

# Church Action on Poverty (CAP) Sunday 21 February 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Lent



We were planning to have a Church Action on Poverty service in the church, with collecting envelopes and maybe even a lunch, but since we can't do that now due to the pandemic, CAP has amended the service for use online. I am using most of their material. If you would like to, throughout **please join in the words in bold at home.**

Invitation to worship, from Last Sunday's Racial Justice service seemed to suit this service also:

## **An Invitation to Worship**

You have all been invited at this time to this special place

**We don't just want an invitation**  
**We want to be welcomed**

You are offered a special welcome to this place at this time

**We don't just want a welcome**  
**We want to have a voice**

Welcome to this place where there will be time for listening

**We don't just want a voice**  
**We want to be heard**

Welcome to this friendly space where your story will be heard

**We don't just want to be heard**  
**We want to be believed**

Welcome to this time and place where no-one's truth is denied

**We don't just want to be believed**  
**We want to be trusted**

Welcome to this place and time where your words are accepted

**We don't just want to be trusted**  
**We want to be loved**

Welcome to this time and place where God's love embraces everyone

**We don't just want to be loved**  
**We want to know we belong**

Welcome, and we pray you will feel you belong among us at all times

Richard Becher

**HYMN** O love, how deep, how broad, how high! (R&S 283, omitting v. 5&6) recorded by Thora

1. O love, how deep, how broad, how high,  
it fills the heart with ecstasy,  
that God, the Son of God, should take  
our mortal form for mortals' sake!

2. He sent no angel to our race  
of higher or of lower place,  
but wore the robe of human frame  
himself, and to this lost world came.

3. For us baptized, for us he bore  
his holy fast and hungered sore,  
for us temptation sharp he knew;  
for us the tempter overthrew.

4. For us he prayed; for us he taught;  
for us his daily works he wrought;  
by words and signs and actions thus  
still seeking not himself, but us.

7. To whom whose boundless love has won  
salvation for us through his Son,  
to God the Father, glory be  
both now and through eternity.

### **Opening Prayer for CAP Sunday by Nick Jowlett**

Lord Jesus, the fabric of our society has been patched many times,  
and yet still there are holes - the places where the poor and the vulnerable struggle to exist.  
As we face a future in which virus, climate and politics  
threaten deeper gashes in the web of community,  
we pray that you will guide us to create a new garment of justice,  
so that those who suffer now may join with all in drinking the new wine of your love  
in the fresh wineskins of a changed world.  
We ask this in your name. **Amen**

### **Thanksgiving prayers by Chris Howson (CAP)**

Heavenly creator, we look back on the last year with horror and with wonder. We are horrified at  
the loss of life in our nation and throughout the world, but in awe that you have been ever present  
in the pandemic, bringing hope and healing through the people of God. You have brought kindness  
into chaos.

#### **We thank you for signs of hope and healing.**

God, we are sorry for the times when we have been slow to respond to the needs of our  
neighbours, especially to those who have been more vulnerable. We pledge ourselves to the  
service of those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic: poorer communities; the Black  
community; those on the frontline of dealing with the public; those who have lost their livelihoods.

#### **God, help us to rebuild our communities with fairness and justice.**

We give thanks for organisations, neighbours, relatives, churches, charities who have gone the  
extra mile to look out for those who have been hurting. We give thanks for the NHS and care  
workers who have nursed hundreds of thousands back to health. We thank the shop workers, the  
taxi drivers, the cleaners, all who have kept our nation together through this time.

#### **We give thanks to all who have helped us through this pandemic.**

Help the Churches to respond with a new determination to be alongside the weak and vulnerable,  
and to listen to the words of those in our midst who need to have their voices heard. Help us to find  
new ways to serve our communities, to be new wineskins for the new wine that is pouring  
throughout our land.

