



Sunday 24 October 2021

Introit: Be Thou My Vision Celtic Worship Ft. Steph Macleod

<https://youtu.be/XiukM6WHQEQ>

Welcome – Rev Tina, Rev Peter, Rev Pete



Aunty Joy at Parliament of World Religions 2009

Acknowledgment – Rev Pete

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land. For most of us it is the Wurundjeri people. We acknowledge the care poured into this land. We also acknowledge the pain and dislocation caused by colonialism and that this land was never ceded. In our acknowledgement, we commit to hearing the story of first peoples, of lamenting loss, of celebrating wisdom and seeking a future of treaty and reconciliation.

Call To Worship – Rev Pete Rivett

Psalm 24, Lift up your heads – John Edgerton, USA and Worship Words

‘Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty – he is the King of glory.’ – Psalm 24:9-10
NIV

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Lift up your heads, church doors,
Lift them up, you faithful hearts,
That the Queen of Grace may come in.
Who is She, this Queen of Grace?
God Almighty – She is the Queen of Grace!
You who have waited lonely months, walk through the doors!
You who have been locked down, the bolts are thrown open!
You who will remain at home to worship,
For whom health or distance make your home the fittest sanctuary
You will not be shut out again.
Having opened a new door through camera’s lens,
The warm embrace of community has found its focus.

Having found that our reach is as wide as the globe,
 Loving hearts now know how wide their reach can be.
 To the one clamouring for more and sooner,
 To the one pleading for less and later,
 To the one who feels that all is now well,
 To the one whose guard is still up,
 To the one who feels this has all been overblown
 To the one who mourns the death of their loved ones,
 Six hundred thousand times over:
 Lift up your heads, church doors,
 Lift them up, you faithful hearts,
 That the Queen of Grace may come in.
 Who is She, this Queen of Grace?
 God Almighty – She is the Queen of Grace!

Prayer of Confession – Rev. Tina

God who understands times as an eternal being, being with us now.

We confess, we have struggled.

We have struggled with lockdown, with anxiety about an unseeable virus, with those with differing opinions and perspectives.

We have struggled

We have struggled as we watch those whose connection to safety is shaken, be it mental health, economic health, educational health and physical health. We have struggled.

At times we have struggled in listening for you, in experiencing your presence as our worldly participation was limited to our four walls.

We have struggled.

We wavered between anger and apathy, frustration and discombobulation, we struggled.

We have struggled to articulate love as we are forced into smaller and smaller connections to those we love and consider neighbours.

We have struggled to feel a sense of belonging to your community, through a screen or over the phone, we have struggled without a tangible, physical presence of your worshipping community.

We have struggled.

Affirmation: Rev Tina

But we look at those struggles and we see a purpose. That the most vulnerable should be held safe. Our struggles are an act of love and compassion for all those who are at risk, either because of their already fragile health, or their vocational call that is expressed through their work. God you have called us to respond as a community of love, we have struggled, but we have responded. God, be with us now, affirm your presence in your people.

Amen

Offering Prayer: Pete

Gracious God,

you have blessed us with so many good things.

May these gifts from us be used to open doors of welcome for all people,
 so they, too, may experience the joy of abundance and unity.

In this time and in the times to come, may these gifts be used to open doors.

Amen

Butterfly Meditation

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Today's meditation is based on this week's gospel and is called a Butterfly meditation
 A copy is available in the printed materials. During this meditation you are invited to imagine yourself as part of the bible story. Instead of us focusing on the blind man who has been waiting for Jesus for a very long time, we will focus on each one of us who has been waiting to gather together - for a very long time

Make yourself comfortable
 Rest your hands on your tummy
 Beginning to notice
 How your tummy rises and falls
 as you breathe
 Breathing out slowly – like a long sigh
 Then allowing your lungs to fill naturally
 Breathing out again - deeply and slowly
 Allowing your lungs to fill naturally
 Meditation is meant to be easy

Notice the image of the butterfly
 A butterfly symbolises many things
 Transformation
 Metamorphosis
 New beginnings
 Resurrection

