

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church**  
**March 19, 2023**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

**The Approach to God**

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Welcome and announcements

Prelude The Lord's My Shepherd in the setting of Handel's  
"Largo" from Xerxes

Irvine/Berry

Introit

Votum Scott Haefner  
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen

The Call to Worship: Psalm 146

Praise the LORD.

**Praise the LORD, my soul.**

I will praise the LORD all my life;

**I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.**

Do not put your trust in princes,  
in human beings, who cannot save.

When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;  
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

**Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God.**

The LORD is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them—  
God remains faithful forever.

The LORD upholds the cause of the oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.

**The LORD sets prisoners free,**

**the LORD gives sight to the blind,  
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,  
the LORD loves the righteous.**

The LORD watches over the foreigner  
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but God frustrates the ways of the wicked.

**The LORD reigns forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
Praise the LORD.**

\*Hymn of Worship      “I Want to Walk as a Child of The Light”      insert

\*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Prayer of Confession: (Responsive):

Open our eyes, Lord,  
**especially if they are half shut because we are tired of looking,  
or half open because we fear we see too much,  
or bleared with tears because yesterday and today and tomorrow  
are filled with the same pain,  
or contracted, because we only look at what we want to see.**

Open our eyes, Lord,  
**to gently scan the life we lead,  
the home we have,  
the world we inhabit,  
and so to find, among the gremlins and the greyness,  
signs of hope we can fasten on and encourage.**

Give us, whose eyes are dimmed by familiarity,  
a bigger vision of what you can do  
even with hopeless cases and lost causes  
and people of limited ability.

**Show us the world as in your sight,  
riddled by debt, deceit, and disbelief  
yet also shot through with possibility**

**for recovery, renewal, redemption,**

And lest we fail to distinguish vision from fantasy,  
today, tomorrow, this week,  
open our eyes to glimpse, if even for a moment,  
a sign of new life to lift-up our faith in you.  
And with all this, open our eyes, in yearning, for Jesus.

**On the mountains, in the cities,  
through the corridors of power  
and streets of despair  
to help, to heal,  
to confront, to convert.  
Come, LORD Jesus –  
Lead us in the light of your cross. Amen.**

**Kyrie Eleison: Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us;  
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Words of Assurance: 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

<sup>4</sup>The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made God's light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

**\*Gloria Patri: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

Anthem

Lift High the Cross

Nicholson

**The Word of God**

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

Gospel Reading: John 9:1-41

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon “*Making a Way – Seeing the Light*”

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

\*Hymn of Worship “Open My Eyes, that I May See” 390

### **The Response of God's People**

The Offering

Offertory There is a Green Hill Far Away Manookin

\*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\*Hymn of Worship "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"

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\*The Benediction

Benediction Response

\*The Postlude The Lord Is My Shepherd based on the tune "Poland"  
Denton/Koschat

Please stand if you are able.

### **Announcements**

We continue to have weekly Book/Bible studies on Philip Yancey's, The Jesus I Never Knew. Groups meet on Monday evenings at 7:00pm and Wednesday mornings at 10:00am in the lounge of the Education Building. All are welcome and there are still plenty of books available. You can read along with the group, or on your own, or just come and join the conversation. The bible study runs through April 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Mission & Service Committee and the Sunday school kids will be collecting toothpaste & toothbrushes until Sunday, April 2nd. You can leave your donations in the blue bins in the Education Building.

What does it mean to be a welcoming community of faith? This is a question that the Consistory has been discussing (since the pre-covid

days) within the broader context of diversity, equity and inclusion. Our conclusion, after prayerful contemplation, is that it means living the message “All are welcome” that our website proclaims. We ask you to join us in to a time of reflection and discussion during coffee hour today as we explore the ways in which our church family can continue to grow in love and faith.

Would you like to become a member of the Niskayuna Reformed Church, or learn more about who we are and how we operate as a church? We are excited to announce that we will be holding a New Member’s Class at 11am, upstairs in the Lounge of the Christian Education Building the Sundays of March 26, April 2, and April 16. The classes will include a light lunch and all materials for the class will be provided. Please call the church office (518-785-5575) and leave a message with Ellen, or let Pastors Mike & Sherri know if you would like to be a part of this class.

Easter lilies (\$10.00) and azaleas (\$15.00) are now on sale. If you would like to purchase a plant(s), please send your check and a note saying you will be taking home a plant(s) to the church office. We are also taking donations to cover the cost of the plants we will need to purchase. We will be doing a memorial bulletin and working off last year's bulletin. If you have NO changes, there is no need to contact the office. If you have any changes/additions, contact Ellen at office@niskayunareformed.org or 518-785-5575 by **Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**. The bulletin will be included in the April 9th Easter bulletins.

We are going to have a Maundy Thursday service on **April 6<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.** This will include a potluck dinner. There are signup sheets for food and set up help in the narthex and in the Education Building after service.

Our Mission of the Month Collection will benefit World Renew. World Renew envisions a world where people experience and extend Christ’s compassion and live together in hope as God’s community. World Renew seeks to bring generational change in communities all around the globe. Through partnerships with different churches and organization they help target five main issues: Peace and Justice; Community Health; Food Security; Economic Opportunity and Disaster Response. Your generosity

is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

The following items will always be accepted by the Mission and Service Committee and collection boxes are on the first floor of the Education Building:

- **Eyeglasses** and **hearing aids** for the **Lions Club International**
- **Empty pill bottles** (labels removed, please) for the **Matthew 25 Ministries in Blue Ash, OH.**
- **Small white bottles** with caps such as those used for Boost or baby formula for the **SICM Food Pantry**

## Scripture

### Ephesians 5:8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live 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, but instead 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.’

### John 9:1-41

As he 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<sup>[a]</sup> must work the works of him who sent me<sup>[b]</sup> 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 neighbours 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 the man.' <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.' But 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<sup>[c]</sup> to be the Messiah<sup>[d]</sup> 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, and 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>[e]</sup> <sup>36</sup> He answered, 'And who is he, sir?<sup>[f]</sup> 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,<sup>[g]</sup> I believe.' And he worshipped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near 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.