



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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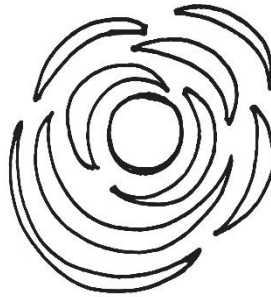
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**Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2026
ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three**

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together to worship the Lord our shepherd, who feeds us, leads us, and satisfies our souls. For it is in God's green pastures where we can be restored and healed along the still waters. And as we walk along the right pathways toward peace, we are not afraid for we know God's presence with us gives us strength and blesses us with abundant goodness and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate (#722)

GREETING

The inclusive grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the shining love of God, and the healing fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE (p. 138)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

May the light of your love, O God, shine brightly in our lives, that your ways of grace and mercy be abundantly visible and bear fruit in us, through Jesus Christ, by the power of your Spirit.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

A reading from 1 Samuel.

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the LORD, designating David as the LORD's chosen successor to Saul.

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the LORD." ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one." ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of

the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from Ephesians.

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

⁸ Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can

work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ 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, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ 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.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ 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 ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ 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.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ 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.” ²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ 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?” ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Gracious God, illumine our hearts and minds with the power of your Spirit, that we might see you more clearly, hear you more distinctly, and love you more fiercely, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

I want to let you all in on a little secret: I hate losing an argument.

Ok, maybe “hate” is too strong a word, but I really do dislike it. And it’s not like I get into very many arguments at all as I’m a pretty easy-going guy. But whenever I do find myself in one, you better believe that I’m in it to win it.

I don’t know, maybe it’s the embarrassment that comes with not being right. Maybe it’s just the thought of my integrity, clout, and trustworthiness being questioned. Or maybe it’s just the fear of losing authority and power whenever I am wrong.

So I guess it’s a good thing that I’m barely ever wrong then.

But seriously, I don’t think I’m alone in this. I don’t think I’m the only one who doesn’t like to be told that I’m wrong when I’m certain that I’m right. I’m not the only one who is tempted to pull out all the stops in rationalizing, justifying, and validating all of my opinions and assertions. I’m not the only one who... well... maybe it is the right word... hates to lose an argument.

Because if I were, then I’m not sure there would be so much division in and around our lives. There probably wouldn’t be so many broken relationships in our society and the next. I don’t think there would be all the violence and war that dotted human history since the beginning of time. Maybe all of that didn’t stem from losing an argument per se, but I’m pretty sure it came from differing parties both believing that they’re right, literally to death.

Everyone wants to be right. No one wants to be wrong. Arguing is like the choice way to figure out which is which.

And I think this mentality is quite apparent in the story we get in today’s gospel lesson, where there’s all this back and forth debating, insinuating, and gaslighting going on. It’s like pretty much everyone with a speaking role is protecting something. Be it their opinions, their reputations, or their very selves, they all go from the defensive to the offensive in this argument that doesn’t really get them anywhere, doesn’t solve anything, doesn’t at all display any kind of grace, love, or community.

We’re familiar with the story. There is a man born blind that has been begging as a way to support himself for as long as anyone can remember. This of course wouldn’t be an easy life to begin with, but tie that with the rampant stigma of the day against physical ailments or disabilities? Then it’s an actual surprise that the man even made it this long when his blindness would have been thought to be ordained by God as some sort of divine punishment.

But Jesus didn’t see it this way. Instead, he responds to the innocent and borderline naïve “who sinned” question posed by the disciples, that sin didn’t cause this man to be blind at all, but sin did blind everyone else to him, his needs, and to God present in the whole situation. Because right away in an action that I’m glad that blind man couldn’t see, Jesus spits in the dirt

to make some mud and spreads that mud on the man's face... on his eyes no less... and heals him.

And you'd think the story could end there. I mean it feels like a good high note to stop at. Like if the point of the story was to show us that Jesus loves and heals even those that we don't think deserve it, then mission accomplished and we can slap on a "happily ever after" and move on to the next episode.

But of course, that's not what happened. The story didn't end there. Perhaps more needs to be said before the point is made.

Word spread about the man formally known as the blind man now being known as the man formally known as the blind man, and as you could imagine, it was unbelievable to all who heard it. Never since the beginning of time has anyone born blind been healed and received sight. Never in the history of humans has anyone's closed eyes been opened. Never in their limited experience of the entirety of creation had they ever seen something to go this much against their beliefs, their knowledge, their pre-set notions of what is right and what is wrong.

And when the Pharisees got a hold of the news? That's when all hell broke loose. They summon the man and they argued with him. They wanted to show how he is wrong. They wanted to prove their stance as right. They even bring the man's parents into the fight, but they didn't support their son in his blindness, why would they support him in his sightedness? They were getting no where.

So the "not-fair-you-see" Pharisees couldn't convince the man that they were right and he was wrong, not with their compelling points around law and theology, not after leaning on their education and authority, not even by name-dropping Moses could they win their argument. So instead, they just booted him out of the community. The man formerly known as the blind man got himself cancelled.

So who was right and who was wrong? To us it seems pretty clear. But back in those days it wouldn't have been so obvious. These are the Pharisees we're talking about here. They were the smartest of the smart, the most respected, most powerful, most well versed on what is right and wrong. How could anyone, let alone a blind beggar born entirely in sin, ever hold a candle against their arguments?

And really, the Pharisees weren't wrong. Sure, they were mean, nasty, and unpleasant, but their claims were correct. It was illegal to heal on the Sabbath, it was sinful to disrespect the Torah like that, it was wrong to disobey, question, or change the status quo.

