



**Order of Service**  
**24<sup>th</sup> October 2021**  
**Sight and Insight**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Take heart, Christ is calling us, beckoning us to come.

'What do you want me to do?' he asks.

***We have come here, we are drawn here,  
to have our sight restored.***

Let us worship the God who gives sight and insight.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We give thanks for the Bangerang Clan  
and the Yorta Yorta Nations

who have nurtured this land and the waters  
from time immemorial,

for their stories of the Dreaming,

for their connection of the sacred,

for their 'yes' to creation.

We commit ourselves to work for reconciliation. *John van de Laar, adapted*

**HYMN *Tis* 179 Praise with joy the world's Creator**

**PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

Creator God,

you scattered stars and suns in glowing skies  
and gave us eyes to see.

Lord Christ,

you spoke God's truth for life and faith  
and gave us minds to understand.

Blessed Spirit,

you live in God's people everywhere  
and bless us with your healing power.

***Triune God, we praise and adore you!***

Holy God,

when we fail to see the wonders of your world,  
the degradation and loss we have caused,  
the injustices lived by vulnerable people,  
the fine words followed by failure to act,  
forgive us.

***Forgive us when we are blind Lord, wilfully or by chance,  
and when we lack insight into your truths. Amen***

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Take heart: God hears your prayers.

The God who heals the blind heals our brokenness.

God calls you with forgiveness, with hope, with life!

***Now our eyes are opened and we can see.***

***Now we can follow Christ into the Kingdom.***

***Thanks be to God!***



## RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

### AN EARLY WORD



**Who are these four people? Three of them have something to do with music. Why did I choose these four?**

A clue: Helen, Geoffrey, Fanny, Andrea

**HYMN TIS 129** *Amazing grace! How sweet the sound*

### THE READINGS

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp for our feet,  
***a light to our path.***

**First Reading** Job 42. 1-6, 10-17

**Psalm Response** Psalm 34. 1-8

**The Gospel** Mark 10. 46- 52

Lord, may your word live in us  
***and bear much fruit to your glory.***

### REFLECTION

A blind man sitting by the roadside just outside Jericho, begging. Who is he? The son of Timaeus. Nothing very personal there - there are probably Bartimaeus siblings, all with that name. Like the Congolese Mamma Lawi, or the Macs - sons of... Here's a man who is disabled, without his own name, without a job, not recognised by the community. His friends, his helpers, his culture, his society, all help to make him invisible.

But then there's a disturbance - a crowd is approaching. The blind man is suddenly shouting. Now the last time we heard shouting outside Jericho, the walls fell down! 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' An invisible man sitting, begging, hearing - and crying out loud. In Mark's Gospel, this means the one crying out is in a condition of extreme need. 'Son of David!' No-one in Mark's Gospel has called Jesus this name yet, nor has Jesus mentioned it. The crowd rebukes the one crying out - not a gentle shushing, but a rebuke. Are they angry with his theology? - 'Be silent. Be mute!' But he shouts again, even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me! Relieve my misery...'

'Call him here', says Jesus. They call the blind man - who? the crowd? the disciples? 'Have courage! Get up!' Throwing off his cloak, he springs up and comes to Jesus. What about his cloak? It's government issue - or approved by the government; it gives warmth and shelter; it's his sleeping bag - and it catches the odd coins tossed to the blind man. He's leaving his security, throwing away his past life to spring up and hurry to Jesus.

'What do you want me to do for you?' Think back to last Sunday when Jesus asked James and John exactly the same question. The blind man's answer is very different from theirs: 'Let me see again'. Jesus responds very differently this time: 'Go! Your faith has made you well'. Healed! Not saved from sin, we note. 'Go!' says Jesus - but the man, now seeing, follows Jesus. And in the next chapter we'll find that following Jesus means walking the last dozen miles to Jerusalem, to a arrest, suffering and death.

The blind man can't see - quite literally. He needs his sight, but he also needs to be visible, seen, validated by the community. Jesus grants him both these things by healing him.

What of the crowd? Their eyesight is fine - but they are blind, whereas Bartimaeus has real sight: he knows who Jesus is. How is it that this invisible man, this man on the margins, sees who Jesus is? Sees Jesus is the Son of David, that he has kingly authority and the capacity to reinstate the Kingdom of God. - which will not be revealed until after the Resurrection of Jesus.

This incident shows us clearly that there's seeing and seeing! Our eyes provide a measure of sight which helps us to live, to negotiate the everyday aspects of life. But that inner sight, or insight, is a gift of God.

The question - for me, and you - is 'Can I put aside my cloak to stand empty and dependent before Jesus? Can I let my failure be redeemed by the grace of God, who lets me die and rise again?'

