March 30, 2014 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Call to Worship
One:  God, we have come here today to be in your presence in your light.
All:  We want out of the dark places; we want to be with you.
One:  We want to see what only you can show us.
All:  We crave that our spiritual blindness be healed and our vision restored.
One:  We come today seeking the right path—the way leading to a deeper relationship with you.
All:  We come seeking the fruit of life that only you provide.
One:  We come, O Holy Sustainer, to worship you.
All:  For you, O God, provide all that is good and all that brings life.

Prayer of Confession

God, we confess that we often wish to see signs of your work, while at the same time turning a closed eye towards your world. We confess that though we say we want to walk with you, too often you must recover us from the dark places where we end up, having wandered away from you. We say that we want the good food and the good water that you have provided, while we hoarded what we have, not wanting to share it with the rest of the flock, failing to acknowledge it came from you. Forgive us, Healing God, Good Shepherd, and Anointing Spirit. Amen.

Contemplative Prayer Option:

(Invite your congregation into a time of reflection and prayer by reading the following. You may adapt this and add a tactile aspect to the prayer time as well. You can offer cards and markers for people to draw the ways that they have been “blind.” They could place those cards on the altar. You could have them approach an area that has candles that they can light as they lift up their prayer to God—representing the light of God coming into their lives.)

“Surely we are not blind, are we?” –John 9:40b

Even though we have sight that does not mean that we always see. We all have times throughout our week that we turn a metaphorical blind eye to the will of God. Perhaps our anger has gotten ahold of us, or we are frustrated, and we take it out on a loved one or a friend. Maybe God has been calling you to use your gifts in her creation and you have been turning away from her invitation. Sometimes we ignore our own need for
connection and relationship with God because we are putting the needs of others before us in an unhealthy way. At this time, I invite you to pray and contemplate on the ways that you have been blind and ask God to shed light into those dark corners with the assurance that God will respond.

(Add invitation to tactile prayer here. E.g.: “You are invited to draw or write something on the cards provided that represent the things you are lifting up to God. After you are finished drawing or writing you can place the card on the altar.” After the prayer time continue to read the words below...)

God, you are our light and our life. Thank you for always remaining with us. Thank you for lifting us out of our doubts. Thank you for your never-ceasing presence. Your assurance and love are abundant and pure. Amen.