

Sunday 17th January 2021
Order of service - prepared this week by Alex Jameson

Introduction Music

Stewards welcome

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship the Lord who made us, who knows our every thought before it is formed.
See the one from whom nothing is hidden - hear him speak.
Come, let us worship and listen.

Hymn: StF 449 Lord of Creation to you be all praise

Lord of creation, to you be all praise,
Most mighty your working, most wonderous your ways,
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
And yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.

Lord of all power, I give you my will,
In joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil,
Your bondage is freedom, your service is song,
And, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.

Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,
rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find,
what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
is taught by your spirit and shines from your word.

Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart,
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
Your love to inspire me, your council to guide,
Your presence to shield me, whatever betide.

Lord of all being, I give you my all,
If I should disown you, I stumble and fall,
But, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.

Jack Copley Winslow (1882-1974)

Prayer of adoration

Creator God, how awesome you are!
Our lives were known to you before we came into being.
Marvellous Lord, everything we do, think or say - you know about.
Such infinite wonder!
Eternal, loving Lord, ever helping us to see and be more like you.
How awesome you are, glorious Lord. Everywhere we go your hand is with us,
Always guiding and revealing your blessings - as we praise, listen and act.

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, that you know us and can see our potential - for you know who we are created to be. We thank you for all the people you have placed in our lives - parents, teachers, guardians, friends, whoever they may be - people who have made a real difference. We thank you for the blessings of relationships, but most of all our relationship with you. Help us to bless others in your name.

Thank you, Lord, that when we are hurt, confused or unsure about something or someone, we can come to you - thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance.

Lord, our hearts are lifted by your presence in our lives. All glory to you with thanks and praise. Amen.

Bible reading: 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. ² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Hymn: StF 663 I, the Lord of sea and sky

I, The Lord of Sea and Sky,
I Have Heard My People Cry.
All Who Dwell In Dark and Sin,
My Hand Will Save.

I, Who Made the Stars of Night,
I Will Make Their Darkness Bright.
Who Will Bear My Light To Them?
Whom Shall I Send?

Chorus

*Here I Am, Lord. Is It I, Lord?
I Have Heard You Calling in The Night.
I Will Go, Lord, If You Lead Me.
I Will Hold Your People In My Heart.*

I, The Lord of Snow and Rain,
I Have Borne My People's Pain.
I Have Wept for Love of Them.
They Turn Away.

I Will Break Their Hearts of Stone,
Give Them Hearts for Love Alone.
I Will Speak My Word to Them.
Whom Shall I Send?

Chorus.....

I, The Lord of Wind and Flame,
I Will Tend the Poor And Lame.
I Will Set A Feast For Them.
My Hand Will Save.
Finest Bread I Will Provide,
'til Their Hearts Be Satisfied.
I Will Give My Life to them.
Whom Shall I Send?

Chorus...

Daniel L. Schutte (b. 1947)

Prayer of confession

Lord, we come before you to say sorry. Sorry for all the times we've let you, ourselves and others down. Sometimes, Lord, we're so busy talking and doing that we fail to hear you. We miss the still small voice saying, "Stop. Listen." Lord, we're sorry for being too busy to hear you.

You speak in so many different ways, Lord, one being through other people - but very often we take no notice and continue in our own way. Help us to tune in to your voice.

Lord, as you use others to speak to us, so you use us to draw people to you. But speaking does not always require words. People see our lives, our attitudes and character.

Lord, we're sorry for the times we've let you down in these areas - when we pressurise others to conform to our ideas, or fail to listen and give others the space to draw closer to you.

Lord, as we spend these few moments in personal reflection, we ask you to speak to us. Show us anything for which we need to say sorry - and change our ways.

Lord, we lift our confessions to you, in your precious name. Amen

Bible reading: John 1: 43-51 Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Sermon

How important are children in family life?

Hannah, the Prophet Samuel's mother, was the second wife of her husband.

The first wife had several children, but alas Hannah was childless.

Such was the pain and anguish of Hannah she often wept and refused her food. Her husband loved her and was very concerned.

On one occasion when the family went up to the house of God Hannah prayed quietly to God begging Him to give her a son. Eli, the priest, was at hand and he thought she was drunk, until Hannah explained her desire for a son and promised to dedicate him to the priesthood if her prayer was answered. God listened to Hannah's prayer and her wish was granted. Her son was born and named Samuel, which name means "The Lord heard".