And what of Job? We have had a whistle-stop tour of 41 chapters these last three weeks. We have heard Job, suffering terrible losses and pain, claiming his integrity in the face of God's remoteness. He and his friends explore the hard questions: why do the evil seem to prosper, while the honest person never gets ahead? 'O that I might know God', he cries. 'How can I understand my relationship with God?' Finally he accuses God of creating a world of chaos and lack of order.

Last week we heard the drama of God's speaking from the whirlwind: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ...where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?... Who determined its measurements - surely you know! ... Have you commanded the morning since your days began?' and more - four chapters, 129 verses - in which God illustrates the magnificent orderliness of every aspect of creation and how they operate in freedom and beauty. Moreover, God shows that humans are not central to creation! But now Job realises that he can't answer God's questions. He thought he knew it all - but now he has learnt the truth. He changes his mind.

'I know that you can do all things. ...  
I have uttered what I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ...  
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear  
but now my eye sees you;'

Job has heard about God; now he sees him - even though people are not supposed to see God - except Hagar, Moses and Isaiah - but Job has seen God, fulfilling his fierce hope (Job 19.25-27). He knows that in those four chapters God hasn't been beating him up, but giving him insight leading to the re-orientation of his life. Job's profound desire to be in God's presence is fulfilled. Now Job has rejected, retracted, his earlier words in his new understanding of God's ways, expressed in this statement of his faith.

And what of the happy ending of Job's story? Ten more children, double the possessions he had lost earlier. All of this took time, of course, perhaps a decade. Like many others, I find this an unnecessary addition - verse 6 would have been a fine place to end. We can, however, say that the restored fortunes of Job show God's faithfulness and mercy - they are not a reward for Job. This is not the Prosperity Gospel; it is God's gracious choice to restore Job's possessions.

So, Bartimaeus and Job. Two men of faith; two men who know what it is to see, and to have insight. What do these two have to say to preachers?

Bartimaeus, though blind, knows who Jesus is. His faith leads to healing and wholeness. Anyone who would preach the Word must have that same faith, that same knowledge of who Jesus is. Good eyesight may or may not be helpful here - think of Fanny Crosby! He also reminds us that we make following Jesus our priority - even when it leads to suffering and death - or places we'd rather not go.

Job's seeing God, through the eyes of his faith, is a lesson for all preachers. It's not enough to have faith: insight is necessary. And, as Job learns, while a preacher may think she has this insight, she will gain much deeper insights as she continues to listen to God speak - from the whirlwind, or in the heart.

Now this is good news! Thanks be to God.

## **OUR RESPONSES**

### **CONGOLESE HYMN**

#### **OFFERING – DEDICATION**

Generous God, may our gifts be used  
to answer the needs of those who call you  
to hear their cries for help,  
to offer refuge to those searching for hope. **Amen**

#### **NOTICES**

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Compassionate God,  
we celebrate the healing you bring to us  
and to the world.

We ask for sight and insight for your Church  
that your people may better serve you  
as true disciples following their Lord  
even to places they would rather not go.  
Grant your special insight to all who preach the World,  
and especially to Lay Preachers in this presbytery and Synod.

We ask for sight and insight through your world, O Lord.  
Bless all who cannot see  
and those working to bring better vision to all with limited sight.  
Especially bring your insights to all working with COVID  
and healing to all victims of the virus.  
Pour out your Spirit on your world,  
renewing it as your perfect creation  
through the reconciling power of your Son..

We ask for sight for our leaders, O Lord,  
that they forget personal agendas  
to become the servants of your people  
so that injustices are righted,  
the weak and vulnerable cared for.

We pray through your Son and we pray the prayer he taught

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*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*



## **BEING SENT ON GOD'S MISSION**

### **RECOGNITION OF A LAY PREACHER'S SIXTY YEARS SINCE ACCREDITATION**

#### **The Minister, Rev Loni Vaitohi**

The Uniting Church provides for the exercise  
by women and men  
of the gifts God bestows upon them  
for the building up of the church. ...

**Kevin Chapman** from the Lay Preachers' Committee, who represent the Presbytery of North East Victoria in  
responsibility for Lay Preachers

**Response** - Joan McRae

**HYMN TIS 210** *O for a thousand tongues to sing*

#### **WORD OF MISSION**

Go! Your faith has made you well.

***We go, knowing our faith has been made stronger.***

Go! Follow Jesus all the way.

***We go, knowing Jesus is the Way!***

#### **BLESSING**

May the faithful love of the Creator,  
the healing presence of Christ  
and the life-giving power of the Spirit  
bless you today and for ever. Amen

#### **THE DOXOLOGY**

