



# Christian Blind Mission Sunday

## 14 October 2018

### Worship Resources



**Welcome to our selection of Let there be light! worship resources for Christian Blind Mission Sunday 2018.  
Please choose, use and adapt the elements that will best serve your context. In these notes you will find:**



**Prayers and  
prayer ideas**



**Suggested bible  
passages**



**Sermon notes**



**Some suggested  
songs**



**Hemedi and  
Mathias' stories**



**Visual ideas**



**Group discussion**



**Reflection**



**Further  
information**

**Visit [www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources](http://www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources) to find more resources to help your church celebrate Christian Blind Mission Sunday including:**

- a downloadable children's activity sheet
- a film and presentation to help bring CBM's facts and stories to life
- a downloadable fundraising ideas sheet
- print items to order for members of your congregation, such as prayer bookmarks, donation envelopes, posters and leaflets



## 1. Prayers and prayer ideas

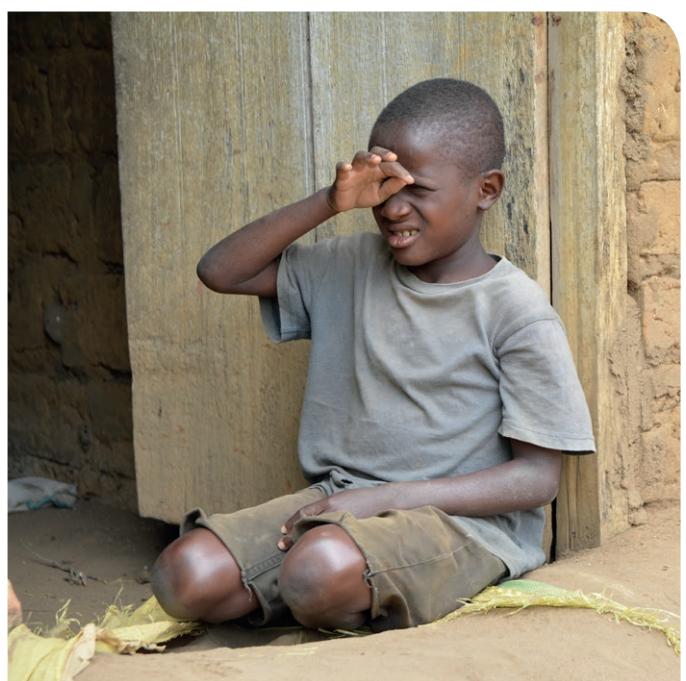
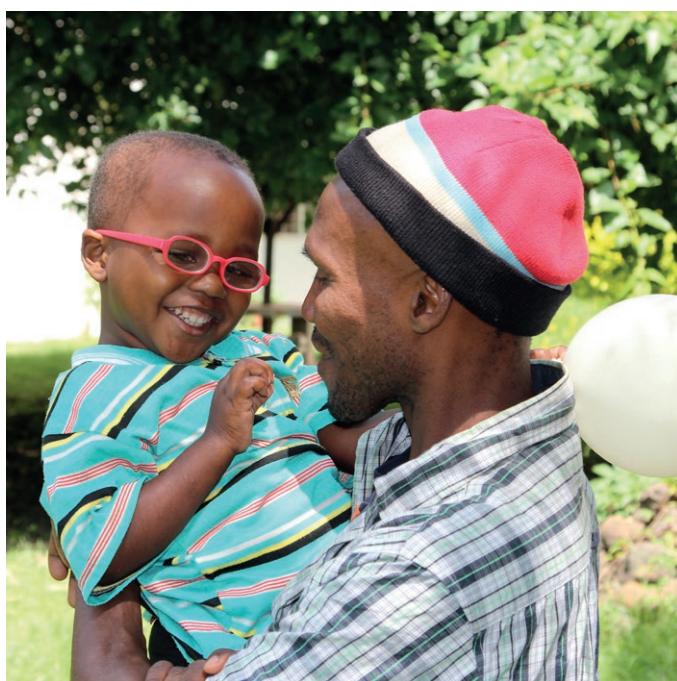
### An all-age prayer of thanksgiving

I spy, with my little eye...  
so much to thank you for, God!  
A thousand things beginning with each letter;  
more than I can think of, name or spell.  
Thank you for the sunlight, and electrical lights,  
that we can switch on when it's dark outside.  
Thank you for colours and creatures,  
and the millions of ways I enjoy the gift of sight.  
Thank you for reading and writing  
and the hundreds of ways my eyes help me every day.  
Thank you for glasses and contact lenses,  
and amazing operations to help people see.

