Anchor Scripture:
John 9:1-12 (Healing of the man born blind)

Additional Scripture Readings:
Isaiah 58: 5-11
Matthews 22: 37-40
Luke 10: 25-37
Luke 5: 12-14
Luke 17: 11-14
Matthews 25: 31-46

Call to Worship (Psalm 34:1-5 -NIV)
I will extol the Lord at all times.
His praise will always be on my lips.
I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

Relevant Hymn:
Opening Prayer – crafted from Luke 7:1-7
Amazing God – whose wonder is shown in the lives of the people who do not prioritize you, and yet you enter all lives as if you are going into a city with both those who expect you to come and those who pay no attention to you.

Gracious God – we need you as the Centurion did in his hour of need. Our status bares no reference when trouble strikes.

Revealed God – You speak louder than the commands we shout. We hear you and your words of life echo in our heads and hearts until we pay attention to you risen Christ.

Responding God – Even our scrambled words do not just bounce, but you respond even by you coming to our help.

Available God – In our busy schedules, you allow yourself to be interrupted by our cries and misery. You reprioritize us as you put us at the top of your agenda.

Lord we praise you for your life-giving nature that gives hope to us your children. We adore you for your generous love – a rare commodity in this life.
Lord we also lament as we look at life and see how much we have missed the mark of love. You showed us compassion in your Son Jesus Christ. We chose isolating your people. Why must those living with TB and HIV be isolated? Why must they walk a lonely journey?

You showed us how to affirm and yet we condemn. We call the disease code names and in the process stigma and stereotypes become the order of the day. Why must the people lose their identity such that they are known by their diseases?

You showed us embrace and yet we chose rejection. People lose their sense of belonging, treated as outcasts. Their sin was to breathe air and their immune systems became weaker. We don’t see how opportunistic TB is, instead we see the opportunity to magnify the difference between our health and those infected by TB.

*A moment of corporate confession*

And so, we confess Lord that we have not loved you and your people, especially in their time of need. We choose things instead of choosing people. We treat others like objects if we are not impressed by them, then we find it demeaning to interact with them. Even though our lives change, we expect other people’s lives to remain the same. We distance ourselves from them and instead, choose to find others who still appeal to us. We pretend our health is better than theirs. We convince ourselves by staying away that we are safe. Even though we breathe the same air, there is a sense that the air we breathe is better than the air they breathe. We make it sound like our lungs are stronger than theirs, until we share the same treatment as them. Help us to live as one and forgive us our ignorance and status driven mentality to life.

*Silence is kept*

The good is this, our God is with us, our God is for us, our God is in us. Our sins therefore are forgiven.

*Thanks be to God our sins are forgiven. Amen*
Singing of the Lord’s prayer in a relevant language

We declare stigmatizing individuals as sin.

TB is in our families, neighbours, fellow commuters, friends, brothers and sisters, and also worshippers. Those living with TB and AIDS experience silence and rejection. In spite of our denial, we are all created in the image of God.

We instead, choose to be agents of hope:
Igniting hope when people forget;
Igniting hope when voices grow silent;
Igniting hope when others turn away;
Igniting hope when people lose heart;
Igniting hope when complacency has become the order of the day;
Igniting hope when faith is lost;
Igniting hope when care is scarce and
Igniting hope when resources are depleted and wasted.

We stand with the vulnerable, the sick, the despised and the neglected as you stood and continue to stand with them, as a deep sign of your grace and unconditional love. Amen.

A testimony may be shared by a TB survivor highlighting personal and global experiences of stereotypes and challenges often experienced by TB patients.

Scripture Reading

(A hymn or song may be sung either before the Scripture or after just before the Sermon)

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind – John 9:1-12 (NIV)

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing. 8 His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.” 10 “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked. 11 He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed, and then I could see.” 12 “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said.
### Sermon Outline

#### Rationale:

1. The blind man did not cause his own blindness (the stereotype that this has to do with him or his association with those who have sinned, i.e. parents)

2. How do we turn the moments of pain into moments of glory? Could this be through compassion? Could it be advocacy as Jesus did in the previous verse?

3. What works are called to by verse 4? Could this be in line with Matthew 22: 37-40? How can we love our neighbours as we love ourselves?

