



# Light up Lives

18 February - 20 May 2021



## Worship Resources

This guide will help you make the most of the **Light up Lives** appeal with your church this spring. Feel free to use and adapt any of these resources in ways that will inspire your congregation to think about the gift of sight and encourage them to raise and give support. In these notes you will find:

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Prayers

2



Intercessions

3



Bible passages

4



Sermon notes

5



Hymns and songs

6



Stories of children  
you can help

7



Reflection

8



Further information



Remember, between 18 February and 20 May every £1 you raise will be doubled by the UK government, so you can help to Light up Lives of twice as many people. Please note the government cannot match any donations raised outside of these dates.



## 1. Prayers

### A call to worship

Blessed are you, O Lord;  
**teach me your ways.**

With my whole heart I seek you;  
**do not let me stray from your commandments.**

Your word is a lamp to my feet  
**and a light to my path.**

Give me understanding, that I may keep your law  
**and observe it with my whole heart.**

Turn my heart to your decrees,  
**and not to selfish gain.**

Open my eyes,  
**that I may see wonderful things.**

My tongue will sing of your promise,  
**for all your commandments are right.**

Give life according to your justice  
**For great is your mercy, O Lord.**

*Adapted from Psalm 119*

### 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 share your blessings to give the gift of sight.

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 on the families and loved ones of these children, who never imagined their darkness would end.

Shine a light to show us the change we can bring into the lives of more children as we seek to show your love in action.



## 2. Intercessions

*The response is: **Lord guide us, that together we may light up lives.***

We pray for our church, our church leaders and all the people of God, that as Jesus promised he will build his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it<sup>1</sup>.

*Lord guide us, that we may see the way you have prepared.*

We pray, thanking God who has made the world and everything in it<sup>2</sup>, that we may protect the beauty of creation. We pray for peace among the nations and for those in authority over us.

*Lord guide us, that we may see the way you have prepared.*

We pray for our community, that in humility we will value others above ourselves<sup>3</sup>. Help everyone around us to know the love of their neighbours and see the love of God.

*Lord guide us, that we may together we may light up lives.*

We pray for those who are suffering from loss, illness, and those in need; that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God<sup>4</sup>.

*Lord guide us, together we may light up lives.*

We thank God for the lives of those who have died in Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named<sup>5</sup>. May we see his everlasting kingdom.

*Lord guide us, together we may light up lives.*

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Acts 17:24 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 3:15 (ESV)



### 3. Suggested Bible passages to use as readings

#### **Psalms**

Psalm 17:5 - "My steps have held to your paths..."

Psalm 25:4 - "Show me your ways, Lord..."

Psalm 140:12 - "...the Lord secures justice for the poor..."

Psalm 146:8 - "...the Lord gives sight to the blind..."

#### **Old Testament**

Deuteronomy 19:9-19 - "Do not put a stumbling block in front of the blind but fear your God..."

Isaiah 35:1-5 - "...they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God..."

Isaiah 29:18 - "...out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see..."

Isaiah 53:6 - "...each of us has turned to our own way..."

#### **Epistle**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - "...we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen..."

Ephesians 5:8-14 - "...now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light..."

#### **Gospels**

Matthew 5:14-16 - "...that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father..."

Luke 4:18-21 - "...he has sent me to proclaim recovery of sight for the blind..."

John 9:1-8 - "...While I am in the world, I am the light of the world..."

John 14:6 - "I am the way and the truth and the life..."



## 4. Sermon notes

*The following are suggestions that will help link sermons to the Gospel readings for Lent. You may find these helpful even if your church does not follow lectionary readings.*

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<b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>February 17, 2021</b>	Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21 “...beware of practicing your piety before men, in order to be seen by them...”	When we choose to do good or help others, God is not blind to our actions. Instead of wanting to be noticed let “your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16).
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<b>First Sunday in Lent</b> <b>February 21, 2021</b>	Matthew 4:1-11 “the devil took him... and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor...”	Satan tempted Jesus and tested his restraint, hoping He would succumb to the “lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16). We should be grateful for the gift of sight and use it well, looking for ways to please God and help others.
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<b>Second Sunday in Lent</b> <b>February 28, 2021</b>	John 3:1-17 “no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”	The Pharisee named Nicodemus realised that Jesus was special because of miracles he had seen. But we do not always need our sight to know something is real. What have you not seen but you still believe in?
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Matthew 17:1-9 “...suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son...”	At the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of God came from inside a terrifying cloud. We are afraid of what we can’t see. Having cataracts is like being in a cloud, not being able to see people or objects clearly. Being blinded can be terrifying.
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<b>Third Sunday in Lent</b> <b>March 7, 2021</b>	John 4:5-42 “look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.”	Whilst in Samaria, Jesus explains to his disciples he is sustained by doing God’s work. By helping others less fortunate, we can find a sense of purpose and satisfaction, “so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.”
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**Fourth Sunday in  
Lent**  
**March 14, 2021**

John 9:1-41  
“...as long as I am in  
the world I am the  
light of the world.”