#### **Help us to renew and refresh our commitment to serve and to challenge.**

For all we need to do

#### **Let Jesus guide us.**

For all we need to challenge

#### **Let Jesus give us courage.**

For all the work to rebuild our nation

#### **Let the Holy Spirit give us the tools of change.**

For good news to the poor

#### **Let God shape us and embolden us.**

For creating the reign of God's justice and mercy

**Let God renew our hearts and minds. Amen**

## Offering

You are reminded to continue to send in your gifts for the work of the church.  
If you would like to make a secure online donation to Church Action on Poverty visit  
[www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/give](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/give)

## As our offertory prayer we use words from the hymn *Brave new world* written for CAP

A brave new world where poverty, not hid, we'll simply banish,  
a world for us so hard to see, where all who live can flourish,  
with common wealth where all can share, this hope we'll feed and nourish:

For this we'll plan, for this we'll work, this dream we will accomplish.  
We'll kill the judgements that deride the difference in a neighbour,  
remove the fear of want or need, grow food that all can savour,  
build up the things that make us one, give due reward for labour.

A brave new world where poverty is banished...  
for this we'll plan, for this we'll work, this dream we will accomplish. Amen

## Reading Mark 10:46-52

### Reflection by Jan Sutch Pickard

The words in italics are Bartimaeus, the rest are the words of the crowd.

*This is what hurts: not seeing, but hearing  
the hum of the crowd, bustling a few feet away –  
business as usual –*

But what's it got to do with you?

*Then sensing the change in tempo and tone:  
something new, to be welcomed or contained,  
challenging the status quo, a threat, a promise –*

But what's that got to do with you?  
Accept the way things are, Bartimaeus,  
the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate  
and the blind man – in the dark.  
We can see what's best. We can see.  
This is the way things are: stop shouting!  
Don't rock the boat or try to break the mould  
or ask awkward questions. Just shut up  
and stay in your place at the side of the road.  
Don't get in the way of progress and policy-making.  
It's for your own good. Take our word for it.  
We have the whole picture  
and structures to keep things under control,  
to keep safe the ferment of new ideas.  
Don't imagine that what you have to say  
will make a difference. We can see what's best.  
Desist, beggar-man. Don't protest.

*This is what hurts: being seen but not heard,  
like a troublesome child, being taken for granted, without agency, not allowed a voice.*

This is what hurts: being seen but not heard... not allowed a voice. This is the case for many poor and disabled people – they are seen but not heard, they are heard but not listened to. Their needs are not really considered. As we heard in our Call to Worship

Welcome to this friendly space where your story will be heard  
**We don't just want to be heard**  
**We want to be believed**

We don't just want to be believed  
We want to be trusted  
We don't just want to be trusted  
We want to be loved  
We don't just want to be loved  
We want to know we belong

Is society listening? Is the church listening, and believing, trusting, loving and welcoming?

**HYMN** That's torn it, from CAP (Tune *Intercessor* at 374 in R&S) recorded by Thora

That's torn it, all we planned is ripped asunder,  
the force of fermentation strains the seams;  
society has witnessed skill and blunder,  
a virus spins and tests our human schemes.

Blind faith has opened wide our eyes to chaos  
where poverty, the consequence of greed,  
has highlighted our wholly human pathos,  
yet shut some hearts to other people's need.

Some early Christians sat in isolation  
while pondering the way that they should live,  
this was no empty prayer-filled incantation,  
but selfless loving, learning how to give.

Whatever greets us in the years' unfolding,  
we only know this crisis offers choice,  
to stumble on, or use the grace we're holding  
to change the world, give reason to rejoice.

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### **Reading Acts 4:1-20**

**Reflection by Jan Sutch Pickard** (this is part of the Bible Study in the CAP Lent Resource  
– Life Changing Stories

#### **Ordinary People Speaking Out**

Paulette Wilson is a modern-day example of an ordinary person speaking out, like Peter and John were in the story from Acts.

