

ORDER OF SERVICE - Sunday 22nd March 2020 – Lent 4

Lectionary: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

Preacher – Peter Blair

Liturgist – Saide Cameron

Bible Reading – Tim Budge

Prayers of the People – Meredith Budge

Laptop Operator – Natalie Sims

Musicians – Shawn Whelan, Andrew Dickinson, Helen Burnham, Catherine Leslie, Joel Hallinan

OPENING SLIDE: He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” John 9:9a-10

GREETING

Saide

with SONG: Come and find the quiet centre, vs1 only, Shirley Murray, In every corner sing

Please stand as we welcome the Word singing ourselves into the sacredness of this time and this space and wherever you are at home or with friends. If you have a Bible near to you please place it open in the space where you are gathered.

Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

SONG: Come and find the quiet centre, by Shirley Erena Murray, from In Every Corner Sing, Hope Publishing Company, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

CALL TO WORSHIP

Saide

Come let us worship God

Creator of a perfect yet now broken world

Giver of sight in times of blindness

Living water to a thirsty despairing people

Come breathe into this space

and let us worship God together.

SONG: Praise the one, various songs

Saide

We begin, singing our praise ...

1. Praise the one who breaks the darkness
with a liberating light.
Praise the one who frees the prisoners,
turning blindness into sight.
Praise the one who preached the Gospel,
healing every dread disease,
calming storms and feeding thousands
with the very bread of peace.

2. Praise the one who blessed the children
with a strong yet gentle word.
Praise the one who drove out demons
with a piercing two-edged sword.
Praise the one who brings cool water
to the desert's burning sand.
From this well comes living water,
quenching thirst in every land.

3. Praise the one true love incarnate:
Christ who suffered in our place.
Jesus died and rose for many
that we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory,
praise the One who makes us one.

SONG: Praise the One, by Rusty Edwards, Words © 1987 by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188.
All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE 604502

From Natalie's blog - Can be sung to the familiar tune NETTLETON (TiS 392), or the less familiar and very lovely tune JOEL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Please be seated and join me in acknowledging the land on which we worship, sharing the words on the third slide.

We acknowledge and respect the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation,
the traditional custodians of this land since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land is not ours to own, but to look after;
and that if we listen, we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves
to work for justice, reconciliation, and care of the earth.**

WELCOME

Saide

Welcome to worship this morning gathered here or with us from your homes. If you are participating through the live stream I encourage you to stand when we sing, to join in as much as you can. The words of the song will be displayed through the live stream as well. If you have a Bible near to you please place it open in the space where you are gathered.

As we travel through the season of Lent with Jesus we wake each new day to increasing uncertainty. What we do know is that God is with us. God was with Adam and Eve, with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well. Today God is with the blind man as Jesus mixes water and dirt to make mud to reveal sight that he had never known. During worship we will farewell Ruth and Felix Tall.

After worship this space will be held for a time of silent prayer with music offered quietly by the musicians. Stay as long as you like and when leave quietly when you are ready. I'm Saide and with our Olive Way & Children & Youth Pastors Peter and Dave, Tim, Meredith and the musicians led by Shawn it is a joyful privilege to be leading our worship today.

PRAYER OF ADORATION & CONFESSION

Saide

In addition to being our Olive Way Pastor, Peter and his family are part of the Grace Tree community. Our prayers of confession today are adapted from the liturgy used by the Grace Tree community for worship. During the prayers of confession there will be an invitation to write on a prayer card. If you are worshipping with us at home please also find a piece of paper that you can write on. Let us pray now offering our prayers of adoration and confession.

God in love you created the world, a place of perfection and beauty
You gave her to humanity, a precious gift to love and care for
Abundant and flourishing with life in wonderful and glorious forms.
Forgive us for our lack of care for this precious gift.

Jesus in love you walked with the unloved offering healing
You gave hope to Nicodemus, new life to the woman at the well,
sight to the blind man, courageously showing us the way to follow you.
Forgive us when we close our eyes to the needs of the world.

Holy Spirit, promised gift with us now, you sustain us in joy.
You breathe deep into our souls, praying endlessly without words
Sending us out day by day to live out our calling to be God's people.
Forgive us for the days when we find this calling to be a burden.