Jesus singled out the blind man as someone who deserved help and had more to give. By restoring his sight, he restored his potential. Although we cannot perform miracles we can make a big difference to people with avoidable blindness.

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**Fifth Sunday in  
Lent**  
**March 21, 2021**

John 11:1-45  
“Those who walk  
during the day do  
not stumble, because  
they see the light of  
this world...”

By following Jesus example, we should love thy neighbour and help others. We should take opportunities to help those who are ill, or struggling or have a disability and show Christ’s love to them through our actions.

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**Palm Sunday**  
**March 28, 2021**

Matthew 21:1-11  
“...blessed is the one  
who comes in the  
name of the Lord!”

As He enters Jerusalem, Jesus can see the path ahead of him, dreadful as it may be. Yet there can be joy amid all our suffering. Imagine a person whose sight you restore calling you blessed, because you come in God’s name!

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**Easter Sunday**  
**April 4, 2021**

John 20:1-18  
**Or** Matthew 28:1-10  
“...on the first day of  
the week, at early  
dawn, they came to  
the tomb...”

The Gospel of John says that this happened “while it was still dark,” so it must have been very early dawn indeed. It’s thrilling to imagine how our response now can bring light out of darkness in much the same way.

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## 5. A selection of helpful music

### Hymns

Thou art the way: to thee alone *George W. Doane*

Guide me, O thou great redeemer *William Williams*

Hail the day that sees him rise *Charles Wesley*

Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord! *Timothy Dudley-Smith*

All things bright and beautiful *Cecil Frances Alexander*

Be thou my vision *Irish traditional*

Great is thy faithfulness *Thomas O. Chisholm*

How great thou art! *Stuart K Hine*

I, the Lord of sea and sky *Dan Schutte*

When I survey the wondrous cross *Isaac Watts*

### Praise songs

Indescribable *Laura Story*

Light of the world (Here I am to worship) *Tim Hughes*

Lord, you have my heart *Martin Smith*

Make me a channel of your peace *Sebastian Temple (from the prayer of St Francis)*

Open the eyes of my heart Lord *Paul Baloche*

Show me the way of the cross once again *Matt Redman*

We have nothing to give *Matt Redman*

God of justice *Tim Hughes*

When I look into your holiness *Cathy Perrin*

10,000 reasons (Bless the Lord) *Matt Redman*

When I needed a neighbour *Sydney Carter*

Thy Word is lamp unto my feet *Amy Grant & Michael W. Smith*



## 6. See through the eyes of children with Sight loss

*Consider including all or part of the story below as part of a reading in a special service, or incorporated into a sermon. Victory is an example of a child whose blindness is treatable but her family can't afford the simple operation to restore her sight.*

### Hope for a brighter future

5-year-old Victory from East Africa is blind. She has cataracts which affect her eyes so much that she only can see light or dark. Her mother Bahati, realised that something was wrong with her little girl when she was just two years old. "She didn't look at things, but had to feel for them", Bahati explains.

Victory's mother was aware that medical treatment for eye problems would probably be expensive and there was no way she could afford it; she has six children to take care of. Sometimes Victory's older sister Ruth takes care of her while Bahati is working, but a lot of the time Victory is left alone.

Since Bahati realised Victory has visual problems, her daughter's eyesight has deteriorated each year. Victory can hardly move around independently anymore. Even inside her home where she knows every corner by heart she moves around slowly and hesitantly. Outside the house she walks extremely slowly because she can't see the many rocks on the uneven ground. She stumbles over them, nearly loses her balance with every step.

"When the other children go to school there is no one around to play with her – only little babies", her mother says, "She is often alone." And even when the older children are around Victory started to avoid their company because they made fun of her.

Victory said: "Mummy, the other kids are mean but god will help me." But still the cataracts in Victory's eyes didn't go away. Victory got more silent and unhappy.