### A prayer for Christian Blind Mission Sunday

Loving God,  
let there be light –  
in the eyes and futures  
of those living in the darkness  
of preventable blindness and poverty.

Let there be light  
in our hearts and lives  
so we see the difference we can make  
when we share your good gifts freely  
to restore hope to those whom others overlook.



## All-age prayers of intercession

**Ensure that the person leading the prayers stands at the front where everyone can see them, and hear them. Invite everyone to join in with the actions, and give their hearts once more to God as you all pray together.**

- **Cover your eyes with your hands**

Loving God, we pray now for the many people who are partially or fully blind, living in the world's poorest places. We thank you that there are people who support them. Give guidance and strength to CBM and all those who are working to restore sight to people who are needlessly blind.

- **Make your thumb and forefinger into circles, and hold them like a pair of glasses over your eyes**

Healing God, thank you so much for opticians and surgeons; for cataract surgery; for glasses and for contact lenses; for tools that help people with permanent blindness. Thank you that doctors can restore sight to people who would otherwise remain blind. Bless everyone who works in the poorest communities to help restore sight to some of the world's most forgotten people.



- **Cover your heart with your hands**

Transforming God, we know our hearts – as well as our bodies – sometimes need healing too. Help us all to see your world as you do and to understand what is important to you; loving and helping all your children, especially those who could experience life so differently if we shared more of what you have given us with them.

- **Open your hands in front of you**

Generous God, use us and Christian Blind Mission to carry your love, light and healing to more people like Hemedi and Mathias. Take these prayers, and shine your light on in our hearts and lives; help us to find ways we can use our hands and feet to do things that will help Christian Blind Mission restore light and sight to more people who have preventable blindness.

## An offering prayer

Take these gifts Lord of light, bless them and use them.  
Let there be more of your light in the world because of them.  
Let there be light in the eyes of children whose sight is restored;  
as we donate to fund these operations.

And may the light shine bright in their futures  
as they are able to see and do so much more;  
Lord, use our gifts to shine a light in the happy faces of the families who love them  
and who never imagined their darkness would end.  
Shine a light on the new possibilities Christian Blind Mission can explore for more children  
as they seek to show your love in action.



## A creative prayer of response: Light up the way

**You will need:** enough tea-lights for everyone in the congregation to light one; matches; a large piece of card and an area set aside in church that is separate from any main thoroughfares; a marker pen; one or two responsible volunteers.

- In advance, use the marker pen to write 'Let there be light!' or draw an outline of a pair of glasses onto the large piece of card. Then, hand a tealight to each person as they come into the service.
- At an appropriate point in the service invite everyone to look at their unlit candle and lead them in a moment of silent prayer for those facing the double darkness of preventable blindness and poverty.
- Encourage them to look again at their unlit candle and think about it now, not as an image of darkness or blindness, but as representing the potential light and sight that they can help restore.
- Invite people, to come forward with their candle, to offer their prayer for Mathias and other people who are living with cataracts in Africa.

