

## LECTIONARY GUIDE for I Samuel 16:1-13 and John 9:1-41

I Samuel in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) recounts the story of the *Calling of David*.

For God had let go of Saul in favor of Samuel. As a result, Samuel became very anxious as he had to find a successor. He went to Bethlehem, and brought Eliab to God, but he was rejected. He brought Abinadab to God, but he was rejected. He brought Shammah to God, but he, too, was rejected. Then he brought seven of Jesse's sons to God, but they were all rejected. So, he asked Jesse if he had any other son. Jesse confessed that there was yet one other, the youngest, who was a shepherd. This young man was brought to God and finally was accepted! Samuel anointed him with oil, and "the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David." (v. 13)

John 9 in the New Testament tells the story of *Jesus Healing the Blind Man*, who was sightless since birth. Jesus healed him by placing mud on his eyelids and telling him to go wash in the Siloam pool. Upon learning of this, the Temple Pharisees complained that Jesus had done this on the Sabbath, thereby, breaking the laws against working on that holy day. They also could *not* believe that Jesus had really done all this, so, they appealed to the man's parents, who deferred to their son. Upon confronting the Man, they blamed his blindness on past sins then drove him away. Later, Jesus met the Man and declared, "*I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.*"

### Ten Questions

1. What are these two stories telling us about human expectations of God?
2. What do we learn about God's guidance when we are calling a new leader, such as a king, a leader or a pastor? Why might it be helpful for people (such as a Search Committee) to consider a number of candidates (the least obvious, maybe even a woman) before the right one is found and accepted?
3. In the story of the Blind Man, why are the Pharisees so skeptical through their extreme adherence to the Sabbath, questioning the facts of the Man's blindness, and "blaming the victim" for supposed sins that caused his very blindness? Have we ever seen someone who was the victim of a condition being blamed for it? What did we do about it?
4. How does John show Jesus as the Son of Man, modeling a new way of being and a new Realm of God; a realm where worship is not limited to Sundays, blindness is understood as a medical disorder, and the condition, which may

have economic ramifications, is not necessarily interpreted as punishment from God?

5. How do we understand the irony of Jesus' statement that seeing is not just seeing with our physical eyes, but with our whole beings; that the Blind Man was born blind, but through Jesus came to see both physically and spiritually; and that *we* may see physically, but may not (yet) see spiritually?
6. What does it mean to see the parallel that Jesus, like David, was not considered to be the most likely "king," but only after much testing?
7. During this viral pandemic, when our worship services are suspended, how can we still personally worship God?
8. When we meet someone, who has a physical disability (such as blindness, deafness, asthma or immobility), or is diminished because of that disability (the Blind Man had been a beggar), how do we respond at first? How does God teach us to respond?
9. What is one story that we know of someone turning from spiritual blindness "to see the Light"?
10. What might be our stories of seeing the Light? What might be First Church's story of turning to see the Light at this time in our history?

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