

Christ Church, 24 October 2021. Written service circulated to all

**Call to Worship (based on Psalm 126)**

Let us begin this day by rejoicing!  
The Lord has done such wonderful things for us.  
Let us be glad!  
The day before us is uncertain.  
We know not what we will encounter on our way.  
Wherever we go, we go forth as people of the living God,  
And we go forth to touch the lives of all with his healing touch.  
Let us begin this day with rejoicing!  
and return to our homes with gladness!

<http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

**Hymn** All things bright and beautiful

*All things bright and beautiful  
all creatures great and small  
all things wise and wonderful  
the God that made them all*

Each little flower that opens  
Each little bird that sings  
He made their glowing colours  
He made their tiny wings

*All things bright and beautiful*

The purple headed mountains  
The river running by  
The sunset and the morning  
That brightens up the sky

*All things bright and beautiful*

The cold wind in the winter  
The pleasant summer sun  
The ripe fruits in the garden  
He made them every one

*All things bright and beautiful*

He gave us eyes to see them  
And lips that we might tell  
How great is God Almighty  
Who has made all things well

*All things bright and beautiful*

Cecil Frances Alexander

**Opening Prayer** (inspired by Psalm 126)

What are your dreams, people of God?

**To be filled with laughter;  
to cry with joy, not with sorrow.**

What are your hopes, people of God?

**To be free of the chains that bind us;  
to shout with thanksgiving, not with anguish.**

Rejoice, people of God; here and now,  
God makes our hopes and dreams come true.

adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2008*

Here, in this place, we discover the great things God has done.  
In story and song, in silence and sacrament,  
we are reminded that God's relationship with us which lasts forever.  
Here, with these people, we find our true home.  
where we can run home laughing, after being lost for so long.  
Here, today as we celebrate the sacrament of baptism we learn  
of the One who repairs all our mistakes,  
of the One who reshapes our brokenness.  
In Christ we die and are reborn to full life.  
In God we are made whole. **Amen**

**Offering**

You are reminded to send in your gifts for the work of the church.  
Holy One, receive our gifts by your grace.  
Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit  
to accomplish Christ's work of love in the world. **Amen.**

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**Baptism** of Zachary William Rogers

**Song May God's blessing** (page 69 red folder)

May God's blessing be upon you now  
May you know of His great love for you  
May God's blessing be upon you now,  
Right where you are.

Sung 3 times (Last time repeat last line)

Chris Kipling © 2008 Song solutions daybreak

**Children leave for Sunday Club**

**Readings: Psalm 126**  
**Mark 10:46-52**

One of my dad's favourite sayings, for when you told him something he didn't know was 'you know some stuff'. I'd like to change that a bit to 'you learn some stuff', which you certainly do when you read Biblical commentaries!

Who can tell me how many times does Jesus heal a blind person?

The answer is three and two of those are in Mark's gospel, but the healing we heard about today is completely different from the other two. In Mark's gospel chapter eight Jesus heals an unnamed blind man in Bethsaida, and in John chapter 9, he heals a man blind from birth, also with no name. In both those other healings, Jesus heals through touch, in fact very specific touch – he spat in the dust, made a paste from it and spread that on the man's eyes, which doesn't sound very hygienic and definitely falls into the category of 'don't try this at home' but it did the trick. Today's story is different in two ways, the blind man is named, he is Bartimaeus, and even more specifically he is the son of Timaeus – he is known in his community, and Jesus doesn't touch him in any way, he simply says 'go your faith has made you well.' Bartimaeus is also more feisty than the other blind men, when the crowd tell him to be quiet he shouts out even more loudly and he knows who Jesus is, addressing him as Son of David and later 'my teacher'. He already has faith in Jesus. In the times of Jesus, the blind represented the poorest of the poor. Bartimaeus lived outside of the city, outside of the path, outside of the light, and outside of the economy - like many beneficiaries of Jesus' healing he embodies the effects of social exclusion. Unable to work he would not be able to form a family. He wouldn't be able to sustain himself let alone any dependents and would be forced to beg. He would be unable to fulfil some of the obligations of civic and religious life and so was an outcast from society. We heard last week how those in debt are often excluded from social gatherings because they are too embarrassed to admit that they can't pay for a drink, or a meal out, or entrance to some

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event. The blind of Biblical times were excluded, not so much because they were disabled, but because they couldn't work and were therefore poor, even poorer than the working poor who are least could afford food and shelter. And of course, there was no welfare system back then. The temple, the church if you like, didn't help the poor, in fact it extracted money from them in temple taxes and the need to pay for animal sacrifices. If you couldn't pay for the right kind of offering, you were refused entry to the temple, you were not allowed to practice your religion. But despite all that, Bartimaeus has something going for him – his faith in Jesus.

