

FAMILY SERVICE

(USING RESOURCES FROM WILD GOOSE PUBLICATIONS)

Opening music

Opening Responses

Leader: God of darkness and light

All: Open our eyes to your justice.

Leader: God of goodness and glory

All: Open our minds to your wisdom

Leader: God of mercy and kindness

All: Open our hearts to your love

Leader: Shield us God with your crook and your staff

All: Bring us safely home

Leader: Guide us God with your truth and your goodness

All: Bring us safely home

Leader: Encourage us God with your oil and your kindness

All: Bring us safely home

Leader: Shepherd us God, walk with us always

All: Bring us safely home

Prayer

Leader: Let us pray. From before the world began and after the end of eternity, you are God. From the sea bursting from its womb to the wind ceasing from its chase, you are God. In the vastness of the universe and the forgotten corners of our hearts, you are God.

All: You are our God, and we bless you.

Leader: Because the world is beautiful, and beauty is a tender thing, and we are caretakers of creation, we need you, God.

All: We need you, God

Leader: Because human knowledge seems endless, and we think that the world is our oyster, and we do not know what we do not know, we need you, God.

All: We need you, God

Leader: Because we can live without you and are free to go against you and could worship our wisdom alone, we need you, God

All: We need you, God

Leader: Because you came among us and sat beside us, and heard us speak and saw us ignore you, and healed our pain and let us wound you, and love loved us to the end and triumphed over all our hatred, we need you, God

All: We need you, God

Leader: Because you, not we, are God, we need you God

All: We need you, God

Leader: Listen, for the God who created us says, 'do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. You are precious to me. I love you, I honour you, I am with you.' So we respond:

All: Maker of all, we are your children, the creatures of your kindness, the bearers of your image. This day, we will walk by your light, follow your Son, and live by your Spirit. This day, we will not offer to you offerings that cost us nothing. For this is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

1st reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you

shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23 (Sung - hymn #519)

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn - 'When I Needed a Neighbour'(insert)

Gospel Reading: John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam'. Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the

Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

This is the Gospel of Christ
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Sermon

Statement of Faith

We believe in God, who made the sun and the sky, the stars and the sea, who calls us to live responsibly.

We believe in Jesus Christ, who became human, who healed the sick, who talked to children, who made friends with sinners. He burned brightly and offended many. His journey was one of life and death and resurrection. His light continues to shine in the darkness.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who inspires the scriptures and whose breath we breathe.

We believe that God calls us to be a community, committed to one another, offering a welcome to everyone: old and young, rich and poor, strong and weak.

We believe that God calls us to be peacemakers: workers for justice, brothers and sisters, a light for our world. Amen

Offertory Hymn: Lord of the Dance p. 31

Prayer over the Gifts: God of mercy and compassion, your Word calls us home to faith and love. Accept all we offer you this day, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Concern

Leader: Let us pray. For the healing of bodies we pray: for a holy healing which deals with both pain and its causes; for healing which leads to a new love for the body, new care for the body; and also, where mortal life wearies for the end, for the healing of death. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Leader: For the healing of minds we pray: for a holy healing which deals with memories as well as madness, abuse as well as anxiety, depression as well as dementia, stigma as well as the suffering of a

tortured mind; and also, where people have been hurt by religion, for the healing of faith. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Leader: For the healing of relationships we pray: for a holy healing which will not make things nice but will make things possible; for the mending of love which has been fractured; and for the holding in brokenness of those for whom love has been undermined by deceit. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Leader: For the healing of our world we pray: for a holy healing, for the tearing down of cruel barriers and the building of bridges for peace; for the ending of needless exploitation and the growth of reverence for our planet; for relacing what the wealthy want with an abundance of what the world needs. Lord hear us

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Leader: So we pray, so we trust, so we will do in Jesus' name

All: Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Holy and gracious God, we live in a world of wonder, conceived by your divine imagination. The universe is your creation born out of love and generosity. Hallowed be your name.

All: Hallowed be your name

Leader: Through centuries of thought and searching, through law and wisdom, insight and experience, your will and purpose were gradually glimpsed until, in Jesus, all that was hidden was revealed, and you let the earth be touched by heaven. Hallowed be your name

All: Hallowed be your name

Leader: In the beauty of the earth, in the silence of our hearts, in the community of your church, in all works of grace and kindness, in forgiving from the heart and in worship from the soul, your Spirit confirms the truth by which we live. Hallowed be your name

All: Hallowed be your name

Leader: If, knowing this we have failed to love you, our Maker, been hesitant to follow your Son, and suspected the power of your Spirit, Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Leader: If we have desired comfort more than devotion, if we have satisfied our wants more than we have served your will, if we have worshipped a lesser god and gone for an easier gospel, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy

Leader: If, in the face of your openness, we have privatized our wealth, limited our company to those like us, restricted our conversation to matters of no consequence, and in all this compromised our integrity and lost faith in our faith, Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy. Forgive us, O God, but not to ease our consciences until we feel penitent again. Forgive us, so that we may have no defence against your will; and then make us friends of your purpose and worthy companions of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn: 'I Saw the Light' p.22

Closing responses

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord;

All: Make a path for our God in the desert.

Leader: Each valley shall be exalted

All: Every mountain and hill be laid low

Leader: The crooked shall be made straight

All: Rough places shall become plain

Leader: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed

All: all people shall see it together

Leader: This is the will of the Lord

All: God's promise shall be fulfilled.

Leader: Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord

All: Thanks be to God. Amen