

ORDER OF SERVICE – Sunday 24th October 2021 – Pentecost 22

OPENING VERSE

‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ Mark 10:49

CALL TO WORSHIP

Saide

Here we are gathered together
uncertain of the days ahead
glad of support given and received
rejoicing in the call to discipleship.

So let us worship God
let us worship God
in whose heart we are held
and in whose love we are made.

Let's sing

SONG: O for a thousand tongues, TiS 210 *verses 1,4-6*

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise, (x 2)
the glories of our God and King,
the triumphs of his grace! (x 3)

4. He speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive,
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

5. Hear him you deaf, you voiceless ones,
your tongues again employ
you blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, you lame, for joy!

6. My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

SONG: O for a thousand a tongues, by Charles Wesley, from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious; PUBLIC DOMAIN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Clare

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

Good morning, welcome to worship. Today we encounter Blind Bartimaeus, sitting by the roadside and receive words of reassurance from the prophet Jeremiah. We are reminded that our faith comes with a call to follow Jesus.

I'm Saide leading worship with Ian in this space and with Lucy, Mal, Dave, Matilda and the musicians through the recordings they have prepared. Soon we will be returning to this space, for now we continue to be grateful for the abundant creativity that supports the worship we offer to God each week.

So welcome from all the places that we are worshipping this morning. Let's breathe together, filling our lungs with breath to nourish our bodies and souls, let's breathe in God's love as we prepare to pray.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION & CONFESSION

Great God in ages past you called your people.
 from the farthest parts of the earth.
 You lead us back onto a straight path.
 You wrap us round with steadfast love
 in all our complicated grief and distress
 and you send us out again in our brokenness
 to love the world in all her glory & wonder.

Jesus of Nazareth, fully human, you walked
 a new path unsettling those around you.
 You call all people to be your disciples.
 You inspire us with your teachings
 as we stumble along behind you
 and you ask us 'What do you want from me?'
 and with the blind man we ask for sight.

Holy Spirit, gentle breath of God, you breathe
 new life into the whole of creation.
 You call all people to live in harmony.
 You remind us that we share this earth
 the air and water with all creatures
 and ask us to tread lightly and carefully
 to get up daily, to see and care with love.

Great God forgive us when we hold onto our brokenness
 setting it before ourselves as a shield.
 Help us to see this brokenness as a gift instead
 a pathway to loving the world with joy.

Jesus of Nazareth forgive us when we fail to understand
 your question and continue stumbling blindly.
 Help us to hear your call each day
 to follow you on the path to peace.

Holy Spirit forgive us when we fall into disharmony
 and fail to care for all creation.
 Help us to breathe in love as we wake
 so that we might live abundantly and free.

WORD OF GRACE

Like Bartimaeus who cried out to Jesus for mercy,
 and was called to life,
 let us rise up and follow Jesus on the way.
 For by his healing grace, our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME intro to reading

Dave and Matilda Brown-Major

Dave chatting with Matilda Brown-Major about the Bartimaeus story. Mark's Gospel like a film in two parts. This is the scene just before intermission. And to entice us to come back for part 2, Mark introduces us to Bartimaeus.

THE GOSPEL: Mark 10:46-52

Lucy

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say,

'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

CHILDREN'S TIME reflection on the reading

Dave and Matilda

Dave chatting with Matilda Brown-Major about the Bartimaeus story.

Focus in on the cloak – his prized possession.

And the story renamed: not Blind Bartimaeus but Radical Disciple Bartimaeus.

SONG: Jesucristo Reina Ya, TiS 728

(Jesus Christ reigns!)

1. Jesucristo reina, reina, ya!

Jesucristo reina, reina, ya!

Jesucristo reina, reina, ya!

Aleluya, amen! Aleluya, amen! Aleluya, amen!

(Jesus Christ heals)

2. Jesucristo sana, sana, ya!

(Jesus Christ loves.)

3. Jesucristo ama, ama, ya!

(Jesus Christ lives.)

4. Jesucristo viva, viva, ya!

(Jesus Christ saves.)

5. Jesucristo salva, salva, ya!

SONG: Jesucristo Reina Ya, Anon. (from Argentina), from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

FROM THE PROPHETS: Jeremiah 31:7-9

Mal

For thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,

and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;

proclaim, give praise, and say,

'Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.'

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,

and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,

among them the blind and the lame,

those with child and those in labour, together;

a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,

and with consolations I will lead them back,

I will let them walk by brooks of water,

in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;

for I have become a father to Israel,

and Ephraim is my firstborn.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION

Ian

Friends, the road is opening up before us this week. We still can't go as far along it as we might wish – all the way to NZ, for example – but we are back on the road again.