- *You may wish to sing or play a song as people come up.* Each person should hand their candle to the volunteers and watch as they light them and place them in the outline of the 'Let there be light' writing, so that the candles create the shape of the words.
- As they do this, thank God for the way that all our individual contributions – in whatever form – add up to make a big difference. Remind the congregation that by working together, we can light up the path for more people like Mathias to receive help, which could transform their lives forever.
- Make sure you take some photos of your message to keep, share and inspire further prayer. We always welcome photos of your church events to publish to encourage others to get involved, so if you manage to get some, please send them on to [community@cbmuk.org.uk](mailto:community@cbmuk.org.uk)



## 2. Suggested bible passages to use as readings

Genesis 1: 1-4

John 8:12

Luke 4:18

Psalm 19

Isaiah 42:16

Matthew 25: 35-40



## 3. Sermon notes

### 1. Let there be light!

- The first words the Bible records God speaking in his relationship with the world are "Let there be light!" (Genesis 1:3) and after light came life in all its variety and diversity. Throughout the creation account, God looks around him, sees what he has made and calls it "good".
- Christian Blind Mission Sunday (14 October and World Sight Day 12 October) gives us an opportunity to pause and look around... there is much to celebrate.
- Light and sight are extraordinary gifts for everyone who is lucky enough to have them. But as we imagine looking at the world through Hemedi's eyes, we can reconnect with the wonder of what our eyes enable us to see and do.
- But there is sadness in hearing CBM's stories too. Reading statistics that illustrate just how many children have preventable blindness, and remain unable to see because their families are too poor to afford treatment, makes us angry. Glimpsing what kind of a life these children might have if they don't receive help, breaks our hearts. And we echo God's words of creation as we pray for change: "Let there be light".
- When we feel this heartbreak, and pray this prayer, we are getting closer to the heart of God. "Let there be light" is not a one-off abstract phrase, it could be used to summarise every redeeming interaction our Father has had with each

of us throughout our individual lives, throughout the whole of human history.

### 2. Seeing by the Light

- Jesus doesn't just bring more light, he is the light – he tells us in the gospel of John (8:12), "I am the light of the world." In his life, his teaching and sacrifice, he shines a path for us to follow and shows us the way we should live. This is certainly wonderful – light brings clarity, warmth, beauty, direction and joy. But light can be disruptive too, exposing things for how they really are.
- In the book of Isaiah, Jesus brings good news to those in need. He says; "I will lead the blind...I will guide them; I will turn darkness into light before them." (Isaiah 42:16) The poor have been sent a champion, and the blind have been sent a healer... Jesus' miracles and teaching confirmed his assertion that this scripture had been fulfilled – so many people's prayers for light at the end of their dark tunnel were answered.
- If Jesus' mission includes bringing good news to the poor and recovery of sight to the blind; then this must be part of our mission too. As we stand before God again today, will we see clearly what it means to follow Jesus? Will we say yes to walk with him, to work with him, and look out for the world's forgotten people.

### 3. Bringing more light

- Christian Blind Mission Sunday gives us an opportunity to restore sight to the world's forgotten people. In countries like Uganda, it is nearly impossible for people like Mathias to access eye surgery without help as there are financial and geographical barriers.
- It's a stark illustration of the degree to how unjust we have made God's beautiful world, that the choice between Mathias remaining in the dark or having

his sight restored, rests with us; people who are strangers to him. But it's also a staggering testimony to the kingdom of light that every time we remember that our family includes people in far away countries, and share the good gifts we have been given, God answers our prayers – we are showing God's love in action, living out his ongoing restorative command; "Let there be light!"

### 4. A selection of helpful hymns and songs



10,000 reasons (Bless the Lord)	<i>Matt Redman</i>
All things bright and beautiful	<i>Cecil Frances Alexander</i>
Be thou my vision	<i>Irish traditional</i>
Come, let us sing of a wonderful love	<i>Robert Walmsley</i>
God of justice	<i>Tim Hughes</i>
Great is thy faithfulness	<i>Thomas O. Chisholm</i>
How great thou art!	<i>Stuart K Hine</i>
I, the Lord of sea and sky	<i>Dan Schutte</i>
Indescribable	<i>Laura Story</i>
Light of the world (Here I am to worship)	<i>Tim Hughes</i>
Lord, you have my heart	<i>Martin Smith</i>
Make me a channel of your peace	<i>Sebastian Temple (from the prayer of St Francis)</i>
Open the eyes of my heart Lord	<i>Paul Baloche</i>
Show me the way of the cross once again	<i>Matt Redman</i>
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord!	<i>Timothy Dudley-Smith</i>
We have nothing to give	<i>Matt Redman</i>
When God Surveyed the New Made World	<i>Isaac Watts</i>
When I look into your holiness	<i>Cathy Perrin</i>
When I needed a neighbour	<i>Sydney Carter</i>
When I survey the wondrous cross	<i>Isaac Watts</i>