Paulette was brought over to Britain from Jamaica as a child, by her mother who had come in response to the British government's call for workers. The presence in this country of both mother and child, members of the Windrush Generation, was lawful. As an adult, Paulette was a law-abiding and hard-working member of society. Yet in 2015 she received a letter telling her that she faced deportation as an illegal immigrant – an example of the government's 'hostile environment' policy. Paulette tried hard to convince the Home Office there was an error, but she was arrested twice, nearly deported, and pushed into destitution. She lost her state benefits and was no longer allowed to work. For two years Paulette had to travel from her home in Wolverhampton to a Home Office reporting office 24 miles away, facing a £5,000 fine if she missed an appointment. Along with many others she experienced confusion, uncaring officials and routine humiliations. But Paulette should not be seen as a victim. She played a decisive role in exposing the government's mistakes. Nervous about speaking out, she nevertheless agreed to be interviewed about her experience; prompting hundreds of other people to come forward and tell their stories. She spoke calmly to a room packed with MPs in Westminster in April 2018, and later gave clear evidence to

the Joint Committee on Human Rights. Her sudden death at the age of 64 in July 2020 came soon after she and others delivered a petition to Downing Street, calling for compensation and reform. Suddenly Priti Patel, Home Office Minister, responded, saying that her department must become a “fair, humane, compassionate” institution – and beginning to put into place the changes to make that happen. What would have happened if Paulette and other women and men, previously overlooked, had let themselves be silenced?

### **Prayers of Intercession by Hazel Palmer (CAP)**

Lord, we worship you as the Maker of heaven and earth. You love justice, so we come to you today to pray for people who are short of money. Some of us are struggling financially ourselves; others are better off. But all of us have been made in your image.

If we have forgotten that, help us remember. Help us move forward, not back.

#### **Lord, give us justice for the poor.**

Even before Covid-19, people were poor for seemingly various reasons: being unemployed, in low-paid jobs, on zero-hours contracts or being sick or disabled. But behind all these differences we see policies like allowing unjust pay and working conditions, cuts to Government grants to councils, lower benefits and delayed payments. When the Covid-19 restrictions end, let these policies end as well. Help us move forward, not back.

#### **Lord, give us justice for the poor.**

We don't believe food banks are the answer. We need a system with payments that give dignity and freedom from fear: fear of hunger, of being unable to pay bills, of being evicted – a proper social security system. To do this, we want a voice that expresses our needs and is listened to by politicians. We need a way of doing things founded on fresh thinking and the real needs of poor people. Help us move forward, not back.

#### **Lord, give us justice for the poor.**

Help the churches to pray for and support those in need. We pray for the young, for the old, for those with children and for the sick. For people with disabilities, we ask especially for recognition and respect for all kinds of disabilities, whether physical or mental and whether visible or not. We bring all these people to you because you are concerned about them, as Jesus was when he was here in the body. Help us move forward, not back.

#### **Lord, give us justice for the poor.**

God, we pray you'll transform our country so it's more like your kingdom of justice, peace and joy. May the hungry be fed, the homeless be housed, the sick and disabled be treated with compassion, and the marginalised taken into the mainstream.

May we be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We ask all these things through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**HYMN** God of freedom, God of justice (R&S 625) recorded by Thora

God of freedom, God of justice,  
you whose love is strong as death,  
you who saw the dark of prison,  
you who knew the price of faith --  
    touch our world of sad oppression  
    with your Spirit's healing breath.

Rid the earth of torture's terror,  
you whose hands were nailed to wood;  
hear the cries of pain and protest,  
you who shed the tears and blood --  
    move in us the power of pity  
    restless for the common good.

Make in us a captive conscience  
quick to hear, to act, to plead;  
make us truly sisters, brothers  
of whatever race or creed --  
    teach us to be fully human,  
    open to each other's needs.

**Blessing**

God who weeps at injustice and oppression, genocide and crucifixion:  
we grieve the state of our world – so much brokenness and violence,  
so much pain and unfairness.

God who aches for a different way,  
a peaceable respect, a community of equals and a realm of love:  
we ask for hope in order to work for change;  
we ask for courage to resist in the face of opposition;  
we ask for faith to believe in the possibility of peace. Amen

A blessing from the United Church of Canada

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