

*Third Sunday of Easter, May 1, 2022*

Greeting

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Gathering Words:

There are times when God interrupts our life, stepping into our busyness to turn us around so that we can suddenly see what is real and important. When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, everything about his life changed. May it be so for Us. Come let us worship.

**Worship Music Who Am I?**

OPENING PRAYER

Compassionate God, you hear our cries, and our pleas for help. We may enter the dark of night with weeping, but we wake in the morning with joy, for you hear our pleas and come in our hour of need. As we gather here in the name of your Son, be with us we pray, that we may know the dawn of your mercy, and the taste your favor. **AMEN.**

\*OPENING HYMN Blessed Assurance #369

THE FIRST LESSON Psalm 30 (NIV)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SHARING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY INVITATION:

The Lord transformed the life of Saul. We, too, have been transformed by that same love. Let us give from our hearts that others may be transformed as well.

OFFERTORY

\*DOXOLOGY #95

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Generous God, may the gifts we offer this day bring joy to those whose mornings are hopeless, feed those whose noontimes are filled with hunger, and bring peace to those whose nights are surrounded by fears and worries. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON Acts 9: 1-20 (ESV)

HYMN OF PREPARATION Just as I Am, Without One Plea (Verses 3 & 5) #357

SERMON The Way of the Lord Pastor Lyle

**The Great Thanksgiving**

Invitation to Communion

We come to this table not because we must but because we may, not because we are strong, but because we are weak. We come, not because any goodness of our own gives us a right to come, but because we need mercy and help. We come because we love the Lord and would like to love him more. We come because he loved us and gave himself for us. We come and meet the risen Christ together, for we are his Body.

Unison Prayer of Confession:

**Gracious and loving God, you invite us to the table, yet we resist your grace. You invite others to the table as well—sometimes people whom we do not see as worthy, and sometimes people who make us feel unworthy ourselves. We put up barriers in places where you long to create circles of love and faith. We repent from these sins and ask you to forgive us for these and all of our trespasses.**

Time of Silent Personal Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the good news: Christ died for our sins and rose again that God may free us from the tyranny of judging others to live fully in the power of God’s grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, God forgives your sins and offers you a transformed future. Live fully into God’s grace. Amen.

Please follow the liturgy at page 15 in the hymnal.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE BLESSING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

GIVING THE BREAD

As the bread is passed by the ushers, we will sing together Nothing but the Blood #362 (Verses 1-2). Please hold bread until instruction by the pastor. We will all share together.

GIVING THE CUP

As the cup is passed by the ushers, we will sing together Nothing but the Blood #362 (Verses 3 & 4). Please hold the cup until instruction by the pastor. We will all share together.

\*CLOSING HYMN Lord, Speak to Me (Verses 1, 2 & 5) #463

BENEDICTION

Let us go forth into the world as people of the resurrection, people who can look evil in the eye and see beyond it to the sure and certain day when God shall turn all our mourning into dancing. Let us go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit and practice resurrection. Let God’s people say, **“AMEN!”**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Our Prayer List:**

Brandy Ansel – surgery May 2nd Clark Harding - surgery

Boose Foundry - recovery Karl Haver – lung cancer

Family of Clara Boutelle Lamar Horst – surgery May 4th

Janie Buchter – anxiety Luke Mengel - stent procedure

Everleigh Sage Corwin – NICU Joe Sipes – car accident

Connie DeHaven -terminal cancer Peace in Ukraine

Chris Diehl – cancer Megan Weir – deployed

Linda Dirks – car accident Pauline Weitzel – fall recovery

Cornette Evans – cancer Bonnie Wyniawkyj -family concerns

Rosemary Feister- test results Jonah Zink - stroke

Family of Clyde Hartranft

**SUNDAY MORNING OFFERING**

**OFFERING AMT NEEDED EACH WEEK       $1,365**

**OFFERING April 24th  $1,023**

**AMT OF OFFERING NEEDED TO DATE     $23,205**

**AMT RECEIVED TO DATE            $27,630**

**BUDGET YTD +$4,425 Attendance – 44 Folks**

**What’s happening at Wiest:**

Adult Sunday School – 1015 Sundays

Choir Practice – Mondays 1PM

Bible Study – 1000-1200 Tuesdays with fellowship

Girl Scouts – 1st Thursday of each month

Blessings of Hope – May 28th 1030-1100

Audio of the Sunday message is posted on our church website ([www.wiestchurch.org](http://www.wiestchurch.org)). Video on Wiest Church Facebook page

Lectionary Readings for next week: Psalm 23; Acts 9:36-43; Revelation 7:9-17;

John 10:22-30.

