Call to Worship
Jesus, Light of the World,
give us eyes to see as you see!
Once we lived in darkness, but now
as children of light, we are called
to what is good and right and true.

Prayer (from hymn Be Thou My Vision)

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Thou my best thought by day or by night, waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light
Be Thou my wisdom, Heart of my own heart whatever befall

Prayer of Confession
As children of God's light, we are called to do what is pleasing to the Lord: to participate in what is good and true
and right and expose what is evil or unfruitful. God does not punish our sin with trials but desires our genuine
contrition. And so we bring our confession to God, so that what is hidden in us becomes visible, and the shadows
of our hearts may be illumined by grace.

time of silent confession ....

Healing God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for your grace, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray.
we hide our eyes from your presence. We do not listen to your word. Forgive us, O Lord, and speak peace
to our fearful hearts. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness
Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness. Sing a song of redemption!
Let sorrow and sighing be no more. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Knowing we are loved and forgiven, may our hearts be at peace and share in that peace with one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. And also with you.

Scripture Reading and reflection through Lectio Divina
As you hear the Scripture read, listen for words or phrases that jump out to or on which your mind or heart longs to linger. When the
Scripture reading is completed take a few moments to reflect on those words or phrases and consider why they are speaking to you. What
is happening in your life that these words may calling out to you?

John 9:1-40
As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 Jesus’ disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?”

3 Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God’s mighty works might be displayed in him. 4 While it’s daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 6 After he said this, he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smeared the mud on the man’s eyes. 7 Jesus said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (this word means sent). So the man went away and washed. When he returned, he could see.

8 The man’s neighbors and those who used to see him when he was a beggar said, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?”

9 Some said, “It is,” and others said, “No, it’s someone who looks like him.”

But the man said, “Yes, it’s me!”

10 So they asked him, “How are you now able to see?”

11 He answered, “The man they call Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes, and said, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

12 They asked, “Where is this man?”

He replied, “I don’t know.”

13 Then they led the man who had been born blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now Jesus made the mud and smeared it on the man’s eyes on a Sabbath day. 15 So Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

The man told them, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see.”

16 Some Pharisees said, “This man isn’t from God, because he breaks the Sabbath law.” Others said, “How can a sinner do miraculous signs like these?” So they were divided. 17 Some of the Pharisees questioned the man who had been born blind again: “What do you have to say about him, since he healed your eyes?”

He replied, “He’s a prophet.”

18 The Jewish leaders didn’t believe the man had been blind and received his sight until they called for his parents. 19 The Jewish leaders asked them, “Is this your son? Are you saying he was born blind? How can he now see?”

20 His parents answered, “We know he is our son. We know he was born blind. 21 But we don’t know how he now sees, and we don’t know who healed his eyes. Ask him. He’s old enough to speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they feared the Jewish authorities. This is because the Jewish authorities had already decided that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. 23 That’s why his parents said, “He’s old enough. Ask him.”

24 Therefore, they called a second time for the man who had been born blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner.”

25 The man answered, “I don’t know whether he’s a sinner. Here’s what I do know: I was blind and now I see.”

26 They questioned him: “What did he do to you? How did he heal your eyes?”

27 He replied, “I already told you, and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

28 They insulted him: “You are his disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don’t know where this man is from.”
The man answered, “This is incredible! You don’t know where he is from, yet he healed my eyes! We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners. God listens to anyone who is devout and does God’s will. No one has ever heard of a healing of the eyes of someone born blind. If this man wasn’t from God, he couldn’t do this.”

They responded, “You were born completely in sin! How is it that you dare to teach us?” Then they expelled him. Jesus heard they had expelled the man born blind. Finding him, Jesus said, “Do you believe in the Human One?”

He answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

Jesus said, “You have seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

The man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped Jesus.

Jesus teaches the Pharisees

Jesus said, “I have come into the world to exercise judgment so that those who don’t see can see and those who see will become blind.”

Some Pharisees who were with him heard what he said and asked, “Surely we aren’t blind, are we?”

For further reflection on the text- wrestling with the hard questions:

“Who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?”

Where do you find yourself or people around you seeking to place blame when a difficulty befalls a person, a community, the world? Jesus is clear that the man is blind because of something he or his parents did- his blindness is not retribution from an angry God. He does say that He does say that “God’s mighty works might be revealed in him.” How do you feel God is present in the midst of tragedy or disease? Do you believe God acts through/within these? How so?

“How are you now able to see?”

In what areas of your life do you feel you’ve gained wisdom or clarity? What do you feel sure of? Is your relationship with God a factor in this “blessed assurance”? How so?

Jesus said, “Do you believe in the Human One?”

He answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

Do you find yourself tied to the man who wants to know who Jesus is? Where are there places that you’d love to find yourself believing but struggle to do so?

“Surely we aren’t blind, are we?”

How honest with you about yourself? Where are you able to admit that you need greater understanding and wisdom and do you actually seek it or is there comfort in not knowing?

Feast of Love (provided by Marcia McFee)

When we “break bread” together as a church in our worship, we remember that Jesus invited folks to his table as part of his ministry, not just at the Last Supper. So we wanted to create a way for all of us to break bread together with whatever we have at our homes. I invite you to share what food you are bringing to the table for our feast.

Jesus used the parable of a great banquet to which all people are invited in order to talk about what the “kin-dom” of God, the family of God, looks like. He said, “Go to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled.” He often invited the most unlikely guests to his meal-times, confounding the disciples. In this way, he was encouraging a deep love and connection beyond social norms. He knew that we humans need connection and inclusion. Jesus comforts us, saying “you have a place at the table” and Jesus challenges us to make
sure we are doing the same—that all people know they are welcome in our hearts, in our homes, in our churches—even if we can’t physically be with each other right now.

It is difficult in this moment not to be near some of the people we love and might be worried about. Take a moment and say out loud the names of people you wish were right there next to you at your table today.

Jesus is no longer physically on earth, yet every time we gather around a table and we call him to mind, he is present with us in Spirit. And so too, our loved ones are with us. Let this be a comfort to us.

We also want to call to mind the people we cannot name, whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and God’s comfort.

For those who have lost loved ones
For those who are sick and recovering
For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home
For those who are caring for persons in medical care
For those who are separated from loved ones
For those who are feeling alone and isolated
For those who are helping and are so very tired
For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort
For those who are afraid

I invite you to take a deep breath on behalf of all those we do not know and cannot call by name. As we do so, we know that God knows who needs our prayers and the Spirit, Breath of God, is blowing from within us outward as a Spirit of Compassion and Presence.

Blessings at the table are part of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Indeed, Jesus adapted his Jewish ritual blessing spoken before and after meals. He asked us to remember him whenever we break bread and raise a cup in thanksgiving. This is why we call our communion prayers the “Great Thanksgiving.” In this feast of love and comfort, we can call to mind things for which we are deeply grateful. I invite you to speak aloud a couple of things that you are grateful for in this moment.

And so I invite you to raise with me a plate of “something” on your table, or a glass of whatever you are drinking, and let us bless it in this way, repeating after me there at home:

Holy Comforter

Holy Comforter
We gather in your name…
invited by Jesus…
bound together with your Spirit…
in union with each other…
Feed our bodies and our spirits…
with your comforting presence…
so that we might be your comfort to others…
Bless this food…
and break open our hearts…
Bless this drink…
and pour out your love…
Amen…

Bessing
And now may you shelter not only in place, but in peace. May the peace and comfort of Christ be present with you now and forevermore. Amen.