## 5. See the world through the eyes of Hemedi and Mathias

- Most young children are still full of the wonder of first sights; pointing to every new shape and colour. But imagine what it's like for a child who once was blind, but now can see? A child who used to know only darkness – heavy curtains over their vision obscuring the light – but now, suddenly they are able to see the world as it was created; in glorious technicolour.
- Hemedi, from Tanzania, East Africa, was born with cataracts in both eyes and his vision deteriorated, until he was completely blind. Hemedi's family were devastated, but his parents had to spend what little savings they had on a life-saving operation for Hemedi's grandfather.
- After receiving cataract surgery that his family would never have been able to afford without CBM, he is joyful to see his father's face clearly for the first time. At three years old, he's too young to understand just how much has been restored to him. But his father, Ramadhani, knows; this means his son can look forward to a bright future full of opportunity.
- Some thousand miles north, near the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, ten-year-old Mathias looks on as his friends play football. He would love to join in



but his cataracts mean he can barely see the ball, so he sits alone in the shade. Mathias' grandmother, Scovia, worries about the kind of life her grandson will face if his cataracts can't be operated on. Now he struggles to read or do his chores. But later? What will happen if he remains in the dark?

- Every year, it's estimated that up to half a million children in developing countries go blind – but 75% of all blindness is avoidable and 50% of it is caused by cataracts, which can be easily treated for as little as £95 per eye.
- In Africa, around one in every five households lives below the poverty line. Surviving is a daily struggle and a family member who cannot see needs to be supported. This presents an indescribable challenge and there is little help available: people living in poverty with disability are the world's forgotten people.
- But there are people who want to help; people like you and people like us; people inspired by the Light of the World to love and serve children like Mathias.
- This Christian Blind Mission Sunday we have a chance to turn the lights back on for more children who are living in the darkness of preventable blindness. We have the chance to say yes to Jesus as he shines a light on our hearts, minds and lives – yes, we will walk with him to bring good news to the poor and recovery of sight to the blind. Yes, we will be thankful for the good gifts of light, sight, healthcare and education – and yes, we will share these freely, as we have also received them.
- See Section 9 for more information on Mathias's and Hemedi's home countries.



## 6. Visual ideas to use throughout your service

The theme of this year's Christian Blind Mission Sunday is ***Let there be light!*** To weave this through your service visually, you could:

- Make creative use of light at different points in the service, turning lights on/off when talking about light and sight.
- Create a montage of images of some of the wonderful lights, sights and colours in God's creation to display as people are coming into the service. You

could include images of Hemedi in this too – see the online photo gallery at [www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources](http://www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources) to find these.

- Encourage everyone to come to church dressed in lots of different, bright colours. (See our online fundraising ideas guide at [www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources](http://www.cbmuk.org.uk/sunday-resources) to find out how you could use this as a creative way to hold a collection at your church.)



## 7. Reflection and/or discussion questions

Distribute or display some or all of these questions to give people a chance to reflect individually on what their response might be to all they have heard this Christian Blind Mission Sunday. Perhaps during a song of reflection, or period of quiet. Alternatively, you could prompt discussion between people or even suggest that this is a topic to follow-up in small groups during the week:

- 1 What do you think is the hardest thing about not being able to see in the UK?
- 2 Would this be the same, or different, if you lived in a poor community in East Africa?
- 3 What have you found most inspiring to learn or think about this Christian Blind Mission Sunday?
- 4 What might you change in your life as a result of today?
- 5 How would you like to respond to Christian Blind Mission Sunday personally or as a group?





