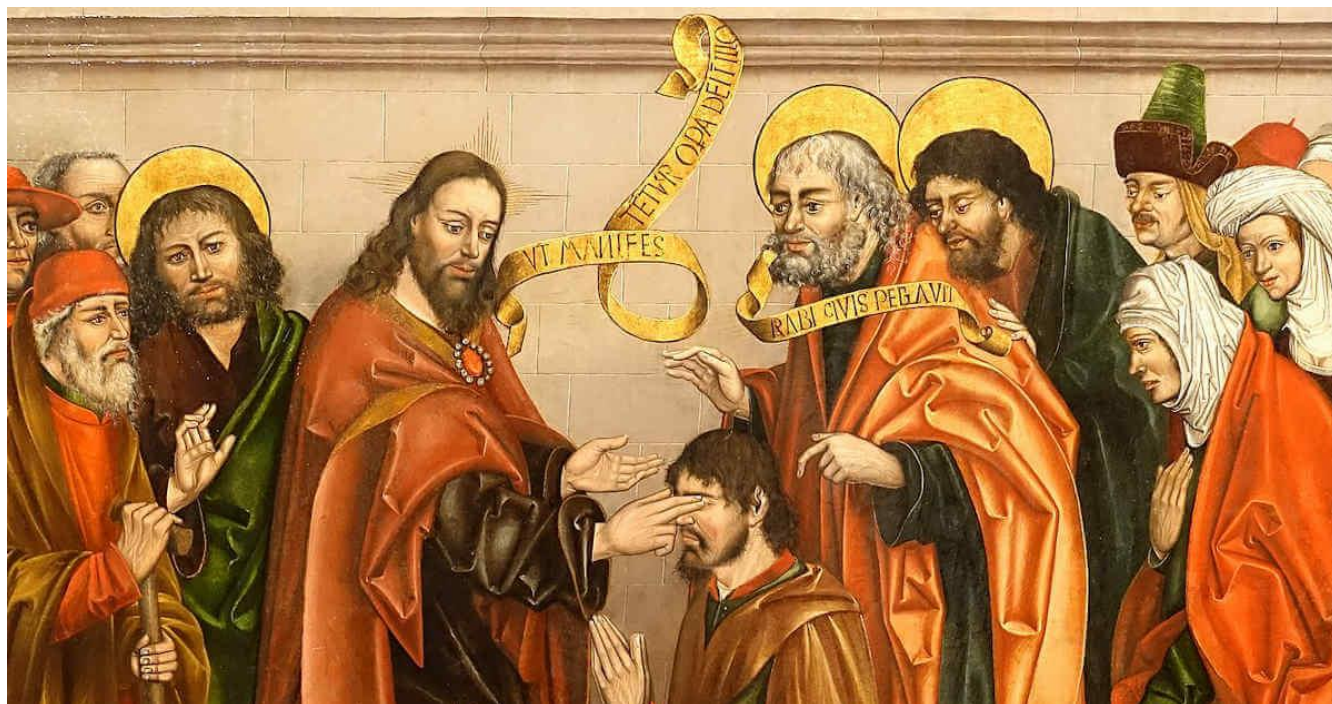


**WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT.
PENTECOST 23 & REFORMATION DAY
Sunday, October 27th, 2024
9am**



The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus, Fernando Gallego workshop, detail, 1480-1488, oil on panel - University of Arizona Museum of Art.

This Sunday the readings from Job, the psalms, Hebrews and the Gospel of Mark continue. Job concludes with today's reading, where Job repents his 'apparent stubbornness' – see the comment on Job later in this liturgy. The psalm, as part of the wisdom literature, focuses upon the theme that is typical of this school of thought: that God punishes the wicked and affirms the good – the very view that the Book of Job questions as being both shallow and inadequate. The Gospel of Mark continues Jesus' response to the victims, the shamed, the crucified of Hebrew society, as he brings Bartimaeus down from his cross. Reformation Day, upon which Brad will reflect is celebrated on October 31st, each year. While the meaning of being a Protestant is multi-layered, meaning different things to different people, the fact that its meaning is unclear to many, provides an opportunity this morning for an attempt at clarification.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

We Prepare Ourselves

News and Notices

Acknowledgement of First Nation's People

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
Traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

A Safe Space

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit

Amen

Collect (inspired from the Gospel story of Blind Bartimaeus)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8B8GQFbEoM>

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu: "I was born blind"

I was born blind and I don't know why
God knows why because he love me so
As I grew up, my spirit knew
Then I learnt to read the world of destruction

United we stand, divided we fall
Together we'll stand, in solidarity

Narranydja dhuwala Batumanj
Narranydja dhuwala Djarrami
Narranydja dhuwala Djejarra'
Narranydja dhuwala Gurrumulnja

United we stand, divided we fall
Together we'll stand, in solidarity

Narranydja dhuwala Barrupa
Narranydja dhuwala Dhukulul
Narranydja dhuwala Maralitja
Narranydja dhuwala Nunbunbu

Y, e, wo wänawu Garrapala
Dhamutjpirr, Dhamuḡura

Gathering Meditation

One voice: Jesus is in our midst. Jesus, our healer, deliverer, and friend, is here.