And here is where we get to the bit where I learned something – I noticed an insignificant detail I had never focused on before in this story – when Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was calling for him, he threw off his cloak and sprang up and went to Jesus. He leaves behind the only item of value that he owns. For people living in extreme poverty, the cloak is a thing that provides warmth in hostile weather conditions, a valuable piece of clothing that would allow them to sleep at night or to throw it in front of them to collect money, but the cloak is also a sign of status and power. Jesus' own cloak plays a crucial role in the healing of the woman with the flow of blood – she only had to touch it and she was cured. In another passage describing Jesus' power to heal, Mark says: "wherever he went, into small towns, or great towns, or into the country, they took those who were ill into the market-places, requesting him that they put their hands even on the edge of his robe: and all of those who did so were made well". When Jesus walks into Jerusalem, the crowd lays down their cloaks as a welcoming sign. Jesus' cloak was so important that the soldiers drew lots for it at the crucifixion. The cloak plays many different functions – a source of power, divestment of power, humiliation, reverence, source of healing – but all those functions share an understanding of the cloak as a sign of status.

This section of Mark's gospel talks about discipleship. We heard the end of the preceding section last week, when Jesus tells the disciples that whoever wants to be first, must be the servant of all. We are told that the first will be last, and the last will be first. We are told that the rich will find it hard to enter the kingdom of God, as hard as a camel passing through the eye of a needle. We are told we should sell our belongings and give the money to the poor. Amongst these examples of what discipleship is Bartimaeus appears as a radical disciple who casts away his only valuable possession. The story ends with a compelling description of Christian discipleship built on wordplay - the miracle starts with Bartimaeus "sitting on the side of the road" yet it ends with the new disciple "walking, following Jesus on the road." You could say that Bartimaeus does not need healing of his physical affliction, but he needs healing of society's rejection of him. The way he is treated as worthless, when

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in fact he is better and richer than those of higher social status – he has faith, he proclaims Jesus as the Son of David, in other words the Messiah, from the beginning and he is willing to give up what little he has to follow that faith and be a true disciple of Jesus. We could learn a thing or two from Bartimaeus.

**Hymn** Word of the Father (words from Church Hymnary, tune at 187 in R&S)

Word of the Father, the life of creation,  
emptied of glory, among us you came;  
born as a servant, assuming our weakness,  
drank from the cup of our joy and our shame.

Each human child bears your image and likeness,  
yet all are heirs to the sins of our earth;  
once from death's flood you arose to redeem us,  
water and Spirit now seal our rebirth.

Searching, you found us before we could name you,  
loving, you suffered our pain and our loss;  
strengthen each child through the faith of your people,  
born in the glory which streams from the Cross.

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### **Prayers of Intercession**

So many days, we are like the blind beggar in Mark's gospel,  
sitting on the side of the road hoping to hear the sounds of your coming.  
We are like the Canaanite woman begging for the crumbs that fall from your table.  
We are like the woman who was sick for so many years  
who reached out to touch the hem of your garment.  
Jesus Christ, Son of David, have mercy upon us!

We come, confident that your promise to be with us always is true,  
confident that you are greater than the trials we face,  
confident that we are secure in the palm of your hands.  
We come to you today, like blind Bartimaeus who sat on the side of the road,  
knowing that you love us and have not forgotten our needs.  
And so we bring before you the needs of others –  
The poor, disabled and socially excluded, may we help make our society a fairer more caring  
place.  
For those who are ill and those who care for them, grant them the confidence of Bartimaeus, that  
you will be with them.  
For the newly baptised and their family, that they will be held in your love and supported by your  
church.  
For....

Help us to see in a different way  
not just the condition of people, but their capabilities  
not just what they need, but what they can offer  
not just as labels, but as lovable and loving people.  
Help us to learn from those who know their need of God,  
and to follow their examples of faith. **Amen**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn** Bless the Lord, Oh my soul (red folder)

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up  
It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass  
And whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing  
When the evening comes

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

You're rich in love  
And You're slow to anger  
Your name is great  
And Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness  
I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons  
For my heart to find

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before

Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name  
Bless You Lord

And on that day  
When my strength is failing  
The end draws near  
And my time has come  
Still my soul will  
Sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years  
And then forevermore  
Forevermore

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name  
Yes I'll worship Your Holy name  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name  
Jesus I will worship Your Holy name  
Worship Your Holy name

**Blessing** (Aaronic Blessing from the International Children's Bible, adapted)

May the Lord bless and keep you all.

May the Lord show us kindness.

May God have mercy on us.

May the Lord watch over us all and give us peace, today and every day. Amen