Perhaps for some this long journey through lockdowns has been a bit like being in a cocoon
 Where we have spent a lot of time alone with God
 Perhaps this has been a period of endings and new beginnings
 We have been sitting and waiting for things to change for a long time
 Waiting for the way to open up so we can get on with our lives
 Our whole community has been waiting together
 Now things look like they are opening up
 Some may be feeling a little tentative maybe a little afraid
 Jesus has been there for all of us for so long
 We have a deep faith yet there may be things holding us back

Imagine Jesus calls out your name
 All your friends at church say:
"Take heart, get up, Jesus is calling you."
 So, you get up. You throw off anything that's preventing you
 from continuing your journey with Jesus
 You go over and stand beside Jesus
 He asks you: *What do you want me to do for you?*

Let us ponder for a moment
 What do we want Jesus to do for us?

Imagine. Jesus gives you what you most need
 Now you are free to embrace the future with hope
 You are free to embrace new beginnings
 Your faith in Jesus has made you whole and has given you a future. Amen

Readings

Job 42:1 - 10a (Lynne Rosenthal) NLT

42 Then Job replied to the LORD:² “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.
³ You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’

It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

⁴ You said, ‘Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’⁵ I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. ⁶ I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”

⁷ After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has. ⁸ So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.” ⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did as the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

¹⁰ When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before!

Reading - Mark 10:46-52 (Margaret Cosstick) NRSV

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

Responses to Scripture – by members of the Congregation – Rev Pete

Hymn – Lord let me see tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8roH9ocFM&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=7>

Sermon - Seeing and believing - Rev Peter

Readings: Job 42:1 – 10a; Mark 10:46 – 52

Ever had someone stand so close to you that you could say they were really “in your face”? I don’t mean an intimate partner or grandchildren. I mean a colleague or stranger. I had a colleague who would do that. They didn’t mean anything by it but I would feel really uncomfortable. They got right inside my “personal space”. What I found was if I turned just a bit so that they were to my side, I felt much better.

There is an old movie that you may have seen, “Dead Poets Society”. It has a scene near the start where the new teacher, played by Robin Williams, got the students to stand on their desks, much to the students’ surprise (and consternation of other teachers). Do you remember why he asked them to do that?

Well I used to get my Year 7 students to do the same! (Not sure I would get away with it now with the health and safety rules!) I would walk around the tables with the students looking down on me and would ask, what do you see that looks different for you now? Inevitably one smart student would blurt out, “You’re going bald Mr Cannon!”

The same group of students I would also ask to get off the tables and lie down on the floor while I walked around and over them. I would invite them to share what it felt like when I stood over them compared to when they were on the desks. Consistently they would say, “I felt small when on the floor and strong when on the table.”

Our position and stance feed our mindset, attitudes, beliefs and actions. As does our culture, education, life experiences, wealth, and the people we mix with. Born white with wealth and a family that values education and you are launched into space. Born black into an impoverished family, single mum, unemployed and you will struggle to get to even 1st base, regardless of how smart you are.

Change our position and stance, change what we see...

Spend time alongside of those who are marginalized, experiencing what they experience, and your perspective is changed. I heard an American woman of colour saying that as a black mother, she has to teach her boys how to not react and behave around police officers, so they don’t get shot! A white mother never has to do this.

How often is it that we prefer to share our stories of struggle and pain with someone who has been through something similar? We feel they can understand better.

This we call empathy.

So, what then did Job see? What did Bartimaeus see? Both looked beyond their own selves and saw something and someone much more. Job came from privilege and wealth, and through circumstances beyond his control was dragged into the dust. At the end of his journey of suffering he recognised God as God. He saw his limits and stepped into humility. He reached out in trust to allow God to be God and stand with friends who erred.

Bartimaeus already knew his need and limitations and heard there was someone demonstrating God’s compassion. He reached out in trust for help. He perceived Jesus was from God and hoped. He cast off his last, only possession, his cloak, and reached out to Jesus in faith and discipleship.