Many voices: We have heard so many good things about him, but we long to meet him, to encounter him ourselves.

One voice: Call out to him, and do not be silent. Like Bartimaeus, shout to him and do not allow anyone to silence your voice. Cry out and tell Jesus what you need!

Many voices: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! We need a touch from you! Touch me; touch us in our need.

One Voice: In this time of worship, celebrate God's goodness! In this time celebration of worship, know that Jesus touched your place of need.

Hallelujah! Amen!

Adapted from Lillian C. Smith, The Africana Worship Book, Year B (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), 72.

Lighting the Community Candle from the Christ candle

Welcoming Song Sing to God Iona Community © 1993

Chorus

*Sing to God with joy and gladness
hymns and psalms of gratitude.*

*With the voice of praise discover
that to worship God is good.*

1. God unites his scattered people,
gathers those who wandered far,
heals the hurt and broken spirits,
tending every wound and scar.

Chorus

2. Such is God's great power and wisdom
none can calculate or tell.

Keen is God to ground the wicked
and with humble folk to dwell.

Chorus

3. God, with clouds, the sky has curtained,
thus ensuring rain shall fall.

Earth, responding, grows to order
food for creatures great and small.

Chorus

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Holy Trinity

We celebrate you as the One who meets our needs,
who grants our daily bread,
who restores our humanity.

**We celebrate you as the One who knows human anxiety,
want, thirst and humiliation.**

We celebrate you in a compromised world
where wealth and poverty coexist;
where many have all they need – and much more –
but don't know how to share.

So, open our hearts.

Not only that we learn sad facts about the world.

But that we may feel our place in this world, as your people.

Where there is injustice,
teach us to learn the causes and help us to resist.
Where there is brokenness,
teach us to learn of our own brokenness and help us to bring wholeness.

Help us to bring you down from the cross through bringing others down from theirs.

Contemplative Silence

When we want to be a church ever-reforming,
yet cling to comfortable ways:

Jesus, have mercy on us!

When we want to honour your “still speaking voice,”
but are fearful of insights which challenge old assumptions:

Christ, have mercy on us!

When we want to give expression to Jesus’ dream of oneness,
but fail to listen to voices of difference:

Jesus, have mercy on us!

Declaration of Forgiveness

Our needs exceed our grasp.

We question but our reason is never enough.

Confident in ourselves we are aware of our vulnerability.

Resilient, we are restless and anxious.

And yet the good news stands as a rock amid shifting sands.

We are forgiven even before we ask.

Thanks be to God.

Peace

We greet each other with the words, “The peace of the Lord be with you” with the response “And also with you”, or if from a distance, the hand over the heart, or the hands clasped.

OUR READINGS

Conversation with the Children

Children’s Song

J.A.M

Chris Jaensch © 1992

1. You can spread it on toast (spread it on toast)
 or spread it on bread (spread it on bread)
 a sandwich if you like (a sandwich if you like)
 or a muffin instead (or a muffin instead)
 But that's not the jam I'm talking about
 It's something else instead.
 The JAM I'm talking's when I keep on walking
 with Jesus in my heart and my head.

Chorus

Jesus and me: JAM!

Good company, JAM!

*He died and he rose again to set me free
 to be the me that he wants me to be.*

2. There's strawberry jam (strawberry jam)
 a traffic jam (a traffic jam)
 getting in a jam (getting in a jam)
 or jamming with the band (or jamming with the band)
 But that's not the jam I'm talking about
 It's something else instead.
 The JAM I'm talking's when I keep on walking
 with Jesus in my heart and my head.

Chorus

Romans 3:19-31 (J. B. Phillips New Testament)

This is the classic Protestant reading, from Romans, the book that changed Martin Luther's life, not to mention that of millions of others. In essence, the meaning of it is this: we can abandon special claims based on our achievements (either the principle of achievements or perhaps achievements focused on the law and culture; 3:27). God's goodness alone is our hope (3:28). Jew and Gentile are on a level playing field (3:29-30) as are all cultures and races, and God's generosity is unlimited towards all.

3 ¹⁹⁻²⁰ We know what the message of the Law is, to those who live under it—that every excuse may die on the lips of him who makes it and no living man may think himself beyond the judgment of God. No man can justify himself before God by a perfect performance of the Law's

demands—indeed it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are.