And now we pray with the Grace Tree community ...

We all carry fears, secret shames and unhealed wounds
from the generations before us, from our culture, and from personal experience.
They tip our hearts off balance, and incline us towards destruction.

**O Lord you have searched me and know me;
You are acquainted with all my ways.**

Let us therefore name those fears, shames and hurts before God and one another,
that the light of God's healing power might shine on all that lies at the roots of our sin.
You might like to write a word or phrase on the prayer card you collected as you entered.
+ brief silence +

SONG: Kyrie Eleison, TIS 734

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison

SONG: *Kyrie eleison*, from *Together in Song*, Harper Collins Religious, copyright unknown

Let us pray together ...

**I confess that I have sinned in thought, word and deed,
by what I have done, what I have left undone,
and the wrong done on my behalf.**

Heal us, reconcile us, make us whole we pray;
take from us our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh
that what You are by nature we might become by Your grace.

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison

If anyone is in Christ the whole creation is made new;
the old has gone, the new has come!

**Let us therefore determine anew to love one another,
confident that in the name of Jesus our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

Peter, Dave

Invite any children present – and young at heart - to come down and listen to the story. Kids at home to get their blindfold ready.

GOSPEL READING: John 9:1-7, p 871

Tim

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 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, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 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." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word
Thanks be to God

WITH THE CHILDREN –

Dave

It will probably just be Felix, so may need some help. Blindfold a child (Felix?), pretend to wipe a mud paste on to their eyes (virus-free!), then the challenge to try to find the pool of Siloam (bowl on the Communion Table). Kids at home put on a blindfold, then have to try to find their kitchen sink. Then back to near the screen, and sing together...

SONG: The blind man, TiS 579

Dave

The blind man sat by the road and he cried, x3
he cried, oh, oh, oh
show me the way, x3
the way to go home.

The people stood by the road and they cried, x3
they cried, oh, oh, oh,
Get out of the way, x3
And go and sit down.

Jesus stood by the road and he cried, x3
He cried oh, oh, oh,
Bring him to me, x3
Tell me what you want.

The blind man stood by the road and he cried, x3
He cried, oh, oh, oh,
I want to see, x3
To see the way

Jesus stood by the road and he cried x3
He cried, oh, oh, oh,
I am the way,
I am the truth,
I am the life
Now you can see

The blind man stood by the road and he cried x3
He cried, oh, oh, oh,
now I can see
You are truth
You are the life
I'll follow the way.
Jesus!

SONG: The blind man, from Together in Song, (with extra verses by Helen Burnham), Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

FAREWELL FOR FELIX AND RUTH

Dave

Dave to say a few words. Play Vilma & Richard's and Ian's recorded message. Give the gift to Felix. Ruth invited to respond.

SONG: For you deep stillness

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland;
for you, deep blue of the desert skies;
for you, flame red of the rocks and stones;
for you, sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands,
and when you're burnt by the journey
may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit
soothe and replenish you.
In the name of Christ. (repeat)

SONG: For you, deep stillness, by Julie Perrin, from It all depends, NCYC '99 Songbook, Uniting Church in Australia, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

SMP – Dave can advise that children and teens are welcome to keep watching the live stream, or to do some of the activities provided.

GOSPEL READING: John 9:18-41, p 872

Tim

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 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." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 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."

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

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

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. 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." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

SERMON

Peter

A time of silence

OFFERING

Saide

with SONG: The Lord's my shepherd, TiS 10

Today we will bless the offerings that you have brought and provided through direct debit after the song. However the bowls will not be passed along the rows. Instead we ask that you place your offerings in the bowls as you leave via the Gathering Space. Let's stand and sing our psalm for today Psalm 23 – The Lord's my shepherd.

1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie

in pastures green, he leadeth me

the quiet waters by.

2. My soul he doth restore again;

and me to walk doth make

within the paths of righteousness,

ev'n for his own name's sake.

