

PENTECOST 22  
24/10/21  
CAVES BEACH

#### NOTICES

Later this week I am going for more surgery. This time I am having a permanent implant to help manage my constant pain. I expect to be away for three weeks. During this time we are fortunate to have the assistance of Rev Lu Piper once again. Thanks Lu.

At the conclusion of this email/photocopy is a letter which sets out the plans for services to start in the church again when we can all be there together.

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

God, creator of the universe, creator of planet Earth,  
we adore you in our worship!

God, inspiration of our faith community,  
we praise you in our worship!

God, who opens our eyes to the needs of faith communities throughout the world,

we are challenged to share through our worship!

God, whose compassionate and merciful way is known in Jesus Christ,  
we respond with our love to his love. Let us worship God!

Opening Prayer God: of miracles God: who opens our eyes Jesus: who opens our eyes

We glory in your creative miracle, O God.

Your world is so wonderful: the sunrise, the vast seas, the mountain ranges, and the gift of life to each one of us.

We glory in your sustaining miracle, O God:

the certainty of the returning seasons, the growing awareness of young children.

We glory in your miraculous Word, O God,

which reveals your loving presence and which challenges us to bring hope.

We glory in Jesus, the miracle of New Life,

who enabled the blind to see, the disciples to have insight,

and the despised to know power. God of miracles, we joyfully adore you!

Amen.

HYMN 547 Be thou my vision

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMcILT\\_Hjg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMcILT_Hjg)

#### PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING & CONFESSION

The psalms tell us that God restored his people  
and it was so extraordinary they felt they were living a dream,  
their mouths were filled with laughter,  
and their tongues with shouts of joy.

The people experienced the goodness of God.

God of all goodness we too,  
in all our days, are recipients of grace upon grace.  
Welcome fills our days and forgiveness fills our night.  
And we too wonder how it can possibly be.  
We too can hardly believe that your love and care  
can be so freely given and so abundant.  
But it is the very truth of our lives  
and we give you, our thanks.

God, when Jesus passed through Jericho a blind man cried out to him.  
There were many in the crowd who told him to be quiet.  
Now is not the time; this is not the place; you are not the person.  
Be quiet.  
We confess God that we have taken the voice of the crowd to heart.  
We have allowed the voices of those in need to be side-lined.  
We have told them to wait for a more opportune time, for a different  
environment.  
We have told the desperate to wait.  
And we have taken these voices into ourselves as well.  
We have kept our own pain and desperation hidden.  
We have let ourselves be silenced.  
We have pretended that all is fine, and it is best for us not to make a  
fuss.  
We confess that we have so often not experienced or shared  
the all-encompassing, all-welcoming love that you have for us.  
Personal confessions

#### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear this! There is no pain too great or hurt too small that it not be held  
in the heart of God. Jesus welcomed the blind man, God welcomes us. All is  
forgiven. Come, we are forgiven. We are free

#### READINGS

\* Hebrews 7:23-28

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were  
prevented by death from continuing in office; 24 but he holds his priesthood  
permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently he is able for  
all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives  
to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy,  
blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

27 Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day  
after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he  
did once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high  
priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which  
came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

\* Mark 10:46-52

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, 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.

HYMN 579 The blind man

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQjZRS-6R4A>

### SERMON

How many of you have missed your regular eyesight examinations during COVID 19 lockdowns? It seems to be one of those things that we tend to put off. Getting into a small room full of equipment and another person peering into your eyeballs is a bit daunting when we are supposed to be socially distancing.

How many of you have received glasses at some stage and suddenly realised there was a whole world out there that you hadn't been seeing properly? Was it the hills in the distance for those with distance issues or reading the fine print on the food you buy, or the even newspaper, for the short-sighted?

I am due to have my eyes checked again shortly but I might wait until after my next operation. My experience with sight issues is very different to someone like Pat Dadge who has little sight left. By the way it is so heartening to me that people take the time to spend with her so that she can be kept up to date on the news and also those who read out the service for her each week.

