

JANUARY

"Seeing Clearly"

by Deaconess Karen Burgess-Cassler

Hymn Suggestion

"Be Thou My Vision" (ELW #793 or available online)

Scripture

"As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God." Luke 18:25-43

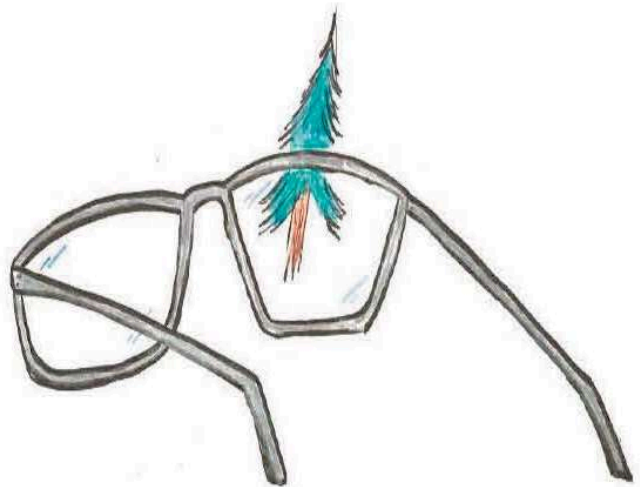
Devotion

Seeing clearly is a gift. That realization was underlined for me when I developed cataracts several years ago. For a while, after surgery, I saw better. Then something changed for the worse -- my vision became cloudy again.

At first this was irritating, then scary as I wondered if I was going to lose my eyesight. I kept cleaning my glasses, thinking there was something on them. But then I discovered that the cataracts had returned.

This time, with fast and painless laser surgery, even with dilated eyes, I could see clearly right away. Colors were cleaner and brighter. The day after the surgery, I nearly cried when I noticed that I could see the fir needles at the tops of the trees and I felt like I was seeing the world more like it really is.

I found unexpected joy in now being able to see things that were not previously clear: details in pictures of my grandchildren, a bridge now visible in the distance, a smile from



a stranger across the street. I also discovered that I needed to clean some places in my house, corners I'd overlooked before because I wasn't seeing them fully.

Seeing clearly can bring us joy, for not only the creation around us, but all of life. Seeing clearly can also tug us toward tasks that we hadn't noticed needed doing -- asking ourselves how our sight becomes clouded without our really noticing until the "cataracts" are removed.

I try to think about this every day so I remember to be grateful and to pay attention and enjoy the gift of seeing clearly - a gift God offers us, just as was offered to the beggar whose faith opened his eyes.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- The way God sees us—how does that affect the work we do as a congregation, council, or committee?
- Where does our eyesight become clouded, even without our noticing?
- Where do we want to see more as God sees us and the world?

Prayer

We thank you, God, for your light in our lives. Help us see you and your world more clearly, and serve as you lead us. Amen.

About the Author

Deaconess Karen Burgess-Cassler is a retired public-school teacher living in Vancouver, Washington.