The Way of the Lord

The Way of the Lord can be mysterious; powerful; ironic; comical; patient; merciful; insightful; far-sighted. Last week, Jesus asked Thomas if he believed in the resurrection because he saw Jesus. He followed up by saying, “Blessed are they who did not see and yet believed.” Believing is seeing.

Today we hear again the story of Saul’s conversion through the loss of his sight; followed by its restoration.

Saul had participated in the stoning of Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr.

From this, he began to “destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.” (Acts 8:3) He got authorization from the high priest in Jerusalem to purge the synagogues of Damascus of the followers of the “Way.” On the way to Damascus, a light from heaven shone all around him. Blinded by the light, he fell to the ground and a voice called to him, saying “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” When he said, “Who are you, Lord?, Jesus answered and gave him instructions. He was taken by the hand to Damascus where he neither ate nor drank for three days.

A disciple named Ananias had a vision in which Jesus told him to go to Judas’ house on Straight Street. There he would find Saul praying. Saul would have a dream that Ananias would restore his vision by laying on his hands. Ananias knew of Saul and his mission in Damascus. He was hesitant to go to him.

Jesus assured him that Saul was his chosen instrument to spread the gospel to the Gentiles and the kings and children of Israel.

Despite his fears, Ananias trusted Jesus and obeyed his instructions. He went to Saul, laid hands upon him and told him that Jesus had sent him to restore Saul’s sight. And Jesus said that Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ananias did as Jesus had commanded, and “scales” fell from Saul’s eyes and he regained his sight.

Saul arose and was baptized. He was cared for by the faith community for several days. Yes, the very people that he came to arrest cared for him. Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying that “He is the Son of God.”

As we all know, Saul became better known as Paul (although he had both names from the beginning). And that Paul was the author of more than half of the New Testament.

Maybe it was Psalm 30 that Paul prayed. Recognizing what had happened to him, . Maybe Paul prayed “Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.”

Maybe we should say that Paul came to believe by not seeing. It is shocking, the strange way of God. The Holy Spirit is active today, just as it was in Paul’s time. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor. 5:17) God seems to have a habit of choosing people that, for all the appropriate reasons, we would be forced to conclude are unacceptable. Just think about these names: Jacob, Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Saul. They all had histories. It should cause us to be cautious about being too certain about who God calls to the ministry.

We might say that “conversion”, “seeing,” “coming to faith” is not always a one-time event. It may take years. I have heard stories of mothers praying for sons or daughters for years; wives praying for husbands; people coming to faith on their death beds. We think that we are called to “save” others. Actually God doesn’t seem to do what we think.

Heavenly Father, you have called us to you. Make us your chosen instruments. Transform us as you transformed Paul. Shape us into children who rejoice in knowing and proclaiming you to the world. Amen.

Sermon Quiz

1. Paul got authorization from the high priest in Jerusalem to \_\_\_\_\_ the synagogues of Damascus of the followers of the “\_\_\_\_.”
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a light from heaven, he heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me?”
3. He was taken by the \_\_\_\_\_ to Damascus where he neither ate or drank for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
4. Saul would have a dream that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would restore his \_\_\_\_\_\_n.
5. Jesus said that Saul was his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to spread the gospel to the Gentiles and the kings and children of Israel.
6. Ananias \_\_\_\_\_\_ Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_\_ his instructions.
7. Jesus said that Saul would be \_\_\_\_\_with the Holy \_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Saul proclaimed \_\_\_\_\_ in the synagogues, saying that “He is the \_\_\_ of God.”
9. Maybe Paul prayed “Lord my God, I called to you for \_\_\_\_\_, and you \_\_\_\_\_\_ me.”
10. The Holy Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_ today, just as it was in \_\_\_\_\_\_ time.

Last Week’s Sermon Quiz

1. In Psalm 145, God’s kingdom is described as everlasting.
2. The Lord is trustworthy and lifts up those who are bowed down.
3. Jesus appeared in the upper room and said, “Peace be with you.”
4. Again he says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
5. Jesus connected believing and forgiveness.
6. A week passes and the disciples again gather, this time with Thomas present.
7. Thomas wants to see what the other disciples have seen.
8. Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and my God!”
9. Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who have not seen but yet have believed.
10. Jesus now breathes on us.