path itself. As

Our Sister Churches:

Hope Lutheran Church Smethport Pastor: Need a Pastor

WESTERN MISSION DISTRICT CHURCHES

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Montoursville

Pastor: Rev. David B. Letscher

Canby Lutheran Church, Bloomsburg

Pastor: Rev. Stan Bower

Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, State College

Pastor: Rev. Logan Wilmoth

St Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bloomsburg

Pastor: Rev. Kerry Maurer

St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church, Camp Hill

Pastor: Rev. Steve Shipman

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Millersburg

Pastor: Rev. Mark Hoffman

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Seven Valleys

Pastor: Rev. Lawrence Cummings

St. Jacob Evangelical Lutheran Church, Glen Rock

Pastor: Rev. Paula L. Murray

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Elizabethville

Pastor: Rev. Nathan C. Minnich

Plus Ours: Lutheran Church of the Cross

Pastor: Rev. Raymond D. Forsythe

Remember to Pray for our Leaders:

Bishop and Mrs. Dan Selbo - NALC

President & Mrs. Donald Trump

Governor & Mrs. Tom Wolf

Remember to Pray for these Special Needs:

All the Service men and women and those in HARM'S

WAY: Sgt. Andreas Wagner, Pvt. Derek Stevens,

Physical Needs:

The SECOND LESSON

is from 5th Chapter of Ephesians

Second Reading:

Ephesians 5:8-14

Children of Light

Paul uses the images of light and darkness as an analogy for life before and after new life in Christ. The apostle exhorts the Christians in Ephesus to walk as "children of light," discerning the will of God, doing nothing that is couched in darkness or sin.

Ephesians 5:8-14 (KJV)

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Here ends the reading" C Thanks be to God

The Hallelujah Page 25

The GOSPEL LESSON

is from the 9th Chapter of St. John

Glory be to You, O Lord.

Gospel Reading:

John 9:1-41

The Blind Will See

Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth. This action leads to a confrontation with the Pharisees because it occurred on a Sabbath day. The subsequent conversations bring some to faith, but it brings the Pharisees to a state of frustration. Jesus cautions the religious leaders regarding the assumption that they see things clearly, stating that those who are blind will see, and those who have sight are living in blindness.

John 9:1-41 (KJV)

- 1 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.
- 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
- 3 *Jesus* answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
- 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.
- 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
- 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,
- 7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.
- 8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?
- 9 Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he*. 10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

The Bulletins are sponsored by the ? . Sponsors are needed. You may sponsor one or more weeks at a time. The Cost is \$5.00 Per Week Please give to the Pastor Forsythe. Checks made out to Lutheran Church of the Cross.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Every Sunday at 9:45AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School After Service

PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday at the Garges' at 6:00 PM

Card and Flower Ministry

Contact Nancy Forsythe at 659-0241 if you know of someone who is in the hospital or is sick. We need to start a flower fund so we have funds to purchase flowers for those who are sick.

Our Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request please call the following numbers and give your prayer request. Be brief and to the point **Call 659-0241. If you want to be on our Prayer Chain** tell Nancy Forsythe.

We are: Christ-Center Mission-Driven / Traditionally-Grounded Congregationally / Focused

Last Week's Record 3/15/2020

A. Attendance 9 B. Offering - \$510.00

PRAYER LIST FOR THIS WEEK

PLEASE NOTE: We need to know of those in need of PRAYER!

Ask the person if they would like their name on our LIST!

C. And also with you.

COMMUNION HYMN NO. 85

Break Thou the Bread of Life

PREFACE page 33

SANCTUS page 35

THE LORD'S PRAYER page 36

WORDS OF INSTITUTION page 36

AGNUS DEI page 37

DISTRIBUTION

All those who are baptized are welcome to join us to receive the precious gifts of forgiveness and community as the Lord comes to us in, with and under the bread and wine of Holy

Communion. Children not yet communing may come forward and receive a blessing from the Pastor Forsythe.

NUNC DIMITTS page 38

THANKSGIVING page 38

BENEDICAMUS page 38

BENEDICTION Page 38

CLOSING HYMN # 226

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

NOTICES OF EVENTS

For March 22nd, 2020

We are meeting at 717 Lambs Creek Road, in Mansfield.

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.
 24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said
 unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a
 sinner.
 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I
 know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I
 see.
 26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how
 opened he thine eyes?
 27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not
 hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his
 disciples?
 28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but
 we are Moses' disciples.
 29 We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow*,
 we know not from whence he is.
 30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a
 marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet
 he hath opened mine eyes.
 31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man
 be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.
 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man
 opened the eyes of one that was born blind.
 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.
 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether
 born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.
 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had
 found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of
 God?
 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might
 believe on him?
 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it
 is he that talketh with thee.

proclaim Christ as Lord to the world. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A God of power and might, you alone are the true ruler of
 the world. All authority comes from you. Bless the leaders of
 the nations, that they may know the truth and lead their people
 according to it. We pray for our own nation — *the members of*
congress, the supreme court justices, all governors, state
legislators, mayors and councils. Guide and direct them to
 know and do your will. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A For the persecuted Church: that remembering the eternal
 house of God not made with hands, they may persuade others
 with their reverent fear of the Lord. Lord, in your mercy.