In a sense, both reached a childlike state. Remember, Jesus said that the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven was the little ones. James and John didn’t get it. Neither did the other disciples. The rich man didn’t get it. The religious leaders didn’t get it. A blind beggar on the margins did...

A particular perspective, one of humility, trust and openness allowed both to see beyond themselves into the heart of God. Both responded. Job with confession, trust and grace. Bartimaeus with confession, trust and in discipleship.

As mentioned last week, when we hold on to what we have, it is hard to engage in the discipleship that is life giving. It is those on the margins who understand Jesus and the Kingdom of God but those in the in crowd, find him to be a threat. We need to let go and follow Jesus on the way, to Jerusalem, so to speak.

If you have your notebook near you, I invite you to pause a moment and consider some questions. Write your answers down.

1. Consider your story and background. What did you start with and who do you mix with? Is it white, middle class (or above), educated and financially comfortable?
2. How can I look at things differently, from someone else's perspective?
3. From our stories, where are you being led to view life and God's reign from? Share your responses with someone.

“Judge Softly” - Rev Peter

“Pray, don't find fault with the man that limps,
Or stumbles along the road.
Unless you have worn the moccasins he wears,
Or stumbled beneath the same load.

There may be tears in his soles that hurt
Though hidden away from view.
The burden he bears placed on your back
May cause you to stumble and fall, too.

Don't sneer at the man who is down today
Unless you have felt the same blow
That caused his fall or felt the shame
That only the fallen know.

You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, unknown to you in the same way,
May cause you to stagger and fall, too.

Don't be too harsh with the man that sins.
Or pelt him with words, or stone, or disdain.
Unless you are sure you have no sins of your own,
And it's only wisdom and love that your heart contains.

For you know if the tempter's voice
Should whisper as soft to you,
As it did to him when he went astray,
It might cause you to falter, too.

Just walk a mile in his moccasins
Before you abuse, criticize and accuse.
If just for one hour, you could find a way
To see through his eyes, instead of your own muse.

I believe you'd be surprised to see
That you've been blind and narrow-minded, even unkind.
There are people on reservations and in the ghettos
Who have so little hope, and too much worry on their minds.

Brother, there but for the grace of God go you and I.
Just for a moment, slip into his mind and traditions
And see the world through his spirit and eyes
Before you cast a stone or falsely judge his conditions.

Remember to walk a mile in his moccasins
 And remember the lessons of humanity taught to you by your elders.
 We will be known forever by the tracks we leave
 In other people's lives, our kindnesses and generosity.

Take the time to walk a mile in his moccasins.”

~ by *Mary T. Lathrap, 1895*

Prayers of the People – Tim Joyce

Prayer from Jamaica

Gracious and compassionate God, faithful to all your promises, supplier of our needs, may we never underestimate the value of all that you afford us; nor the usefulness of the endowments you give for the realization of your purposes. May we never so take for granted the gifts your bounteous grace provides as to become victims of the callousness that produces an abundance of waste. And save us, we ask you, from becoming purveyors of the careless and irresponsible disposal of the waste we produce.

Almighty God, we pray for Your Church that we may demonstrate to the world a living, vibrant faith, that it will be responsive to the context and demands of the day and to the needs of the people it serves. For the Whitehorse cluster of churches that each of our congregations may effectively reach out and witness to those in our communities. We pray that we will be ready to confront the challenges that face us, and the changes that lie ahead.

We pray for the ministry team of Tina, Peter and Pete. That we might navigate our way out of lockdown in a way that celebrates the opportunity to gather again in person to worship but respects the anxiety and fears of many. As part of our ecumenical cycle we pray for St Luke's Catholic Church, Blackburn South, and for the Uniting Church congregations of Melbourne (Gospel Hall) – the oldest Chinese Church in Australia, St Michael's Melbourne – for their special ministries and for Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street and the important mission and ministries that are based there. We also pray for retired Ministers – that they might be valued for their wisdom and experience and that they find roles consistent with their need to serve and the context in which they find themselves.

