**Lent Week Four Prayer Service**

 **Hearts of Love, Eyes Of Compassion**

Note-on your altar you may want to have some symbols of blindness such as blindfolds, dark glasses, or a cane.

**Welcome & Introduction**

Leader: Welcome to our celebration of the fourth week of Lent. Today we will hear the story of Jesus curing the blind man. We pray for the ability

to see people for who they truly are and not just by their outward

appearance. Please join in our opening song *Open My Eyes Lord*

**Opening Song** show video of *Open My Eyes Lord*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

**Penitential Rite**

Leader: We just sang about how we want God to open our eyes so we can see God’s face. Sometimes our eyes are not open to see the face of God in our brothers and sisters. So now we will pause for a moment and think about how we sometimes judge others by how they look or what they can do rather than seeing them with the eyes of God.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you see us with eyes of love. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Christ Jesus, you see us with eyes of forgiveness. Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you see us with eyes of compassion. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: May our loving God help us to be more like Jesus, seeing people with eyes of understanding and kindness.

All: Amen.

**Opening Prayer**

Leader: Let us pray.

Gracious and loving God, who sees into the depths of our hearts, in this time of Lent give us clear sight so that we may be people of

love and acceptance. May we treat others the way that we would like

to be treated – with respect, understanding and thoughtfulness. We ask this prayer in Jesus’ name.

All: Amen.

**Scripture Readings**

Proclaimer: A reading from the 1st book of Samuel

God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint one of Jesse’s sons as King of Israel. When he came to Jesse’s first son who was tall, strong and handsome, Samuel thought, “surely the Lord’s anointed is now before me”. But the Lord said to Samuel, “do not look on his appearance or on his height because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as humans see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is watching the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him before Samuel. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him king in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

The word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

**Gospel Reading**

Proclaimer: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.”

Proclaimer: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reflection**

The two readings we heard today both deal with blindness. The gospel reading talks about real blindness which very few of us have. The second reading talks about another type of blindness that all of us suffer from. It is the type of blindness caused by judging others by their outward appearance or by what they do. How often do we, like the prophet Samuel, judge people by the way they look? Do we make positive assumptions about a girl who is pretty or a boy who is handsome? Do we make negative assumptions about someone who faces physical or mental challenges? In the gospel, Jesus healed the man born blind but he also comes to heal us of our own blindness. If we ask him to, Jesus will cure us of the blindness of judging people by their outer appearances or by what they do. Jesus is always willing to help us look upon others with God’s eyes-eyes of love, compassion and acceptance.

**Video**-we will now watch a video about a young man named Patrick Hughes who was born blind and disabled. People made certain assumptions about him which he has proven wrong. Thankfully, Patrick’s dad saw Patrick through God’s eyes of love, compassion and acceptance which has made all the difference in Patrick’s life. Show *Blind Disabled Piano Player* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xwCG0Ey2Mg*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xwCG0Ey2Mg)

**Prayer of the Faithful**

Leader: Loving God, we come before you with our prayers, our hearts full of hope and joy.

Reader: For the leaders of our world …*(pause)* that they may truly see the needs of everyone not just the rich and powerful. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the leaders of our church …*(pause)* that they may look with eyes of compassion and justice for all. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For our community …*(pause)* that together we may see others through the loving and caring eyes of Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For ourselves…*(pause)* that we may look beyond the outward appearances of others and see the goodness in them. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask you Lord to hear the prayers we bring before you.

All: Amen.

**Final Prayer**

Leader: Loving God, you see us as we truly are and love us with patience and mercy. Help us to love others in this same way so that we can

be kind, gentle and compassionate people, seeing others as you see

them. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

All: Amen.

**Blessing & Dismissal**

Leader: May you go out and see with the eyes of peace and love.

All: Amen.

Leader: May you go out and see with the eyes of mercy and forgiveness.

All: Amen.

Leader: May you go out and see with the eyes of kindness and understanding.

All: Amen.

Leader: May almighty God bless you, in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

**Closing Song-**show video of *Open the Eyes of My Heart* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh30xwmJ-x0*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh30xwmJ-x0)