C hear our prayer.

A Hear the cry of the righteous, and save all whose spirits
 are crushed. Grant them healing and wholeness in Jesus name.
**We especially pray for those we name before you, aloud or
 in our hearts...**(*pause*) Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A For all those who have died in the promise and power of
 the of resurrection, that held in your eternal keeping they may
 come with us to that new day when you work within us all far
 more abundantly than all that we ask or think, and to you be
 all glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations
 forever and ever. Lord, in your mercy, **C Hear our prayer.**

P. Merciful Father, guided by your Holy Spirit, we are
 confident that you know our needs and that you hear our
 prayers and so we place all for whom we pray into your
 loving care for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen

HOLY COMMUNION Page 31

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Church, Pastor Minnich, the NALC Church Body, and all NALC Churches and Scriptural teaching churches, and for missionaries throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.
A. Father, as we pray for our leaders of our nation, strengthen the wills of all who take counsel for the nations. Teach them to use wisely and well the authority and power entrusted to them, so that all people may prosper and live peaceably with one another. **Especially President Donald Trump and Vice-President Mike Pence and Governor Tom Wolf,** that they seek your will when making decisions for the welfare of their people. Lord, in your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.
A. We give thanks to You, O Lord, for Bishop Dan Selbo, Pastor Forsythe, former Bishop Paull Spring, ministers and lay leaders who preach the Word of God, that they may testify to all people of repentance toward God and faith in our risen Lord Jesus Christ: and that meditating on Your precepts and fixing their eyes on Your ways, they may declare all the just decrees of Your mouth. Lord, in your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.
A **Let the cross of Christ be our source of hope and power in this congregation. May we never be ashamed of the foolishness of Christ crucified, but may we boldly proclaim the cross as your wisdom and righteousness, that many will experience its life-giving power. Lord, in your mercy,**

C Hear our prayer.
A Fill us with your Spirit, so that we desire to walk as children of light who try to discern what is pleasing to you. Give us your wisdom, so that we take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them so that the truth is made known. Help us to make the best use of our time, realizing the days are evil and time is of the essence to

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.
39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

"The Gospel of the Lord"

C. Praise be to You, O Lord
The SERMON Pastor Forsythe

"A Drink of Cool Water"

The APOSTIES' CREED page 28

Sermon Notes:

"A Drink of Cool Water"

Consider focusing on what Jesus said in this Gospel lesson about sin and suffering as we often wonder why a person suffers so much. Jesus pointed out that it was not sin that caused the man to be born blind, contrary to what the people thought. Instead, his disability was used to bring glory to God through Jesus' healing of his eyes and his spiritual sight. How do we glorify God in the midst of our suffering?

FIRST

Isaiah 42:14-21

God Restores His People

***Our we having Trouble Hearing the Truth of God?
God is Our Helper IF we Ask HIM.***

SECOND

Psalm 142

God Our Refuge

*What Happens to us In the midst of trial,
abandonment, and persecution.*

THIRD

Ephesians 5:8-14

Children of Light

*Paul uses the images of light and darkness as an
analogy for life before and after new life in Christ.*

FOURTH

John 9:1-41

The Blind Will See

This is talking about Spiritual BLINDNESS

OBEDIENCE IS THE ONLY WAY

To know what Spiritual Formation is all about in our
lives. It happens when we say yes to God!

Our we seeing signs of the end time?

Believers Must Die to Sin, and Live to God

This shows us the necessity of holiness.

THE TRUE WAY REQUIRES ACTION

“Great Faith leads to results”

Repentance is key to THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The importance of pleading the BLOOD of Christ!!

SERMON HYMN No. 199

Amazing Grace

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray. C. God of faithfulness, we bring before you the precious gifts of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for those in need and prepare for your Son's advent into our hearts. Amen.

Right before the Prayers of the Church

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

L. In trust let us pray to God our Father, Jesus the Good Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit for the needs of the our neighbors near and far. a brief silence.

L. Almighty God our heavenly Father, we thank you this day for the hope of life we have through your Son Jesus, the Living Word. Help us to know like the Apostle Peter that there is nowhere else to go, because Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. Empower us to tell others, so that they might know him as well. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.
A. Father, may all of us of the Lutheran Church of the Cross be Your influence of the love You want us to share with others of the gift of salvation for all people. Help us to be the Scriptural Church that draws others. Bless also our sister congregations: **Hope Lutheran Church** - need a Pastor, and the **Bethany Lutheran Church**, Pastor Letscher, **Canby Lutheran Church**, Pastor Bower, **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**, Pastor Wilmoth, **St Luke Lutheran Church**, Pastor Maurer **St. Timothy Lutheran Church**, Pastor Shipman, **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Pastor: Hoffman, **St. Paul Lutheran Church**, Pastor:Cummings, **St. Jacob Lutheran Church**, Pastor: Murray, **Salem Lutheran**