We pray this morning for the nations of the Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Badas, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

We are thankful for:

- the natural beauty, climate, and distinctive cultural practices of these islands
- how churches have responded to disasters and served all in need
- how liberation from colonialism and oppression has been pursued through music, words and actions
- the leaders of the ecumenical movement who have come from this region.

We pray for:

- those devastated by disasters, that their lives, communities and eco-systems might be rebuilt
- the strengthening of all who faithfully witness through word and deed to the gospel
- all those affected by crime and addictions
- good governance and smooth transitions between political leaders.

Merciful God, we pray for the poor, neglected and marginalised in our own community. For indigenous people. For refugees and asylum seekers. For those who are suffering because of the

pandemic – directly or indirectly. For the unemployed. For those with mental health problems. For those who are lonely. We pray for the just distribution of vaccines – as we do for the just distribution of Your many gifts. Surround those who are suffering with your love, O Lord. We pray for compassionate and generous responses to need – by individuals, churches and governments. We pray for justice. We pray for peace – in our world and in our hearts. Merciful Lord - We pray for those in special need at this time
 For the sick, for those who face health battles, for the lonely, for the grieving. We entrust these people to your care. Enable us to be agents of Your love in the world. We pray all these things through Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven hallowed be Your name
 Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven
 Give us today our daily bread and 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



Candle Prayers - Rev Tina

Hymn – Can you hear the Call (Ringwood Original)

Notices

Blessing Rev Peter Cannon

God who was present when we logged in, has been present in our gathering and is present as we leave, blesses us. But this blessing carries a joyous burden. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Sending out – Rev Tina

Go from this place, knowing that God goes before you, challenging you to open your eyes to the work of the kingdom of God that is happening in the most unlikely of places.

Amen

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For - U2 (Gospel Soul Cover) ft. Rogelio Douglas, Jr.

PostmodernJukebox

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EbLlgKfk9c>

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina

Next Sunday we are having an All-Saints Service, so please email me the names of those you would like remembered and prayed for during Candle Prayers.
tinaalyndon@gmail.com

Hope - As we are opening up again, everyone is hopeful. We can be with family and friends. We can go to a restaurant for a coffee or a meal. We can get back to normal. We can worship together again.

This week's gospel reminds me that for some, life won't change much. Perhaps for the homeless things stay the same in many ways. I found these stories about homeless people. One is a surprise and is more about the person who reached out with love. All of us have faced loneliness. I once went to Swanston Church of Christ to an all-night prayer session and spoke out about how lonely homeless youth can feel. A voice came from the blanket beside me. *Yeah!* It was a young man. Later I saw him with someone – reading a bible. I got to know Natalie when I managed a Legal Crisis and information service. She once played at David Jones.

How a teenager became homeless and a carer before he could vote | #HW2020 | ABC Australia
https://youtu.be/6i7rhg1rC_s

The incredible story of Melbourne 'Piano Lady' Natalie Trayling – who has experienced homelessness over the years. September 2019. Matthew Trayling
<https://youtu.be/VKdDrYKbPKw>

Street Pianist Natalie Trayling aged 84 - Among the People – Matthew Trayling 18 Aug 2018
<https://youtu.be/uT7mfREKG44>
10M Plus have watched this

A woman gave food to a homeless person, not knowing who he really was....the whole world knows him - Life Stories 2021
<https://youtu.be/A8Gv-Zfl8EU>

Keep in mind some of the women staying at Marrageil Baggarrook next to Mountview Uniting may have been homeless. There are many elderly women living on our streets. The blind man in the gospel may have been homeless and sitting at the roadside begging, so he could eat.

If we have a home, we are blessed. If we have a loved one, we are blessed. Next time you see someone who appears to be a homeless person, discern whether or not it is wise to help in some way. I still have the cards I got from Uniting that can be given to someone who is homeless that may help them find some assistance with housing. I'll leave them at the churches for you when we open up again.

Here is a song to raise your spirits and help you give thanks to God for your blessings.
 Gratitude is good for the soul.

You Raise Me Up | BYU Vocal Point (Josh Groban A Cappella Cover)
<https://youtu.be/rcLloA-IXIc>