When we come to the story of Bartimaeus we have a very different experience of blindness than most of us will ever have to face. Bartimaeus was sitting by the road trying to get enough for food from those passing by each day. This man might not have been able to see physically but he was obviously well attuned to what was happening in the world around him. He obviously knew all about Jesus and His healing powers. This blind beggar knew that he could be healed if only he could get the attention of this one travelling Rabbi, called Jesus.

For Bartimaeus it was not so much about physical eyesight as having the insight to see a way out of his predicament. Not having physical vision didn't mean that he could not see how he could be healed. The interplay of blindness and insight is a recurring sub-text in much of this part of Mark's Gospel. It is not really about physical eyesight but the spiritual blindness of those who Jesus is talking with.

Jesus is trying to get the crowds, the religious leaders and His disciples to comprehend what He is talking about. Several chapters before this we have Jesus healing another blind man and that time it took a second attempt for that man to have his sight fully fixed. This emphasises here is that it can be hard to get people to see the obvious even for Jesus. After this story the themes of healing and sight are scattered in subsequent passages.

Jesus is constantly trying to get His message across but it seems that the audience are like the first man who only see things initially in a distorted and vague way. It seems to take several goes to get people to see the obvious.

Jesus has asked his disciples who they think that He is and here Peter gives an insightful answer but he doesn't fully understand the consequences. Three disciples accompanied Jesus to a mountain top for the transfiguration, but they still are not fully seeing what Jesus has been teaching them. They are all sight impaired in some way!

Repeatedly Jesus tries to get the message across. He keeps speaking about how He will suffer rejection and death but all the disciples seem to be interested in is who is the greatest among them. Then there are the stories of the children and the slaves as examples of how to understand His Kingdom. Leadership is a whole different experience with Jesus. They can't see what Jesus means.

Then there is the rich young man who has kept the commandments faithfully but was unable to complete the transition to discipleship. This passage just leads to His followers talking about how much they had given up to follow Jesus. There is no thought of looking at the broader picture. Even in this discussion they are looking to better their position in the community.

Now we come to Blind Bartimaeus. Despite his apparent physical blindness there are things that this beggar can still see....

He can see that:

1. Jesus is not someone who he wants to throw a few coins onto his coat as he sits by the roadside and walk away. He can see that Jesus can restore his physical sight. Like the debate a few passages back when the disciples tried to exclude the children this blind beggar was not going to be sidelined by those gathered around Jesus jostling for the best position.
2. Bartimaeus 'sees' that Jesus can do more than just restore his physical sight. He is the first person in Mark's Gospel to name Jesus as the one promised to follow David and become the Messiah. This was something that the Jews had been wanting for many generations. It is noteworthy that this story is the last one in this Gospel before Jesus enters into Jerusalem.
3. Bartimaeus sees that as a follower of Jesus there is no need to try and keep a second option. The old security of the past no longer applies. Some of the disciples left their fishing nets where they lay. Bartimaeus has no hesitation leaving behind his begging cloak where it lay as he could 'see' that it was no longer needed.

Can we now see that this poor beggar sitting by the roadside is being used by Mark to show us much more than simple physical eyesight? The things that really are central to faith do not rely on physical eyesight. We just need to think back a few verses to where Jesus said that it would be better to have our eyes plucked out than to miss out on the vision which would allow us to enter heaven.

Just choosing to follow Jesus does not of itself make it easy to see Jesus. There are probably three things that we need to do.

1. Ask for help from the Holy Spirit. Bartimaeus starts by calling out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" It is by calling on the power of the Holy Spirit that we can start to see the full picture of Jesus' teaching. There are many things that we can't do by ourselves and we need to be receptive to the eye opening healing offered by the Holy Spirit so we can see the world as Jesus does. Even if it takes more than one attempt, don't give up. Even Jesus could not help the first blind man to see initially. Jesus has patience beyond our comprehension.
2. We need to be prepared to get rid of the blinkers which narrow our vision. The rich young man walked away as he could not broaden his vision to see what Jesus was offering. Bartimaeus walked away from everything in his old life to follow Jesus.... So often there are things which we couldn't think of living without which hold us back. It might be material possessions, some sorts of relationships or ingrained habits which are like a giant anchor stopping our movement. By letting go we need to be prepared to see the world in whole new light.
3. Rather than just relying on your own eyes we need to be prepared to draw on the perspectives of others. We need to keep open to new and differing ways of seeing the world which previously we have just taken for granted. Like Jesus taught us with the little children we need to be prepared to view the world through a child's fresh eyes. To see and understand the freedom in our world, we need to look through the eyes of a slave. If you want to appreciate the freedom that sight gives us just look through the eyes of someone who has been blind for a period.

