

28th August 2022 – Morning Service

The Call to Discipleship

Christine Odell (Methodist Church Resources)

Call to Worship

Lord we have heard you call us, heard you ask to enter our lives.

Lord, you are our God and Saviour: we come before you in worship and praise.

Lord, we have heard you call us to be your disciples, learning from you.

Lord, you are our leader and teacher: we come to listen to your living Word.

Lord, we have heard you call us to serve you lovingly in the world.

Lord, you are the Spirit of life and love: we come to offer our lives to you. In Jesus' Name, **Amen.**

StF 25 – God is here, as we his people

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| 1) God is here! As we his people
Meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure
What it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
All our varied skills and arts
Wait the coming of his Spirit
Into open minds and hearts. | 3) Here our children find a welcome
In the Shepherd's flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us, as of old;
Here the servants of the Servant
Seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living
To believe and to adore. |
| 2) Here are symbols to remind us
Of our lifelong need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit;
Here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
Here in silence, as in speech,
Here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each. | 4) Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom,
In an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the gospel,
Help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
All we have to give, receive:
We, who cannot live without you,
We adore you! We believe! |

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Prayer of Adoration

Creator God, for making the world to be our home and us in your image to love and serve you; for calling us to be stewards of your creation: we praise and thank you.

Saving God, for coming to live our human life among us and to break through the barriers of sin; for calling us to share your forgiving love with all: we praise and thank you.

Empowering God, for filling us with love, joy and peace, with courage and strength; for calling us to serve you, the Living God, with boldness: we praise and thank you. **Amen.**

Introduction

September approaches and one of the many new years the church celebrates, alongside Advent (the liturgical new year) and January (the calendar new year). At times like these we all make promises to ourselves which we know from experience will be difficult to keep. We start our new diaries, put up our new calendars, and start to plan the year ahead. It is a time for looking forward, and a time for reflecting on our future lives. Today we are looking at how Jesus called his first disciples and what he called them to do. This helps us to think about our own calling and discipleship. What is the God who calls us saying to us, individually and as a church? In our service we will be thinking about the calls of the first disciples and what we can learn from them.

Reflection – Who was that?

Who was that? Sheltering in that dark, dank cave, shivering with fear, I heard the storm, felt the ground shake and then a still, small voice. Who was that?

Who was that? Sitting in that gently rocking boat on the quiet lake, mending nets ready for the catch, I heard a clear, compelling, calling voice. Who was that?

Who was that? Deep in reflection and prayer, alone and yet not alone, wondering about my life, I heard a new, loud, encouraging thought. Who was that?

Reading: from Psalm 139

Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. You are all round me on every side; you protect me with your power. Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.

Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there. If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west, you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me. I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light round me to turn into night, but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because you are to be feared; all you do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart. When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother's womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there –you saw me before I was born. The days allotted to me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them ever began. O God, how difficult I find your thoughts; how many of them there are! If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts.
Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.

StF 439 – Abba Father

Abba Father, let me be
Yours and Yours alone.
May my will forever be
Evermore Your own.

Never let my heart grow cold,
Never let me go,
Abba Father, let me be
Yours and Yours alone.

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Reading: Matthew 4:18 – 22

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Reflection – Andrew's journal

Dear Diary, I little thought when I started keeping this journal a few weeks ago, what exciting and life-changing events I would have to record very shortly. I fully intend to keep this diary going, so that when I am old, God willing, I shall be able to read it and look back at these events with the benefit of hindsight. Perhaps then I might be able to understand what happened today.

It started like any other day. It was a calm, clear day, just right for fishing. Simon and I took our boat out on Lake Galilee. We were looking forward to a good catch and enjoying the warmth of the sun. The nets had been thrown out, when I glanced at the shore and saw a man walking there. The sun was so bright I couldn't see who it was. He waved and shouted a greeting. He called us to him. The water was shallow, so we walked through the sea to him. The man - who turned out to be one of our neighbours, Jesus, the son of Mary - looked us both straight in the eyes. 'Come with me and I will teach you to catch men' he said.

Well, what were we to make of that? I looked at Simon and he looked at me. And together we just did it, we went with Jesus. And later James and John joined us, too. I don't know why we all decided to suddenly up and change our lives like that. Perhaps one day I will. I only know that there is something about this Jesus that makes you want to follow him to the ends of the world, hang on his every word, and live as he wants you to live. I feel full of excitement and joy, yet also somehow peaceful. I'm looking forward to this new way of fishing with Jesus. What a day it's been! I'm looking forward to recording what I learn tomorrow!

StF 250 – Jesus calls us o'er the tumult

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| 1) Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea,
Day by day his voice is sounding,
Saying: 'Christian, follow me'; | 4) In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares and pleasures:
'Christian, love me more than these'. |
| 2) As of old apostles heard it
By the Galilean lake,
Turned from home and toil and kindred,
Leaving all for his dear sake. | 5) Jesus calls us! By your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
Give our hearts to your obedience,
Serve and love you best of all. |
| 3) 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'. | |

Cecil Frances Alexander CCL No. 515642

Reading: Matthew 9: 9 – 12

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

Reflection - The eye witness account

I was there, you know, when Jesus called next door. We weren't happy, living next door to that taxcollector. My friends and I, well, we don't want that kind of undesirable living in our neighbourhood. It was bad enough having to pay tax to an occupying government without having to associate with the people profiting from it. So we didn't speak to that Matthew, or Levi or whatever he calls himself. Or his family. It wasn't any worse than that.

