



seeking:
Who sinned?



UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF ANOKA

Welcome to Worship

Sunday, March 19, 2023

Fourth Sunday in Lent

***Please stand as you are able.**

PRELUDE

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty arranged by Lana Kelley

WELCOME

Pastor Karen Evenson

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

Leader: Scripture is full of questions...

Response: Where are you?

Leader: Am I my brother's keeper?

Response: Whom shall I send?

Leader: Who do you say that I am?

Response: Who sinned?

Leader: How many times shall I forgive?

Response: If God is for us, who can be against us?

Leader: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

All: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.

*HYMN

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus (UMH 349, twice)

CALL TO CONFESSION

In today's text, the disciples ask Jesus, "Who sinned?" They want to know who around them could be blamed for suffering. The disciples want to identify who around them had done wrong. In the prayer of confession, we stop pointing fingers at others. In confession, we turn our attention toward ourselves and invite God into that honest and vulnerable space. So do this counter-cultural thing with me today. Let us pray together using the prayer of confession, printed in your bulletin (or visible on your screen). Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: Have you sinned?

Response: I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness.

Leader: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

ALL: Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

INVITATION TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

SPECIAL MUSIC

People Need the Lord by Nelson & McHugh
Chancel Choir

A MOMENT TO SHARE THE STORY

HYMN

Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior (UMH 351, v 1 & 3)

SCRIPTURE READING

John 9:1-41 (NRSVUE)

MESSAGE

“Seeking: *Who Sinned?* (It must be *someone’s* fault.)”
Pastor Karen Evenson

OFFERING

Every Eye Shall See by William J. & Gloria Gaither
Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow (UMH 94)

PASTORAL PRAYER

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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

Open My Eyes, That I May See (UMH 454)

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Toccata by Robert W. Thygerson

Worship Hospitality Team

Choir Director ~ Kelvin Paye

Coffee/Donut Steward ~ Carole Davidson

Deaconess ~ Kim Harris

Greeters ~ Dan and Marsha Zeller

Jubilee Bells Director ~ Kathy Chojnacki

Organist ~ Diane Gronewold

Pastor ~ Rev. Karen Evenson

Scripture Reader ~ Scott Evenson

Sunday Snow Removal, if needed ~ Scott Evenson

Ushers ~ Babs Brown, Larry Gronewold, David Blincow, Gail Sanstad, and Mark Worst

Welcome Center ~ Chuck and Sandy Burnham

Worship Tech ~ Jake Berg

MARCH 26, 2023

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Scripture: John 11:1-45 | Ezekiel 37:1-14

Seeking: Can these bones live?

Message by Pastor Karen Evenson

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

UMCA Office Hours: 10:00am - 2:00pm ~ Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Or by appointment, please contact us at:

Phone: 763-421-2378 | Email: umcanoka@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

4:30pm Servant Leadership Board Meeting

ALL are Welcome

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

6:00pm Adult Confirmation and Renewal Group Meeting

6:00pm Jubilee Bells Rehearsal

6:30pm Youth Group and Confirmation Class

6:30pm Women of the Choir Rehearsal

7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 23, 2023

8:00am Thursday Book Group at Bakers Square

9:30am Bring Your Bible ~ In-Person & Zoom

Sunday, March 26, 2023

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

9:30am Worship (In-Person & Online)

10:00am Sunday School

Contact the office if you have questions or to get connected to any of the Zoom meetings

MARCH Ministry of the Month:

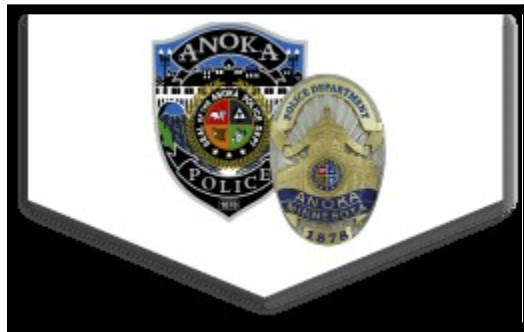


ACBC provides emergency food and clothing to Anoka County residents in need while maintaining the dignity of those we serve.

Ways to help ACBC:

- Donate grocery items
- Donate cash and checks
- Volunteer your time - Contact ACBC at 763-422-0046

THE ANOKA POLICE DEPARTMENT **4th Annual Anoka Safety Fair Fundraiser**



**UMCA's goal is to be at the GOLD Sponsorship Level of (\$500-\$999).
We will be accepting donations through April 9th.**

This program fits our UMCA priorities, mission, and vision of:

- Providing Hope to Our Community.
- Reaching out to support and connect with kids and families, as we work to grow in love with God and our neighbors.

The Safety Fair Program:

- Is for Anoka kids and their families to have fun while learning about safety.
- Is dependent on private and corporate donations allowing many of our "at-risk" children and families to attend free of charge.
- Is on June 27, 2023 at George Enloe Park.



"Son, Rise"

by Rev. T. Denise Anderson | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Inspired by John 9:1-7

Jesus' community saw this man's blindness as a curse or a punishment for sin (either his parents' sin or his own). While it is true that blindness comes with challenges in a world made for sightedness, it is important that we do not problematize blindness in preaching and teaching this story the way they did. What happened here was an apocalypse—a revelation of the nature of Jesus and the heart and mind of God. That revelation challenged the epistemologies of the community, and it is the ones in the story who'd been sighted all along who were ironically unable to perceive what God was doing. Jesus said that he "must work the works of him who sent me while it is day" (John 9:4). Daybreak is also an apocalypse of sorts; it reveals what we couldn't readily see at night and allows us to perceive the work in front of us. In my portrait, I've lit this man's face as if the earth and the sun's light are moving slowly across the surface, signaling the dawn of a new day. His eyes remain closed in my portrait because, for me, his newfound sightedness is not the miracle or the most important part of this story. What's most important is the revelation of who Jesus is. Jesus has been revealed to this man in a way that even the witnesses around him could not comprehend. His encounter with Jesus raises him to a new life and offers the whole community a new understanding of God's works. It's a new day for everyone, though that proves to be a difficult gift to receive.



"Insight"

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Inspired by John 9:8-41

In seven verses, the gospel writer tells us that a man born blind is given sight. But after that, the narrator devotes thirty-three verses to the details of disagreement that swell after the healing takes place. I used to find this second part of the story tedious and exhausting. In a world with constant conflict, I'm tired of listening to endless bickering. However, this second half of the story makes me realize that this encounter is hardly about physical healing or literal blindness. It's about how harmful theology can prevent us from seeing people—truly seeing them. It's about how our narrow imagination can harden into accusation and blame. It's about how we can be threatened by new ideas or shifts in someone's identity. It's about how our doctrine can lead to exile. Ultimately, it's a story about our resistance to change. Can this be a cautionary tale for us? In this image, hands expressing denial and exclusion press in on the man. In the background, I wrote a barrage of questions I imagine emerging from the crowd: Why did God heal you? What did you do to cause this? Who sinned? Alongside those questions, I wove in contemporary statements I've heard spoken in situations when we think a tidy rationale will comfort us: Everything happens for a reason. God only gives you as much as you can handle. Pray harder. I wonder what this story would look like had better questions been asked. What if his neighbors had instead asked the blind man, "How do you feel?" What if the man had asked the crowd, "What are you afraid of?" What if the Pharisees had asked one another, "What if it's time to change?" Surrounded by remnants of narrow vision, the man has new insight. He looks beyond the words, beyond the crowd, beyond the accusations driving him out of town. Can we seek understanding without denigrating or objectifying humans in the process?