But at the same time, the man wasn't wrong either. He was blind. He can see now. He really doesn't know where Jesus was at that exact moment when they asked. So who really wins? Is it a stalemate? Did any of it really matter?

And maybe that's just it. The point is that being right isn't the point.

Arguments happen. Disagreements occur. Difference in opinion is inevitable. There is no denying that. But the problem is when in the heat of the moment, when emotions are flaring, when we are blinded by our need to be right and win, we miss Jesus there, in the middle of it

all. Not skirting the issue and invalidating our feelings. Not taking sides and joining in on the finger-pointing and the blame game. Not even in calling us out for getting caught up in things that might not even matter.

But Jesus welcomes. Jesus accompanies. Jesus loves.

In the midst of all the strife and friction, Jesus reminds us who we are as God's people. While we might still disagree and see things in completely different ways from our opponents, Jesus reminds us of who he is as the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Even when we were all seeped in sin together with everyone who has ever lived, is living, and will ever live, Jesus reveals to us all the salvation found in God's grace and reminds us that the point was never to win arguments, but to know that we are loved regardless even if we're right or wrong or somewhere in between.

Loved in our differing opinions. Loved in our misguided perceptions. Loved in our irritating desperation to win.

See while the world tells us that there is respect in being right, worthiness in winning arguments, power in putting your opponents in their place, Jesus tells us that there is more to be gained in grace, there is a freedom in forgiveness, there is a peace in swallowing our pride and prioritizing community. Because our faith was never about winning or losing, looking strong or weak, or even taking rewards or punishments, but it has always been about our relationship with God and each other, our service to our neighbours, and showing all people how they, however different they are from us, continue to be held as a beloved child of God.

And perhaps once we see that, we'll see and recognise how God holds us, binds us together, and opens our eyes to the salvation that is so freely given to us all, rich or poor, healthy or sick, right or wrong. All.

So as we continue through this season of Lent, may we see God's presence with us, not pointing fingers or calling us out, but in loving us as we are, flaws and brokenness and all, which has always been the point. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Great Is Thy Faithfulness (#733)

CREED (p. 105)

With all those lifted up by God's grace, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

INSTALLATION OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

The following people have been called to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve our community in this way, as we are all welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God. So we now rejoice that these siblings in Christ will lead us in our congregational life and mutual mission as God's people in the world.

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

You have been called to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

You are to see that the words and deeds of this community bear witness to God's love, which gathers us into one together with the whole church.

You are to seek to welcome all in our worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.

You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.

You are to be examples of active love, foster peace and harmony among us, and support a mutual understanding in this congregation.

So now on behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you:
Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices
to which you have been *elected*?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

People of God, I ask you:

Will you support these, your congregational leaders,
and will you share in the mutual ministry
that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

I now declare you installed as officers and council members of this congregation.

Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace,
that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Following the light of Christ shining in our lives, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, “by your shepherding mercy, O God,” and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you provide for our needs and you satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness. We pray for our newly installed congregational council, that they faithfully lead us by your love and help flourish our lives in community and service to others. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in your name, we shall not be in want. Give us faith to trust in you and your promises, that we be strengthened to serve you with love and joy. We pray for our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Living Faith Lutheran Church in Sechelt and their interim pastor Richard Hergesheimer; and for Lord of Life Mission in Sandspit and their interim pastor Jim Whaley. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your faithfulness is revealed in all of your creation its beauty: in the grand mountains to the green pastures, to the raging rivers to the still waters, to the vast skies to the deepest valleys, and our souls are restored. May we always be mindful of our care for this planet, that its restorative beauty be a benefit to all the generations to come. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in your name we shall fear no evil of the world, for your rod and staff protect and comfort us as you shepherd us into your justice and peace. Be with all world leaders and politicians and teach us all to work together to bring about a better future, that one day war and violence can be a thing of the past. We pray also for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you feed us with your healing and you anoint us with your abundant blessing. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your gracious love never feel too distant from us. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Greg and Akiko; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Kelly; Betty; Ngan Kew (nan CUE); Matt; Patty; Sarasawathi (SAR-ah-sa-WAH-tee); and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you bless us with your goodness and mercy and you welcome us to live in your eternal house with you and all the saints. May the lives of faith of the past inspire us in our own faith and service to others in our community and beyond. By your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your healing grace shown to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

PEACE (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL**DIALOGUE** (p. 144)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ; who reveals to us your gracious healing and abundant blessing, opening our eyes to our welcome among the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth, to praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Yes, Lord, you are holy and mighty and every good and perfect gift comes from you. You open our eyes to see the light of your love shining in our lives, joining us together regardless of who we are or where we are from, revealing to all the ways of your mercy and community. And in the fullness of time, you send to us your Son Jesus to walk among us as one of us, teaching us of your mercy and leading us to your healing grace.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they shared it, Jesus took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

For it is in this bread and cup that we receive the gracious healing and welcome of God, joining us together in light, even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O Lord, for this community that you welcome us into, for your unending love and mercy, for this blessed meal, we give you thanks and praise through the light of Christ living in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

With our eyes opened by the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God's unending welcome and love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

Lord, Be Glorified (#744)

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying (#752)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, you have again fed us with your truth and nourished us with your light, and you have revealed your grace and mercy through this bread and cup. Strengthen us in our community and lift us up for your service, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the love of God pursue you,
the light of Christ enfold you,
and the Holy Spirit keep you in blessing and peace, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Be Thou My Vision (#793)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in the light of Christ's love.
Thanks be to God.