



Order of Service



12 March 2023

10 am



Worship led by:
Rev Dr AJ Groenewald
Organist Martin Petty and choir

Gathering of God's People

Time when we greet one another and prepare for worship.
Those who are able please stand for the entry of the Bible.
Words of welcome and announcements.

Good morning

I hope you are all well.

Allow me a few announcements please:

We will have our ASM direct after worship.

On the 15th of March will be guild ASM and Rev Bill who will be the entertainer ... and believe me when I say he is very good.

Next Sunday I will be in Liberton Northfield church to conduct worship and moderate ASM. Rev Lough will be conducting worship here.

Home communions are taken place during this month. If you know of anyone who would like to have home communion, please let me or Kay Coull know.

May I please ask you all to not use the bpc-minister at Balerno church email address but the Church of Scotland one.

Let us worship God ...

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: Come and see what the Lord
 has done.

**All: Give thanks for his
goodness,**

Minister: and know his healing
presence among us.

Beloved, I greet you in the Name of God the
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

MP 544

Open my eyes that I may see

1.Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth Thou hast for
me.

Place in my hands the
wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me

free.

***Chorus: Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!***

2. Open my ears that I may hear
voices of truth Thou sendest
clear,
and while the wave-notes fall
on my ear,
everything false will disappear.

Chorus

share. ***Chorus***

3. Open my mouth and let me
bear
tidings of mercy everywhere.
Open my heart and let me
prepare
love with Thy children thus to

4. Open my mind, that I may
read
More of Thy love in word and
deed:
What shall I fear while yet Thou
dost lead?
Only for light from Thee I plead.

Chorus

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Lord God, sometimes we gather together in our
sacred space,

the cares of the world on our shoulders.

We feel we haven't the energy to be expectant.

Open all our senses to you, Lord.

We want to feel your healing touch today.

Lord God, we lay our burdens at your feet.

We are ready to experience your power.

Sometimes you are at work in our lives

and we don't even know it.

Open all our senses to you, Lord.

We want to feel your healing touch today.

Lord God, make us positive along our way,

whatever our circumstances.

Help us to be amazed by the unusual.

Open all our senses to you, Lord.

We want to feel your healing touch today.

The week ahead is a blank canvas.

There will be many familiar places and faces.

But, Lord, thank you that we can meet with you today,

and you opening our eyes anew.

Let us not take our preconceptions with us,

but give thanks for all the new opportunities ahead.

We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: John 9:1-12

Reader: Anne Shaw

Background to the reading

It is important that we understand the background of our reading before we make assumptions about the meaning of the text.

In our reading, it is not so clear where it all happened but most scholars agree that it happened in Jerusalem. Jesus met a man that was born blind, something that was known by all – even the disciples of Jesus.

In the context of the early Mediterranean world, anyone suffering with illnesses were regarded as a punishment by God for their sins. Children and grandchildren could suffer because of the sins of their parents and grandparents. BUT the disciples were not sure about the exact cause of his blindness and asked the question: “Rabbi who sinned, this man or his parents?”

Jesus then answered them by saying: “neither this man or his parents sinned”. Jesus explained a higher motif namely that God’s revelation might be made visible in him. All, even those who are born blind should use the time wisely on earth to do God’s work because the time on earth is limited. He, Jesus is the LIGHT of the world and all should follow HIM.

Jesus then continued to perform a healing ritual. Instead of just using words, He put a mixture of mud and saliva on the eyes of the blind man. He told him to go and wash it off in the pool of Siloam.

I wondered as I was preparing whether we should sing CH4 688 By cool Siloam ... at least now you know where you heard the name before if you forgot it!

The pool of Siloam was located at the south end of Mount Zion, the City of David in the Tyropoeon Valley. King Hezekia authorised a tunnel to be dug from the Gihon spring outside of Jerusalem into the city to make sure the people inside the city could have water. There was no need for them to venture outside of the city's walls to get water.

Jesus was not concerned about the method of the healing but in the faithful obedience and trust of the blind man. Interestingly the writer then explains to his Greek readers that Siloam means the one that was sent which is a clever nuance referring to Jesus who were sent by God.