We are currently preparing to open up our church for in person worship on 7th November (lots of work going on behind the scenes towards that). But, in the meantime, today during our after-worship ZOOM chat, we are conducting a Welcoming Ceremony – a time to focus on the constant renewal of community in the church as we prepare to regather. Please come along, follow the link on our website.

A Welcoming Ceremony is something we used to do a couple of times a year before COVID. It is the time when we formally welcome newcomers to membership of our congregation, those followers of Christ whose way has converged with ours recently on the journey of faith.

Now I'm hammering the road/journey metaphor this morning, because of Bartimaeus. His story takes place on a road. And it begins and ends with contrasting statements about Bartimaeus' relationship to that road.

Before I get to that, a bit of Greek because I can't help myself. The Greek word for road is ὁδός hodos. It also means path, way, journey. Many of our English words with -od in them are derived from ὁδός.

Most obviously "Exodos" – a way out.

But also:

"method" – a way of doing something

"period" – a way around, a defined time

"synod" – a way together, a gathering

and then of course there is your "odometer" – an instrument for measuring your journey along the road.

And finally, all the electronic words: electrode, diode, anode, cathode – words all to do with the path that an electric circuit takes, the way for electrons.

The word is ὁδός hodos – road, path, way, journey – and it occurs twice in the story of Bartimaeus once at the very beginning and once at the very end.

As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the ὁδός – beside the road. He's not on the way anywhere, he's not taking a journey, he's begging on the verge, that is his life. But a mere 6 verses later we read this: Jesus said to Bartimaeus, "Go, start travelling; your faith has saved you." Immediately Bartimaeus regained his sight and FOLLOWED JESUS ON THE HODOS 'ΟΔΟΣ. At Christ's welcoming call Bartimaeus moves from the margins to the middle of the road. And what is that road, that way? Literally it is the road to Jerusalem. A journey that starts earlier in Mark chapter 10: They were on the ὁδός hodos, going up to Jerusalem, ...and Jesus said to them, "See, we are going to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be condemned to death; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again." The road to Jerusalem, the way of the cross.

Bartimaeus follows Jesus on THAT road – that way of self-giving love leading to the hope of new life. Actually, more than that, Bartimaeus embodies that road, he represents in himself the way of the cross. The humiliation, rejection and suffering that Jesus is about to encounter – Bartimaeus has lived it for years beside that road. But not only the suffering – notice that when Jesus calls Bartimaeus, the crowd says to him, "Take heart, RISE UP, he is calling you!" Rise up – it is the same word used by the angel in the tomb speaking to the women on easter morning, "Jesus is not here," they say, "he has been raised up". And Bartimaeus throws off his beggar's cloak, like the burial shroud of his old life and he leaps to his feet – as in the Lord of the Dance, "they cut me down, but I leapt up high, for I am the life that'll never, never die." Thus, Bartimaeus embodies the gospel of death and resurrection, the good news. He is a signpost on the road saying this is what is coming for Jesus and for all who would follow his way – struggle and suffering, yes, but also hope for new life.

And so later this morning we will formally welcome some fellow travellers on this way – given that we haven't had a Welcoming Ceremony for so long, many of the newcomers are old friends by now – and Bartimaeus is a good guide for us as we renew community together for the journey out of lockdown. He is a model of true discipleship in the Gospel of Mark, in contrast to the 12 official disciples who are presented as ignorant and obsessed with power and status. The metaphor at play is blindness – and let's just note for the sake of modern visually impaired people and the rest of us, that this story is not literally about blindness, it is about faith. The 12 can see with their eyes, but their hearts are closed to the truth of where Jesus is headed along this road. Bartimaeus cannot see with his eyes, but his heart is open to the way of Christ, and by the end of the story his eyes symbolically reflect the state of his heart.

So, what does it mean for us to welcome fellow travellers and commit to journeying together as open hearted followers of Christ in this time and place? What does Bartimaeus do in his story of welcoming and being welcomed onto Christ's way?

First, he cries out for mercy. Mercy is a big word in our faith – it encompasses beauty, compassion, grace, faithfulness, healing, justice, lovingkindness, and steadfast love. Bartimaeus cries out for all this and refuses to be hushed by the silencing pressures of the world around him.

On our way together let us also cry out and refuse to be silenced.