## 8. Reflection: Let there be light!

**You could use this as an alternative reading in your service, or even in place of a sermon, allowing the scriptures and resonances it weaves together to speak for. You could also reprint it in your church magazine article or share it with your church online.**

Once upon a time, before time, was the Light – the source of all lesser lights; the one who imagined colour and life. He spoke his first recorded words in our cosmos – “Let there be light!” – then breathed into being whole rainbows of creation; separated rolling aqua blue from fixed rock grey and sculpted green, brown and desert-yellow rise; divided solid below from ethereal, gaseous above; balanced our atmosphere and fine-tuned every intricate detail to sustain plants and creatures.

Then he made us; no small wonder... fearfully and wonderfully made with two eyes shaped and set in place to drink in all his glories. He designed us as searchers so we would find more and more of the mystery he'd crafted in layer upon layer of our world; more and more of the mercy he set in place to re-create us when we broke his perfection with our selfishness...

Yes, the Lord is our light and our salvation indeed.

How did he do it? How did he look ahead and see that some of those same eyes he crafted would need healing one day? Laying in place every material, principle and calculation needed for sand to be fired into glass lenses and skilled hands to precisely operate so blind eyes could see again.

As marvellous as his more obvious miracles, the Light saw to it that we would discover his hidden gifts of medicine and optometry, cataract removal surgery and laser treatment and the utter wonder of bringing light into a child's life for the first time.

But then, really, actually, this was never the hard part.

The hard part is always getting our hearts to see right. The psalmist says God's word is a light to our path. But who wants to see by it? Too often we're tempted to look away; to let our feet find another route.

No wonder then, that the Light of the World came to shine among us and on us, and



lay down his life for us. Because we kept choosing – keep choosing to shut the eyes of our hearts to the searching beam of love.

Even face to face, some walked away when he shone too bright for them, asking them to take the light of the good gifts they'd been given and shine and share it with others.

And so the dark statistics of injustice pile up; there are places that have and places that don't; people that are always in the spotlight and those who are constantly overlooked; eyes that would be able to see again so easily, and for so little cost, but still can't. And all because of the way we've stacked up the odds against the poor.

Enough. "Let there be light!" Let God's conviction flood our hearts so we can see clearly again what's really important.

"Let there be light!" Let the resources we are holding that could help cure preventable blindness for some of the world's poorest people be released.

"Let there be light!" Let us join in with bringing good news to those who are poor and recovery of sight to people who are blind; let us be part of restoring brighter futures in Jesus' name.

"Let there be light!"

Let there be more stories of eyes newly flooded with laughing wonder following successful operations.

We say yes to him; we say it with him – "Let there be light!"



## 9. More information about blindness, Tanzania and Uganda and CBM

CBM is the overseas disability charity with more than a hundred years' history of being motivated by Christ's love to reach out to some of the most forgotten people in the world's poorest places; transforming the lives of people with blindness and other disabilities.