The blind man trusted Jesus completely and in the pool of Siloam with no-one else present, the wonder happened. He could “see” again and returned home while the neighbours did not believe that it was him, the blind beggar! In the context the only job people with blindness could do was begging. He must have been transformed by the miracle that he was obviously looking different but he confirmed to them all that it was him.

They then asked the million dollar question: How did all of this happen?

He answered that it was “the man they called Jesus” who healed him.... At least twelve times in the Gospel of John, Jesus is called “a man”....emphasizing that although Jesus was fully God He was also fully human”

Not letting go, still not believing that a miracle happened, they said: Where is this man?

At this moment of the story it seems as if the blind man did not know himself who “the man they called Jesus” was. It was only later in verse 38 that he realized that Jesus was the Saviour, the Son of God.

The neighbour’s curiosity did not disappear or those of the Pharisees – they asked the same question 4 times in the reading: “How were you healed?” (John 9:10, 15, 19, 26)

They took the blind man to the Pharisees to make sure the blind man was telling the truth. Please read the complete chapter later today.

Choir sings “Come let us to the Lord our God. paraphrase 30 vs 1, 2, 5 & 6.”

Sermon

Our reading today clearly reveals to us 4 different reactions to the miracle of Jesus healing the blindness of a man.

The neighbours reacted surprised and sceptically
...

The Pharisees reacted doubtful and judgemental...

The blind man's parents believed but could not publicly admit it out of fear for them being thrown out of the synagogue.

And then the blind man reacted by growing and maturing in his faith, believing in the Saviour and LIGHT to the world.

It seems evident that the neighbours and the Pharisees kept on asking the wrong question.

They should not have asked "How?" but "Who?"
(Simply rearrange the letters!)

Because the insight gained by the blind man lies in the fact that he believed without seeing... he believed in the voice that told him where to go ... he believed in Jesus He did think twice about the HOW ... for him hope was associated with the PERSON who spoke to him rather in the details of how this can be possible...

Sometimes we also have different reactions to our faith in Jesus. We are also so prone to ask the wrong question. Often we are so stuck with the details of faith and getting it right, that we lose sight (pardon the pun) of the true IDENTITY of Jesus and HIS presence in our lives through his Holy Spirit.

We want to understand the mechanics of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Saviour, who alone can perform the miracle.

AND let's admit it: if we keep on doubting the presence of Jesus, we will never see the LIGHT, if continue to be sceptical we will never experience the transformation of the miracle. If we continue to be frightened about what others may think of our faith and our journey with Jesus, then we will never be FREE of the darkness, If we continue to argue about the mechanics of the presence of Jesus in our lives, we will never be able to have true faith and trust in HIM alone...

The real question of our reading to all of us is:
WHO is Jesus to you as you journey through Lent?

If He is the LIGHT, there is no more Spiritual
blindness...

If He is your Saviour, there is only faith,

If He is the Man of Golgotha, there is only love

If He is the ONE who was resurrected for you,
there is only HOPE.

May we all pray that God will heal us too from our
Spiritual short-sightedness and blindness so that
we can SEE the LIGHT of Jesus shining in our
hearts on this Lenten journey.

Amen

Responding to God's word

CH4 555

Amazing grace

Prayer of thanksgiving: Kay Coull

CH4 132

Immortal, invisible, God only wise

Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Lord, open our eyes to see what you are revealing.
Open our mouths to speak about you.
Guide our thoughts and increase our
understanding.
Stir our hearts to love as you loved us.
Move our hands and feet to serve you in others.

And the blessing of God Almighty Father Son and
Holy Spirit will be with you, now and forevermore.

Sung Amen, Amen, Amen

Please remain standing as The Bible is removed.

You are invited to stay for tea and coffee which are served in the hall.

Intimations

Annual Stated Meeting 12 March 2023 after our Sunday Service.

The Guild

The next Guild meeting is an AGM and social evening with Rev Bill Wishart and his ministry of magic. Everyone is very welcome to attend on Wednesday the 15th of March, at 7.30 pm in the Ogston Hall.

Liberton Nortfield ASM 19 March 2023.

Rev Adrian Lough will be conducting worship in Balerno while our Minister is at Liberton Northfield.

THANKS TO YOU... Thank you for all your generous contributions towards the ministry and mission of the Church. Gift Aid envelopes are available at the end of each row or from the Treasurer after the Service.

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