Jesus hears Bartimaeus' cry and stops, pauses his journey. Listen to what happens next and see if you can hear what the author might trying to emphasise: Jesus stopped and said, "CALL him here." And they CALLED Bartimaeus saying, "Rise up, he is CALLING you." It's subtle but I think we are supposed to discern a call in this verse. Bartimaeus is called by Jesus, and he responds with exuberance. Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and ran to Jesus.

On our way together let us also respond to Christ's loving call, casting aside those aspects of our lives which are holding us back.

Bartimaeus comes to Jesus and prays for faith – doesn't sound like it at first, because he says, "My teacher, let me see again." But we have already noted that this story is not about blindness, but about faith, about discipleship, about a way of open-hearted living modelled on and empowered by Jesus. It is about being ON the way, rather than BESIDE the way. And Jesus says to Bartimaeus, "Start travelling. Your faith has saved you from a life beside the way. Your faith has opened for you a path along which to walk." And that's it. Jesus doesn't heal Bartimaeus, he just calls and welcomes him. And immediately Bartimaeus regained his sight and followed Jesus ON THE WAY. He could've gone anywhere. But seeing is following for Bartimaeus. Faith, for him, is living along the Christ way, being a disciple, a follower, a pilgrim, a fellow traveller.

So finally, on our way together let us also follow our hearts – hearts which belong to Jesus, the lover of our lives, the divine welcomer, the presence of God's love in the world. Faith is following. Living is travelling along the Christ Way. Let's do that together.

SONG: You are salt for the earth?, AoV.2.4

1. You are salt for the earth, O people: Salt for the Kingdom of God!
Share the flavour of life, O people: Life in the Kingdom of God!

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy, Bring forth the kingdom of peace;
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice, Bring forth the City of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people: Light for the City of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people: Shine for the Kingdom of God!

3. You are a seed of the Word, O people: Bring forth the Kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, Grow in the Kingdom of God!

4. We are a blest and a pilgrim people: Bound for the Kingdom of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland: Love is the Kingdom of God!

SONG: You are salt for the earth, by Marty Haugen, © 1986 GIA Publications,
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OFFERING

Bring forth the kingdom of mercy
Bring forth the kingdom of peace
Bring forth the kingdom of justice.

May all that we offer each and every day
our money, our words, our actions,
our thoughts and prayers
be dedicated to doing all this and more.
Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

with SONG: Kyrie, MV 68

SONG: Kyrie, (Guarani), from More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
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One of the great traditional prayer responses of the church, Kyrie eleison, comes from Bartimaeus's cry to Jesus, "Have mercy on me; eleison me". Kyrie eleison are Greek words meaning, Lord have mercy, or, more fully, have compassion, grace, faithfulness, lovingkindness, steadfast love.

Saide

Ian

Let us pray with Bartimaeus in song, holding in mind and heart the needs of our lives, our community, the body of Christ, our nation, the peoples of the world, the earth and all it's creatures. Let us pray, Kyrie eleison.

Kyrie eleison, kyrie eleison
Kyrie eleison, kyrie eleison

Jesus, way walker, path treader,
you call us with Bartimaeus to rise up in hope.
Grant us the faith to follow you on your way
through struggle, into new life.
Pour out your healing mercy,
your compassionate grace, along our way

Have mercy on us in our emergence from lockdown
with the complex range of emotions we are feeling.

Have mercy on your children:
those who are ill, those grieving loved ones, those anxious and afraid.

Have mercy on our community:
business owners and operators, health workers, teachers and students,
and those who have been left unemployed by the pandemic.

Have mercy on the church
as we seek ways to witness to your gracious love
for the vulnerable and the marginalised in the face of vaccine mandates.

Have mercy on the world
with justice in oppression, peace in conflict, plenty in poverty.

And have mercy on the earth:
the air, soil and water, plants and animals,
including your human siblings,
one creation in the light of your love for all.

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison, kyrie eleison
Kyrie eleison, kyrie eleison

All this we pray in the name of Christ who taught us to pray saying:

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 for ever. Amen.

NOTICES

Good morning.

I'm Matthew Cameron

And I'm Michael Cameron

Matthew and Michael

And this is the BUC News

So lockdown has ended.

Yes so what does that mean for returning to worship in person?

I'm glad you asked. The worship committee and Church Council have been working on a policy to make sure that we can all return safely.

I imagine there's a lot to think about and consider

For sure all the details will be coming out soon.

Now a reminder that Emergence will be open in less than two weeks.

And how amazing that the exhibition has coincided with us emerging from lockdown.

I agree, it's definitely amazing.

However I believe that the Opening Night on 5th November will be on Zoom.