3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,

yet will I fear no ill:
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4. My table thou has furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5. Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

SONG: [The Lord's my shepherd](#), Scottish Psalter, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins; PUBLIC DOMAIN

... *Let us pray*

Living, loving God, shepherd of us all
In this time of darkness and uncertainty
we offer our gifts to you, our money and our lives
break our hearts wide open that we might be
the voice of compassion in a community
that is struggling to find the way to be whole. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Meredith

As we prepare to pray, let's all sit with our feet flat on the ground and hands resting gently in our laps. Let's do some calming breathing as we settle into the prayers for the people. Take a deep breath in and imagine it filling your stomach with calm cool air, take another deep breath and imagine it filling your heart space with love, take a third breath and allow it to flood your mind with peace. Now imagine flooding your stomach, heart and head with loving peaceful light, all with one last long breath.

Let's pray.

Loving God

We come to you in prayer today with our deep sense of confusion, fear and anxiety as we watch the COVID 19 virus spread relentlessly through the world and wonder how it will impact on our own lives our loved ones and our communities. We watch businesses close and our own jobs disappear and wonder, how long, how deep and how far will it all go before we see hope and recovery on the horizon.

We each face the difficult questions of where we go, how we should act, where and how we should be travelling, working, studying to keep our families and close ones safe.

And yet, we also know that our community is only as safe and healthy as the most vulnerable in our midst. Loving God, help us to be open hearted and creative in our ability to reach out to the most vulnerable members of our wider community and to keep everyone safe.

We watch as our fears and anxieties risk turning to anger and self-interest as we shut down our lives to keep those we love most, safe. We see people letting fear swamp their sense of composure and grace, stock piling and fighting over products out of fear of the unknown. Loving God, protect us from judgement but instead, to offer understanding, and be examples of a calm, more generous and sharing way to face this crisis together. Help us to find creative ways to share what we have and to trust in the supply of essential goods and services so that we can all get through this together.

We particularly pray for people who are already on the edges, struggling from day to day to survive. For the people who are seeking asylum, for those who have nothing to live on other than the generosity of those around them. Show us how to best care for them while keeping everyone safe.

We especially pray for the Olive Way and the ASWC as they continue to offer support and nourishment to our most vulnerable members of the community. Keep everyone safe and well as we seek to support the ever growing needs of those we care about.

We also pray for people across the world who are in refugee camps or areas of conflict who are already facing so much hardship. We pray they will get the support they need to survive these times. We pray too, that this could be a time when all violence and conflict pause so that leaders can refocus their efforts on keeping people alive rather than killing their enemies. May this be a new opportunity to discover peace in our world.

Loving God, show us how to be beacons of grace and hope in the midst of this fear.

We look for hope, for moments of positive change and disruption that will bring new opportunities and grace to our lives. We pray for governments that will take stock and put the health, wellbeing and economic security for all, ahead of the interests of the rich and powerful. We pray for long lasting changes in government policy to better care for everyone in our society and our environment. Recognising our connection with everything on this beautiful planet. Show us how to also be voices for justice and change in these times.

Give Governments the wisdom to restore our trust in them and guide them to learn from the examples of other countries to take swift and wise actions to protect the whole community.

We pray for grace, we pray that love will direct all our decisions and actions.

Show us ways to stay calm and stay connected and stay healthy and stay involved in the lives of everyone who needs us.

We also especially pray for Ruth and Felix and give them safe travel.

Dear God, sustain us with love and strength, as we seek to serve you in these rapidly changing and challenging times.
Amen

NOTICES

Saide

It's time to share the news of our community. Come and join me out the front here. Please say your name and share your news in a sentence or two. I will conclude the notices with the third story from the Lenten Offerings.

SONG: Christ be our light, ATO 313

Saide

Let's stand now and sing ...

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.

*Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others
Walls made of living stone.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come.

SONG: [Christ be our light](#), by Bernadette Farrell, from [All together okay](#), Openbook Publishers;
Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

BENEDICTION

Saide

In the reading from Ephesians for today the Apostle Paul writes

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

We are indeed called out into this light, to be shining lights of God's love in the world.

In a time of darkness when so many are blind to the gift of compassion

may we be the voice and heart and hands of compassion to all that we meet.

And as you do and be this may you know the blessing of the steadfast love of our eternal God,

the calm courageous compassion of Jesus and the sustaining joy of the Holy Spirit. Amen

CLOSING SLIDE: ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?'. John 9:40