God's new plan—righteousness by faith, not through the Law

²¹⁻²⁶ But now we are seeing the righteousness of God declared quite apart from the Law (though amply testified to by both Law and Prophets)—it is a righteousness imparted to, and operating in, all who have faith in Jesus Christ. (For there is no distinction to be made anywhere: everyone has sinned, everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan.) Under this divine system a man who has faith is now freely acquitted in the eyes of God by his generous dealing in the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. God has appointed him as the means of propitiation, a propitiation accomplished by the shedding of his blood, to be received and made effective in ourselves by faith. God has done this to demonstrate his righteousness both by the wiping out of the sins of the past (the time when he withheld his hand), and by showing in the present time that he is a just God and that he justifies every man who has faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith, not pride of achievement

²⁷⁻²⁸ What happens now to human pride of achievement? There is no more room for it. Why, because failure to keep the Law has killed it? Not at all, but because the whole matter is now on a different plane—believing instead of achieving. We see now that a man is justified before God by the fact of his faith in God's appointed Saviour and not by what he has managed to achieve under the Law.

²⁹⁻³⁰ And God is God of both Jews and Gentiles, let us be quite clear about that! The same God is ready to justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by faith also.

³¹ Are we then undermining the Law by this insistence on faith? Not a bit of it! We put the Law in its proper place.

The Gospel of Mark 10: 46-52 p. 823

A short explanation: There is a span of material in Mark's gospel, reaching from 8:27 to 10:45, which is bound together by a loose thread and a common movement. The movement is from north to south, more particularly, from the northern borders of Galilee to the beginning of the steep ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem. It is the way to the cross. Three times threaded through the passage Jesus announces that as Son of Man he will suffer and be rejected (8:31; 9:31; 10:33). Three times the disciples fail to understand. They show themselves blind to his purpose and to his values. Mark has set on either side of this span of material two accounts of Jesus' healing of

blind men (8:22-26 and 10:46-52). The intention is doubtless symbolic. The disciples are blind. That is a primary function of today's passage in Mark's gospel.

But what about Bartimaeus? He is twice named (10:46): 'son of Timaeus' and 'Bartimaeus' - which also means 'son (Aramaic: bar) of Timaeus, meaning something like, son of the precious or worthy one. Nonetheless Bartimaeus is a nobody. When he raises his voice (10:47), people are quick to remind him of the fact (10:48). With the persistence which can characterise the desperate, the man does not shy away from being a nuisance. Jesus responds, hears his request, healing him. A nobody in the world's eyes, a sidelined person, a blind beggar, becomes the hero of faith. This is Mark at his subversive best.

⁴⁶They 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. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then 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." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Thinking Together

Prayers for the Church and World

Today we pray for the peoples of Canada and the United States of America. We include the peoples of Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, Lebanon and Syria. We also remember ourselves in Australia as families struggle under economic pressures.

We offer the Bidding: God of Mercy...**Hear our prayers.**

Prayer for life in freedom

God of all hope;
hear our prayer.

When money becomes a prison:
free us to choose life.

Where wealth turns into addiction:
free us to choose life.

When income determines worth:
free us to choose life.

Where poverty equals invisibility:
free us to choose life.

When economies deepen injustice:
free us to choose life.

Where greed invents new oppressions:
free us to choose life.

when finance rules every decision:
free us to choose life.

where consumption replaces compassion:
free us to choose life.

Keri K. Wehlander; used with permission

We pray the prayer of all Christians

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 forever. Amen.

Offering Song **Amazing Grace (TiS 129)** American Folk Hymn, arr.
Lawrence Bartlett (b. 1933), words by John Newton (1725-1807)

We sing as the offering is received.

The congregation remains standing as the offering is received by the minister and prayers are offered over the gifts.

SENDING OUT

Leaving Song **Now As You Leave This Assembly of Lovers**
Amanda Udis-Kessler © 2019

1. Now as you leave this assembly of lovers,
carry the gift that your heart has received.
As you've been treated, go out and treat others,
sharing the grace that is endlessly free.

Chorus:

Keep on blessing the world as you do.

Welcome the stranger and offer a feast.

Work to bring justice, strive to show kindness.

Surely the Holy will bless you with peace.

2. Centre your mind on the things that are precious,
all that is sacred and worthy of praise.
Love all the world with a passion so reckless
you will know wonder the rest of your days.

Chorus

Commission and Blessing

Liturgist & Preacher: Rev'd Geoff Dornan and Brad Opdyke

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

Musicians and Wesley Music Scholars: Jojo Yuen (piano) and Caitlin Launt (vocals)

Reader: Lorraine Billingham

Video & Sound: Nancy Opdyke and John Alcock

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In the biblical stories, grace and freedom are always encountered in a *sense-related way*. They are always expressed socially and historically. Grace and freedom are encountered in stories of awakening and exodus, of conversion and liberation, of discipleship and of faces lifted up in hope. Grace is never just invisible, but always

tangible. In all this, grace and freedom are being seen. Who sees his brother or sister, sees his God.

Johann Baptist Metz, The Emergent Church