Yes check out the event on the website for the link.

What a great way to make sure that lots of people can join in the event.

Definitely and then the exhibition will be offered virtually and in person during the week.

And I guess we check the website for opening times.

Yes and details for the Performance Event on 12th November will be confirmed in a week or so.

Anything else?

Oh yes contributors are reminded to deliver their works to the church next weekend. Check your email for details.

Perfect, another reminder is that the second session exploring the Statement from the Heart will be held via Zoom on November 8th at 7.30pm.

Ah yes, the monthly series that is being hosted by the BUC Walking Together Group.

All the details are in the Olive Press.

Speaking of the Olive Press I noticed an update about the Olive Way Coordinator position.

That's interesting. Details?

The closing date has been extended to 14th November.

I'm assuming we are still letting friends, family etc know about this amazing opportunity.

Yes indeed.

This month Church Council approved a recommendation that we become organizational members of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network

That's quite a mouthful.

It is. It's also sometimes referred to as the PIEN>

Right that's much easier.

Now speaking of mouthfuls PIEN is promoting a 2-pronged fundraiser for November

Interesting. What's the focus?

Learning to cook Palestinian food and hosting a Peace Meal.

Okay now let me think.

About what?

Well if there's anything else to say of course

Okay. And?

I know. Remember we participated in Sounding the Alarm last Sunday.

I do, there's a photo of Dad out there on social media ringing our church bell.

Yes well it was all part of the global Faiths 4 Climate Justice Day of Action.

How do we find out more about it?

You could probably just search on social media but there'll be a story in the November Olive Branch, out next Sunday.

Great now next Sunday is a 5th Sunday so our service will have a reflective focus.

Correct and we are welcoming Kirsten Parris as our preacher while Ian is on leave for the weekend.

Lovely and this will be our final live stream only service.

Oh and I've just remembered. The BUC Arts Committee would love to hear from anyone who is available to volunteer as an exhibition host or guide during the week.

And I've remembered that the Sunday Chat this week is a Welcoming Ceremony

Nice and I believe there's quite a large group of people being welcomed.

Hop onto Zoom at 11am to offer a BUC welcome.

I think that will do for this week.

I agree.

Next week we'll be signing off for the last time.

Again!!

Keep up to date with all the news in the Olive Press, website and Facebook group.

Goodbye and thanks for listening.

SONG: Be thou my vision, TiS 547

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Mother and Father, thy child let me be;
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
3. Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;
thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.
4. Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,
thou my inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only first in my heart;
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.
5. Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

SONG: Be thou my vision, Gaelic poem 8th cent., from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious PUBLIC DOMAIN

BLESSING

Saide

In the days ahead may we fix our eyes on God
Mother and Father, Wisdom and Word.
May our hearts be filled with the joy of heaven,
our minds with hope and expectation
and our souls with peace and a passion for justice.

Let's go out now with God as our vision
Sent out in Jesus' name, one body, the people of God. Amen.

THANK YOU

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Bible readers:
Lucy Hardman
Mal Rowe

Dave Hall
(Pastor: Children, Youth
and Young Adults)

Acknowledgement of Country:
Clare Keogh

Children's time
Matilda Brown-Major

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson

(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Ian Ferguson

Musicians

Simone Alesich
Helen Burnham
Saide Cameron
Brad Coath
Colleen Coath
Glenice Cook
Sheryll Coulson

Hannah Denison
Andrew Dickinson
Ian Ferguson
Colin Hunter
Jessica Kvensakul
Kate Scull
Natalie Sims
Maggie Somerville
Daniel Whelan
Shawn Whelan

Songs:

(Prelude) Lord we are blind,
Words © D.O. Edge
Music by permission Oxford
University Press
from Together in Song, (633)
Harper Collins Religious
Elaine Potter

(Postlude) Sent out in Jesus Name
Traditional Cuban,
from All Together Okay, (412)
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Jane Allardice
Natalie Sims
Shawn Whelan

Images:

Ray Cameron
(Walking the Camino, 2016)

Sculpture of Jesus begging:
location is outside St Francis of
Assisi Church, New York City.
<https://sqdte9mbh615zsvesmkh1eyq-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/W31st-135-St.FrancisOfAssisi-6.jpg>

Bartimaeus casting off cloak,
image sourced from:
https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/cdri/jpeg/B_Proper25.jpg

Editing / Production:

Jane Allardice
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Dave Hall
Lydia Jacka
Dave Miller
Mal Rowe

CLOSING VERSE:

Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?'
The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Mark 10:51