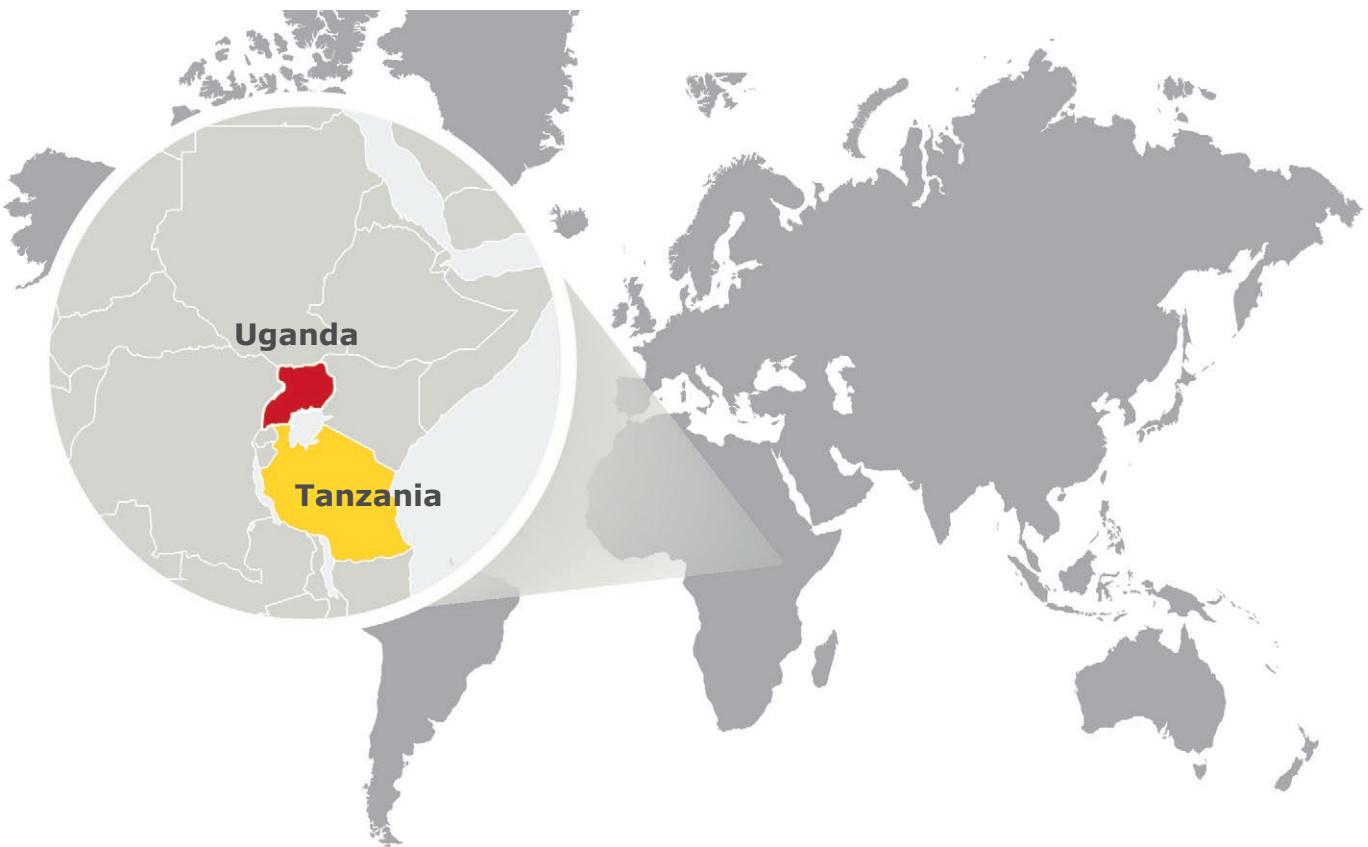
Find out more at [www.cbmuk.org.uk](http://www.cbmuk.org.uk)

### Blindness around the world

- **36 million** people in the world are blind.
- **75% of blindness is avoidable.** So every day, people are losing their sight because of diseases or conditions that could be prevented or treated.
- **89%** of visually impaired people live in low or middle income countries.
- **More than 1 in every 7** people are struggling to see simply because they can't access a pair of glasses to

correct short-sightedness; almost all of them live in the world's poorest places.

- Not only is it harder for people with preventable blindness in poor communities to access treatment, it's doubly difficult when families struggle to provide for those who can't work; there is little or no external support.
- Investing in restoring a child's sight makes it possible for them to learn and have the chance of a brighter future.



## About Tanzania and Uganda

- Hemedi lives in Tanzania, and Mathias in Uganda. These are neighbouring countries in East Africa. The two nations have different stories, strengths and challenges, but also share some needs in common.
- Both countries have very young populations and much lower than average life expectancy (63 in Tanzania and 56 in Uganda). Around one in every five households lives below the international basic needs poverty line, meaning it is a daily struggle to survive, and medical bills are often way out of reach.
- One of the best news stories in recent decades for both these nations is the huge improvement in free education and literacy rates achieved. However, children with blindness or other types of disability are being left behind – they are more likely to miss out on education than any other group.
- Christian Blind Mission enables children like Hemedi and Mathias to go to school by providing them with cataract surgery they need. CBM also helps girls and boys with lifelong disability to complete their education. Your support doesn't just give children brighter futures, it helps invest in the future of their countries too.

## Contact us:

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