

# Lent 4 March 22nd 2020

## What kind of mark do we want to leave?



The stones & the road  
by  
Jan Richardson

### Welcome & Gathering:

#### Call to worship

We are on a Lenten journey.  
Each step of the way,  
The Source of Life is at our back;  
The Word of Life is ahead of us;  
The Spirit of Love is beside us.  
We offer our worship to the Holy Companion  
Who transforms the journey of our lives and world.

#### Hymn: Sing for God's glory CH4 172

- 1 Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation,  
racing across the sky, trailing bright clouds of elation;  
sun of delight  
succeeds the velvet of night,  
warming the earth's exultation.
- 2 Sing for God's power that shatters the chains that would bind us,  
searing the darkness of fear and despair that could blind us,  
touching our shame  
with love that will not lay blame,  
reaching out gently to find us.
- 3 Sing for God's justice disturbing each easy illusion,  
tearing down tyrants and putting our pride to confusion;  
lifeblood of right,  
resisting evil and slight,  
offering freedom's transfusion.
- 4 Sing for God's saints who have travelled faith's journey before us,  
who in our weariness give us their hope to restore us;  
in them we see  
the new creation to be,  
spirit of love made flesh for us.

Kathryn Galloway (b. 1952)

#### Opening Prayer with movement

One: Holy One

Wherever we have been

**ALL: Love and hope surround us.**

*(action: \*arms circle round, cross in front of body and lower)*

One: Wherever we are going

**ALL: Love and hope surround us. (action\*)**

One: Wherever we are now

**ALL: Love and hope surround us. (action\*)**

...

We unite our prayers together in the Lord's Prayer or Jesus Prayer, using a form of words which are worshipful for us...

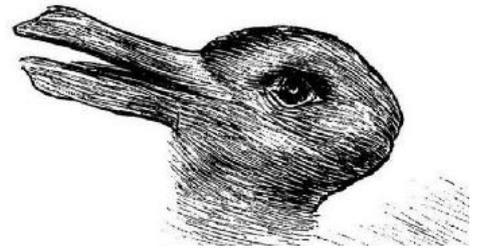
Source of Life,  
Father and Mother of us all:  
Creation honours you!  
May your Realm of Justice & Joy  
Sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another,  
forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen

### **Time for all ages: Perception**

#### **Hymn: Don't be afraid**

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
My love is stronger than your fear.  
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
And I have promised, promised to be always near.



#### **Meditation: Psalm 23 Redux by Carla Grosch-Miller**

This I know:  
My life is in Your hands.  
I have nothing to fear.

I stop,  
Breathe,  
Listen.

Beneath the whirl of what is  
Is a deep down quiet place.  
You beckon men to tarry there.

This is the place  
Where unnamed hungers  
Are fed, the place  
Of clear water,  
Refreshment.

My senses stilled,  
I drink deeply,



Glory  
by  
Jan Richardson

At home  
In timeless territory.

In peril, I remember:  
Death's dark vale holds no menace.  
I lean into You;  
Your eternal presence comforts me.  
I am held tenderly.

IN the midst of all the troubles,  
That threatens and diminishes,  
You set abundance before me.  
You lift my head; my vision clears.  
The blessing cup overflows.

This I know:  
You are my home and my hope,  
My strength and my solace,  
And so shall You ever be.

- *Music for reflection Karl (4mins)*

### **10.33am Reading: John 9:1-41 The Message (MSG)**

True Blindness

9 1-2 Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?"

3-5 Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world's Light."

6-7 He said this and then spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, "Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "Sent"). The man went and washed—and saw.

8 Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, "Why, isn't this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?" 9 Others said, "It's him all right!" But others objected, "It's not the same man at all. It just looks like him." He said, "It's me, the very one." 10 They said, "How did your eyes get opened?" 11 "A man named Jesus made a paste of mud and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' I did what he said. When I washed, I saw."

12 "So where is he?" "I don't know."

13-15 They marched the man to the Pharisees. This day when Jesus made the paste and healed his blindness was the Sabbath. The Pharisees grilled him again on how he had come to see. He said, "He put a clay paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see."

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "Obviously, this man can't be from God. He doesn't keep the Sabbath."

Others countered, "How can a bad man do miraculous, God-revealing things like this?" There was a split in their ranks.

17 They came back at the blind man, "You're the expert. He opened your eyes. What do you say about him?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

18-19 The Pharisees didn't believe it, didn't believe the man was blind to begin with. So they called the parents of the man now bright-eyed with sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? So how is it that he now sees?"

20-23 His parents said, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But we don't know how he came to see—haven't a clue about who opened his eyes. Why don't you ask him? He's a grown man and can speak for himself."  
(His parents were talking like this because they were intimidated by the Pharisees, who had already decided that anyone who took a stand that this was the Messiah would be kicked out of the meeting place. That's why his parents said, "Ask him. He's a grown man.")

24 They called the man back a second time—the man who had been blind—and told him, "Give credit to God. We know this man is an impostor."

25 He replied, "I know nothing about that one way or the other. But I know one thing for sure: I was blind . . . I now see." 26 They said, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 "I've told you over and over and you haven't listened. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you so eager to become his disciples?"

28-29 With that they jumped all over him. "You might be a disciple of that man, but we're disciples of Moses. We know for sure that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man even comes from." 30-33 The man replied, "This is amazing! You claim to know nothing about him, but the fact is, he opened my eyes! It's well known that God isn't at the beck and call of sinners, but listens carefully to anyone who lives in reverence and does his will. That someone opened the eyes of a man born blind has never been heard of—ever. If this man didn't come from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."

34 They said, "You're nothing but dirt! How dare you take that tone with us!" Then they threw him out in the street.

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and went and found him. He asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 The man said, "Point him out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?" 38 "Master, I believe," the man said, and worshiped him.

39 Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretence of seeing will be exposed as blind."

40 Some Pharisees overheard him and said, "Does that mean you're calling us blind?"

41 Jesus said, "If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure."

## Sermon - Perception

### Hymn: The Lord's my shepherd StF 481

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me lie in pastures green.  
He leads me by the still, still waters,  
His goodness restores my soul.

*\*And I will trust in You alone,  
And I will trust in You alone,  
For Your endless mercy follows me,  
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
And He anoints my head with oil,  
And my cup, it overflows with joy,

I feast on His pure delights.

\*

And though I walk the darkest path,  
I will not fear the evil one,  
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know.

\*

*Stuart Townsend*

## **Prayers of the People Susan Henderson**

### **Offering & Dedication**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow  
Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above you heavenly host  
Praise Maker, Christ and Holy Ghost.

### **Hymn: Be thou my vision CH4 465**

*Rop tú mo baile, a Choimdiu críde*

- 1 Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
thou my best thought in the day or the night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my Wisdom, be thou my true Word;  
I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father: thine own I would be;  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,  
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;  
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of Heaven, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish, 8th century

*translated* Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880–1931)

### **Blessing**