Bahati and Victory had almost given up hope – until recently something happened that changed everything: a team of eye medics came to the nearby community centre, inviting anyone with eye problems to come. They immediately recognised the cataract in Victoria's eyes and strongly recommended her mother to bring the girl to CBM-funded district hospital.

With help from CBM's eye specialists, and free surgery, Victory will have her life transformed. Clearer vision will mean a much better quality of life. She will be able to go to school, learn to read and write and hopefully be independent.



## 7. Reflection

*A short talk you may use or adapt when inviting people to think about what it's like to live needlessly blind, and consider their response to this life-changing appeal.*

What comes to your mind when I invite you to consider what it means to **Light up Lives** To see what path we are on, we need light, and there can hardly be a concept we see more often in the Bible. None of us need reminding that the first words spoken as God created the universe are "Let there be light." And at the complete opposite end of the Bible, John describes the end of time, when the servants of God "will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light." (Revelation 22:5).

So God is light. All light comes from him. But what does this really mean both physically and spiritually? As we try to **Light up Lives** we should go, we learn that we cannot do it without God. But we also have to choose to walk in the light. We have to recognise it. We even have to choose to see it. The opening verses of the Gospel of John describe this in detail, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him."

To know the way we should go, we need to see the light. To recognise it for what it is. And to make that daily effort to stay on the paths that God has prepared for us. He has set out the way that we and all people should follow, but also guides us individually through the changes of life.

But even if we follow God's path, it can be a rocky and difficult road. David says in Psalm 17, "My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not stumbled." But just a few verses later, we read that "My mortal enemies...have tracked me down, they now surround me, with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground."

It makes me think of what happened to a girl named Allen who is needlessly blind and living in a part of East Africa where eye health services are scarce. She can see just enough to collect water, but her mother Elizabeth explains, "One time she went to the water spring and the children she found there smeared hot pepper in her eyes. They beat her up and she came back crying. I felt like someone was piercing my heart with an arrow."

It's terrible to think that a mother and child have to suffer needlessly, because Allen's condition is treatable. Her cataracts can be removed to restore good vision. What strikes me is this: because the world did not recognise the light – the true light – when it was coming into the world, could this be part of the reason why children are still needlessly blind, and don't receive the help they need?

If everyone on earth recognised what it meant to have Jesus walking among us, we would have changed the way we treat others. But now the task is for those of us who do know the light, and work in our own feeble ways to follow the path through life that is lit up by him. Knowing this, it only makes sense to do what we can today, and in the future, to help restore the sight of people who could see, but can't because until someone helps, they can't afford the medical care they need.

As individual members of our congregation any donations we make to support Christian Blind Mission's **Light up Lives** appeal will be doubled by the UK government. So we know this is an important, urgent need. People's lives will change. And the multiplying effect of this gift reminds me of the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."



## 8. More information about blindness and CBM

Every day, people in the world's poorest places become needlessly blind because of conditions that can be easily treated, like cataracts. Many women, men and children in poverty have no access to the most basic of eye health services. Worldwide, an incredible 3 out of 4 people who are blind don't need to be. And too often, if you live in a poor community, losing your sight also means losing the chance to go to school, live independently or earn a living.



Donations from your church members will help to **Light up Lives** in the world's poorest places by:

- improving access to sight-restoring cataract surgery and treatment for blinding conditions like glaucoma.
- reaching people at risk of blindness in remote areas, far from the nearest eye hospital, helping them access treatment before it is too late.
- ensuring people with low-vision can access glasses and support, so they can go to school, earn a living and be active in their communities.
- training local staff, equipping hospitals and strengthening eye health systems to ensure the maximum long-term benefit.

Visit [www.lightuplives.net](http://www.lightuplives.net) to find more resources to help your church be part of our **Light up Lives** appeal:

- a film and presentation to help bring Christian Blind Mission's facts and stories to life
- a downloadable children's activity sheet
- a downloadable fundraising ideas sheet
- printed prayer bookmarks, donation envelopes and posters for you to order for your congregation

Donate today and gifts from your church congregation could help to **Light up Lives** of twice the number of people.

Until 20th May 2021 all public donations to our **Light up Lives** appeal will be doubled by the UK government. So every pound your church can give will have double the impact – it could fund twice as many sight-saving surgeries, pairs of glasses or eye-health outreach activities in the world's poorest places.

Your donation will help prevent blindness and transform lives wherever the need is greatest. Match funding from the UK government will improve access to sight-saving eye-health services in Zimbabwe.

Find out more at [www.lightuplives.net](http://www.lightuplives.net)



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