

I once met a man who was blind. His name was Michael and he was German.

I couldn't tell you how old he was or what he looked like because I couldn't see either.

I can tell you he was tall – his voice floated above my head.

And I can tell you that he smoked because he I could smell the tobacco on his clothing.

I think he was in his late 20s or early 30s but these things are unimportant.

Michael was my guide in Frankfurt's Dialogue museum.

Leaving all our possessions, including glasses, watches, phones – anything one might see by – we slowly made our way down an ever darkening corridor.

One hand held tightly to the rail on the wall. The other grasped the white cane we had been given.

2 families – 8 of us in total, made our way into the kind of pitch black darkness you never experience in the West. It was complete.

I could sense my husband's rising panic. He does not like confined spaces. He does not like to feel trapped. I heard his whisper, 'I don't think I can do this.'

I grabbed his hand: 'Yes, you can, they said there are doors in every room. We can get out any time you want. Come on. You'll regret it if we don't.'

So it was that we entered the cavernous space (or was it?); the seemingly eternal darkness with no idea of what to expect next.

'Hi, I'm Michael and I'm your guide' he said, 'Follow my voice.' Gingerly, we tapped our canes forward a step and let our feet follow, shrinking against the possibility of a step, a wall, a trap!

'I've been told someone is afraid of the darkness – who is it?' said Michael.

My husband sheepishly admitted it was him. I could feel the movement past me and then...'Whooooa!!' The sound of my other half taken by surprise, moving quickly and unexpectedly in the darkness. Michael had him by the arm.

Over the next hour we tapped our way through a park and sat on a bench to listen and feel the music in the bandstand. We tapped over a bridge and touched the cool water of a stream and the plant life that grew there. We even negotiated a busy street, finding the crossing and navigating safely over.

‘Follow my voice.’ Said Michael over and over. ‘There’s a small step here!’ ‘Find the first door on your left once you’re over the road.’ He was our shepherd and our guide. He was blind but he could see.

And as at last we found our way to the bar, ordered drinks (and hoped we’d been given the right change!) and made our way to our seats, Michael told us his story and allowed us to ask whatever we wanted of this kindly gentle giant.

In such a short time, our senses were sharpened and we could hear, feel, sense more than we usually would. I quickly realised that I knew where my boys were, when someone was too close for me to move and even when a wall made its presence felt.

We said goodbye to Michael in the darkness before making our way back to the searing light of day. Too loud. Too much.

He would never see us and we would never see him but I would know his voice and he gave me much to consider about the treasures of darkness. I remember Michael each time the lectionary throws us any stories about blind men healed – of course I do – but actually, I find Michael a more helpful symbol for God, Father, Son and Spirit:

Father God speaking to our fathers in faith from out of clouds, bushes, night time skies and silent calm.

Knowing and following the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Not being able to see where the Spirit blows but knowing she is there.

Gillaine

<https://dialogmuseum.de/en/about-us/>

Resources

Holy Week worship ideas from Singing the Faith Plus

Singing the Faith are offering a resource to support individual or collective worship during Holy Week. It sets out for each day:

- the four (Year A) Lectionary readings

- a short summary of the main themes that run across the readings
- a selection of hymns suitable reflecting the themes.

Find it at:

[Holy Week \(Year A\) - a Singing the Faith introduction \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/holy-week/year-a-a-singing-the-faith-introduction)

World Water Day

Today, the 22nd March, is World Water Day, a global call to action for all of us to think about the way we consume and manage water. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 6 sets out the promise that everyone on the planet will have safely managed water and sanitation by 2030. However, right now we are seriously off track to meet this goal. Billions of people and countless schools, businesses, healthcare centres, farms and factories don't have the safe water and toilets they need.

To accelerate change more action is needed. To find out more go to <https://www.worldwaterday.org/>