When he was old enough Samuel joined Eli in the Lord's service and when asleep one night he heard someone calling him. Since Eli was the only other person there Samuel thought Eli was calling him, but Eli said he had not called. This happened a second time before Eli realised it must be God calling Samuel. The next time God called, Eli told Samuel to reply "Speak for your servant is listening". Samuel was obedient and God shared his message with Samuel.

Do we, these days, share our physical problems with God? Do we give God the opportunity to speak to us?

God called Samuel and Samuel became one of the great, trusted prophets of Israel. God spoke to him and Samuel listened and obeyed. Is that true of us?

Our Gospel lesson also relates to the call Jesus made on his first disciples. John the Baptist had been baptising people in the River Jordan at Bethany and Jesus came to be baptised. John was reluctant to baptise Jesus but finally agreed. John then witnesses to his disciples that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and that He is God's Chosen One. The next day John was with two of his disciples when Jesus passed by and John said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" These two disciples of John followed Jesus and spent the day with Him, long enough for them to be convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

We have to spend time with Jesus to share our lives with Him and to experience His presence with us if we are to become His disciples. Jesus later decided to go to Galilee from Bethsaida and He finds Philip, who up to this point had not been mentioned. Jesus says to Philip, "Follow me!" Philip wasn't going on his own so he finds Nathaniel and tells Nathaniel, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law and about whom the Prophets also wrote; Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph. "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathaniel asked.

"Come and See", said Philip.

It is interesting to hear Nathaniel's initial reaction to the news that Jesus came from Nazareth. Human nature doesn't seem to have changed a great deal. When I was a young audit clerk working in Portsmouth, Paulsgrove had the same stigma as Nazareth. Subsequently Leigh Park took on this stigma and probably there are such areas in most towns. Philip's reaction to Nathaniel's comment is not to argue with him, but to invite him to come and see for himself.

Nathaniel takes up the offer. As they approach, Jesus said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit". Nathaniel is most surprised. "How do you know me?" Nathaniel asked. He was totally converted when Jesus said, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you". Then Nathaniel declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel." Jesus tells Nathaniel he will see greater things that that in Jesus company.

I wonder if you can think back to when you first heard the call of Jesus. As a Sunday School scholar, and later a member of a Bible Class, at Stubbington I met with Jesus and began to understand His call upon my life. The important thing was the equivalent of the day those two disciples spent with Jesus. It was then that He convinced me that He was the Son of God and I

had to follow Him. Don Read, the local preacher at Stubbington who ran the Bible Class, asked the Circuit to give me a note to preach. Jesus had called me through Mr Read.

I wonder who was instrumental in calling you? We look back with gratitude to their listening to Jesus instructions to call us just as Philip said to Nathaniel, "Come and see". We become followers of Jesus when we have spent time with Him.

Do we listen to Him prompting us to invite somebody else today to "Come and see"? Our witness is so important at the present time when so many are finding life frightening.

Our Presidential theme for the year must be proclaimed and witnessed to; "The best of all is, God is with us". We have to live and share our belief that God is with us. Throughout the difficulties we face at present in lock-down, but he will still be with us, and remain with us, in the better days to come, to which we look forward in hope and assurance.

Intercessions (for those not on Zoom)

Creator God, we bring ourselves into your holy presence and give you our full attention. We praise you for your greatness, your awesome power, your majesty and beauty that we see mirrored in the world around us. We treasure each opportunity to discover more of you in times of prayer.

Jesus, Son of God, you greet us as individuals who are intimately known by you. For you know our name, our personality, our potential. We long to reflect your goodness in our lives. We listen for your word of forgiveness, comfort and challenge.

Holy Spirit of God, you urge us to share our faith with others, through acts of kindness, words of truth and commitment to your call. Please show us where there is particular need we can respond to, and help us to do this with love and generosity, sensitivity and wisdom, courage and perseverance.

Loving God, the world is crying out for justice, renewal and peace. We call to mind those parts of the world that are in pain and offer them into your loving care.....

We long that you will show us how to reflect your message of truth, hope and love in all creation. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: StF 250 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult

Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea,
day by day his clear voice soundeth,
saying, "Christian, follow me;"

As, of old, Saint Andrew heart it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store;
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more."

In our joys and in our sorrows,

days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
that we love him more than these."

Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,
Saviour, may we hear thy call,
give our hearts to thine obedience,
serve and love thee best of all.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Closing words and blessing:

God of each day and each night, we commit our gifts, our money, our time and the calling you have places on our lives, to you and your kingdom, for your work and the building of a world that reflects of your kingdom. In Jesus' name,

Now, may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and with all those who we know and love, and are called to love, this day and forevermore. Amen.

StF 443 come let us sing of a wonderful love

Come let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home! weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)