**OFFINGTON PARK, WORTHING**

 **22nd May 2022**

**10.30am**

**ALDERSGATE SUNDAY**

**CELEBRATION & CHALLENGE**

**STEWARD’S WELCOME & NEWS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come if you’re healthy, come if you’re hurt.
Come if you’re hopeful, come if you’re sad.
Let God’s light shine upon you.
Let God’s life fill you.
Let God bring you healing and hope today.

**HYMN StF 364 [ii] O for a thousand tongues** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK\_c**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK_c)

**PRAYERS**

**Praise & Thanksgiving**

All-encompassing God, we bow in adoration.
There is no need of sun or moon in the radiance
of your majesty.
We bow in adoration, basking in the light of your love,
**and exalting your name.**

Son of God, we bow in adoration.
Lamb of God, you light up our world with your glory.
We bow in adoration, basking in the warmth
of your saving grace,
**and exalting your name.**

Holy Spirit, we bow in adoration.
Blessing of God’s goodness, you cause our hearts to leap for joy.
We bow in adoration, basking in the power of the river of life,
**and exalting your name.**

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we bow in adoration, basking in the eternal light,
**and exalting in the powerful glory of your radiance.**
**Amen.**

**READING OT Zechariah 3, 1-5**

[**https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+3%2C+1-5&version=NIV**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+3%2C+1-5&version=NIV)

**SONG StF 343 All my days** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S17GChJ44-E**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S17GChJ44-E)

**READING GOSPEL Luke 10, 1-12 & 17-20**

[**https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A+1-12+&version=NIV**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A+1-12+&version=NIV)

[**https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A+17-20&version=NIV**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A+17-20&version=NIV)

**SERMON**

When you consider the word ‘healing’, what is your emotional reaction? If you’ve recently witnessed the apparently miraculous recovery of someone seriously injured in a road accident, you might feel very positive about the idea of healing. But if you and many others prayed earnestly for a young friend with cancer who then died, you may feel deep frustration and despair – or perhaps anger. We are all shaped by experiences such as these.

The man in today’s Gospel story had been ill for 38 years. How would you feel in his position? When Jesus asks him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’, what do you imagine went through his head? We might read his response in various ways. When he says, ‘Sir, I have no one to [help me]’, does that reveal an enduring hope for healing? Or is it more of a ‘Yes, but...’, signalling an acceptance of the hopelessness of his situation? Or might we see it as a decision to remain dependent on those who have at least carried him and his mat to the pool, day after day, so that he might beg? Might the alternative – living an independent life and earning his money – have lost its appeal?

It might be that our situations – and the range of possible responses – are uncomfortably similar to those of the sick man. We might even be suffering from a chronic physical illness or disability, whether or not others are aware of it. More likely, we have unresolved emotional issues or unreconciled relationships, whether in our families or in our churches. And what about the brokenness we ignore in our communities, and the massive inequalities we tolerate in our nation? To what extent do we work for ‘the healing of the nations’, or act as if we genuinely want to ‘save our planet’?

These are deeply challenging questions. When Jesus asks us, ‘Do you want to be made well?’, he seems to be addressing us both individually and collectively. If we allow him to draw our attention to one particular issue today, what might it be? And how might we respond?

In the story, Jesus understands the man’s response – ‘Sir, I have no one to [help me]’ – as implying a ‘Yes’ to his question. So, he empowers him to totally change his life, as he responds to Jesus’ direction: ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ If we are willing to change, Jesus is ready to empower us. And if we are willing to change our world, Jesus will walk with us every step of the way.

Dare we pause for a moment and notice what Jesus would have us see – either in our own lives or beyond? And if we dare to say ‘Yes’ to his healing and enabling power, what might be our very first step?

**SONG StF 239 Sent by the Lord am I** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRGy2XNJDnQ**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRGy2XNJDnQ)

**OFFERING**

**PRAYERS**

**Confession**

Lord, you give us life.
But there are times we don’t live life the way you wish us to.
When pain has us in its grip, we may give in to the gloom of pessimism.
Forgive us when we see only the gloomy downside of situations.
Forgive us when circumstances take over and moaning is easier than fighting.
Dark times sap our strength and courage and blind us to your light.
Renew our strength to fight our way into your healing light.

**Forgive us and rekindle the light of hope in these times, Lord, that all shall be well.**
**Amen.**

**Intercession**

Over the huge boundaries between rich and poor:
**we pray equality.**
Over the powerful boundaries between justice and oppression:
**we pray truth.**
Over the cultural boundaries between church and community:
**we pray connections.**
Over the bitter boundaries between families:
**we pray reconciliation.**
Over all the boundaries that divide:
**we pray trust and openness and new beginnings.**
In Jesus’ name.
**Amen.**

**SONG StF 407 Hear the call of the Kingdom**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MstAsQseFY**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MstAsQseFY)

**BLESSING**

Glorious God, you shine your light
into the dark places of our lives and of our world.
Gentle God, you touch us with your healing love and make us whole.
We ask you to be with us and shine through us this week,
and use us to bring hope and healing to others.
**Amen.**

**Prayers and Sermon from Roots on the Web**