How about you sit in a different chair at home one day or even a different chair when you come back to church? How about imagining how a refugee sees our culture and freedoms. Let us take time this week to open our eyes and look at things without blinkers or other restrictions. Let Jesus be our vision through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN 210 O for a thousand tongues to sing  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK_c)

#### PRAYERS FOR THE OFFERING

God of all the earth, of all that is and ever was,  
we bring here money that represents  
our labours and our security.  
We know, as we share this with others  
that our true security is in our relationship with you  
and with your creation.

We know that our labours,  
if they are to be of lasting value  
must be for the good of all that you have made -  
the earth, its creatures and each other.  
Amen.

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

My theme today is "A Time for Every Thing."

Did you watch "Four Corners" on ABC T V this week? -. "The Life and Times of Angela. Merkel" .?

An amazing life story of the Chancellor of Germany from 2005 to 2021.

Angela was born in 1954 and was brought up in East Germany under communist rule.

Her father was a Protestant Pastor who elected to go from free West Germany to communist East Germany where he trained students to become Christian Leaders.

Angela was greatly influenced by her father and her character was steeped in Christian values and strict discipline. This resulted in a calm, loyal, assertive moral person with very strong values of; hard work - morality - austerity.

Her father often quoted from Isaiah 30: 15 -" In quietness and confidence shall be your strength "- Angela made that her own.

After the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989 everything in United Germany became "new" - Angela 's political career played a central role in German Reunification.

She introduced a new slogan in Germany - "We can do it" and insisted that "More can happen than you think".

She chose to resign quoting " There is a time for everything "Ecclesiastes 3:8

Let us pray

Our God - our Creator - our Life and Breath we come to you this morning realising that you are in control of all things - that you are all powerful - all knowing and all loving.

You know exactly where we humans have been during this pandemic - you have your own agenda - you have allowed leaders to rise and fall.

You have allowed great discoveries to be made in research into successful vaccines for COVID 19- you have allowed lockdowns to turn humanity into finding value in simple, everyday life and to appreciate our local environment.

You have allowed us all to understand the meaning of freedom.

You have taught us again that "for everything there is a season - a time to be born and a time to die - a time to cry and a time to laugh - a time to grieve and a time to dance - a time for war and a time for peace. "We thank you that you have "made everything beautiful for each own time - you have planted eternity in the human heart and people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labour because your gift produces happiness."

(selections from Ecclesiastes 3)

You have taught us to enjoy what we have, rather than desiring what we don't have. You have taught us to value and appreciate life

We thank you for our personal life history - for your guidance and direction

- for all events, people, friends and our families which have influenced the people we have become today.

We pray for our sick people - for those who are to have operations or procedures - for those who are recovering from these - for those who are lonely and alone, anxious, frightened or depressed.

We pray for wisdom as restrictions are lifted here in New South Wales and in all states of Australia - that the respect and concern we have learnt will continue to influence the future, resulting in a successful return to normality.

We pray for all our leaders in state and federal parliament and for our NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet- for our Prime Minister Scott Morrison who has such a tremendous responsibility in making decisions which affect Australian lives and livelihoods together with decisions concerning the whole world.

We thank you for the inspirational life of Angela Merkel and the Christian influence from her father which she gave to United Germany and Europe.

Let us pray the Lord's prayer together.

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 for ever. Amen.

HYMN 236 Jesus hands were kind hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7oAg1wZ3Rc>

BENEDICTION

'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

We go in the name of Christ.

'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

We go in the grace of God

'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

We go in the power of the Spirit.

'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UIGh7GSMd0>