4. What are the night moments when TB has struck? We are all affected by TB. There are economic consequences when TB is left to thrive, both in the families and commercially.

5. What would spitting and making mud mean for us? Have we natural resources that we can use to combat TB? Mud is not the cleanest of things especially when made from saliva – how do we get ourselves dirty in trying to help the patients and families of those infected and affected? The saliva can be one’s possession, but the dust is communal and is God’s natural resource available to all and for all. What resources are there that are being overlooked? There may also be an opportunity to address the difference between improbable versus impossible understanding of the theology of healing to take away the irrational and exploitation of the healing assertions with the faith communities. The creatio ex materia vs creatio ex nihilo motifs may be helpful to explore.

6. What is to wash in the Pool of Siloam? Siloam meaning sent. How do we deal with the hopelessness that TB brings? Can we instil confidence even to those affected that they too have the responsibility to assist in the healing process? How about encouraging adherence to treatment? There is also a need to challenge the institutions of healing to make sure that they are pools for healing. Are they well resourced to carry out this task? Have we adequate Pools of Siloam?

7. The man came back and testified boldly, “I am the man.” We need activists who will be ready to say, I am a survivor of TB.
Lighting of the Candle (as a way of responding and committing)

In our “nothing for nothing” world, grace makes little sense, Jesus;
We can’t believe that you would welcome us,
uplift us and restore us so freely;
and so, we turn faith into a transaction –
a way of earning your love.

We can’t understand that the needs of others are a gift to us;
an opportunity to be channels of generosity and dignity,
to experience together the miracle of grace;
and so, we turn you into a cosmic game show host,
rewarding winners and insiders, while ignoring losers.

This inappropriate grace of yours, Jesus,
is a remarkable thing,
liberating and renewing and transforming;
raising up the least and surprising the great,
creating connections where none would usually be,
and scandalising those who worship
the gods of wealth, legality, exclusivity and custom.

Thank you for a grace that ignores our sensibilities,
and that welcomes, heals and dignifies even the likes of us. Amen.

(Inappropriate grace by John van de Laar)

Where appropriate individuals and corporates or institutions may pledge resources towards combating TB. A prayer of thanksgiving may then be offered afterwards.

Suggested Closing Hymn: Lizalis’ idinga laKho (or any other song that asks for God’s guidance and grace)

Sending and Benediction

God calls us to go and be agents of transformation where TB is prevalent;
To journey and be catalysts for hope
Jesus sends us to go be companions of the rejected, labelled and written off;
To offer healing and dignity
The Spirit empowers us to be courageous in healing Society from TB;
To commit our resources, time, gifts and talents in reshaping the destructive paradigms of dealing with TB.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all,
Now and forever more. Amen.
For religious leaders, parliamentarians and legislators to lead the fight to end TB in SA.

SANAC Prayer, Word and a Call to Action Toolkit.
World TB Day 2019

**Suggested Actions for Faith based Communities:**

Invite a health professional to address the congregation on TB, HIV/AIDS and STI’s and their prevalence in the local community.

Invite a TB survivor to share his/her experiences with the congregation.

Invite a person living with HIV/AIDS to share his/her experience with the congregation.

Encourage and Challenge members of the congregations to screen for TB and test for HIV and STI’s.

Encourage people on treatment for TB and HIV/AIDS to continue to take the treatment as instructed by the health professional. TB is curable even when the infected person is also infected with HIV.

**Encourage members of faith-based communities to visit and care for those infected with TB and HIV/AIDS as per the word of Jesus Christ in Matthews 25:**

Urge people on treatment for TB to finish the treatment for their complete cure.

Invite the department of Health to visit the congregation and offer screening for TB and other non-communicable diseases.

Encourage and urge members of faith based communities to volunteer their services and contribute resources to local health facilities.

Introduce Hygiene and health education in the curriculum of children and youth services of faith-based communities.

Introduce Annual Health days in congregations, for information on various health conditions and prayers to health professionals.

Ensure appropriate ventilation and hygiene at Worship services. E.g. Washing of hands as people enter the place of worship.

Register your church as a pick up point for chronic medication.

Start adherence club for chronic medication in the congregation.

**Inform the congregation about the AIDS and TB helpline 0800 012 322**