Then Jesus, a local lad, walked by, straight into Matthew's office, and said to the man, 'Follow me!'. It seemed he wanted him as a companion, even if no-one else did! And, would you believe it, Matthew stood up, left his work, and went with Mary's boy! I know all this, because I sit in the doorway most days, keeping an eye on things.

And after that, our worst suspicions about the tax collector were confirmed. After he'd invited Jesus to eat with him in his home, all kinds of other undesirables would come and share meals with them – other tax collectors, women of dubious reputation, people a bit strange in the head, or handicapped in some way. Well, we were forced to tell the Pharisees, because Jesus was lowering the tone of our neighbourhood! I saw them arrive and happened to hear them question some of the friends of Jesus. 'Why does your master eat with such people?' they said. Then I heard Jesus himself answer the question, 'People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick' he said. 'I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts.' Well, what do you make of that?

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, you know how often we judge other people, how we divide those we meet into 'them' and 'us'! We like to spend our time with those we know and understand and find it hard to be ourselves with those we do not know, hard to befriend the stranger who is so unlike us.

We are sorry about this, because we learn from the gospels that you came to call all sorts of people to follow you. You did not reject the outcast or the unclean or the foreigner, but welcomed them with love. Forgive us our fear and narrow-mindedness, we pray, and, through your Holy Spirit, give us the grace To see and treat others as Jesus did. **Amen.**

Reading: John 1: 43 – 50

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that."

Reflection – Philip's story

When I met Jesus, I knew he was the One. He was what I had been looking for all my life. I'd heard about him from my friends Andrew and Simon, and was really keen to meet him. Then one day, all of a sudden, there he was. It was as if he had been looking for me, as well! I was so excited! And when he said 'Come with me', he made my day, or perhaps even my life! Of course I would go with him.

I had to go and tell my friend Nathanael, of course. You should always share your good news with your friends. 'I've met him!' I said 'The One, the Messiah we've heard about in the Scriptures. And he's asked me, your old friend Philip, to follow him! And, of course, I will.' 'Who is this amazing messiah?' asked Nat, rather sceptically. I could see he thought this was just one of my enthusiasms and that he might have to reign me in. 'Why, it's Jesus of Nazareth.' I replied. 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' he asked. 'Come and see!' I said, and took him to Jesus.

Jesus seemed to take to him straightaway. He never minded people who asked questions, I found later, but seemed to welcome it. Nat was very impressed that Jesus knew he had been sitting under a fig tree earlier, thinking this showed how special Jesus was. I think Jesus was surprised that Nat, the questioner, reacted like that, but he was delighted that Nat shared his thoughts so openly and honestly. As I've always said about Nat – you know where you are with him. And right now, we're there together, members of the Jesus team. I'm so glad I helped make another follower for Jesus!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, we thank you for all those who have listened to your call, followed you faithfully, served you wholeheartedly and witnessed to your truth, justice and love. We thank you for the disciples who embraced the strange adventure of following Jesus. We thank you for the evangelists who risked their lives to bring the good news of your saving love to all the world. We thank you for all your saints: for Christians of every era and in every place who have lived out your gospel as shining lights in a dark world. We remember those whom we have known who have shown us the way of love and given us insights, comfort or challenge. We thank you especially for those who have died, and rejoice that in you we are all made one on earth and in heaven. In Jesus' Name, **Amen.**

StF 666 – Master speak thy servant heareth

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| 1) Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for thy gracious word,
Longing for thy voice that cheereth;
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for thee;
What hast thou to say to me? | 3) Master, speak! Though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart;
Master, speak! For O thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart,
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak, and make me blest indeed. |
| 2) Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the rock. | 4) Master, speak: and make me ready,
When thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for thee;
Master, speak! O speak to me! |

Frances Ridley Havergal CCL No. 515642

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, we do not belong to ourselves, but to you: You call us by name; you say to us 'Follow me!'. You call to us in the world. You speak to us through the voices of prophets, politicians and poets. We pray for those who challenge us by speaking out against injustice and oppression. You speak to us through the voices of those with whom we work and socialize and live. We pray for those whose talking with us challenges us to show your love in our everyday lives. You speak to us through the voices of the needy, the unwanted, and the dispossessed. We pray for the victims of greed and warfare who cry out to us for help.

Loving God, we do not belong to ourselves, but to you. Show us what we should do.

L: Speak, Lord: **R: your servants are listening.**

You call to us in the world. You say to us 'Follow me ...' through a lifetime of loving and giving. We pray for those who need our friendship: those who are neglected, needy, misunderstood. You say to us 'Follow me...' into the dark places of suffering and fear.

We pray for those who need our support: those who are ill, sorrowful or anxious ...

You say to us 'Follow me...' into the kingdom of light and joy and peace.

We pray for those who need to hear the message of the hope to be found in Christ.

Loving God, we do not belong to ourselves, but to you. Show us what we should do.

L: Speak, Lord: **R: your servants are listening.**

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Leader, Teacher and Saviour, **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the
glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 449 – Lord of creation

- 1) Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
Most mighty your working, most wondrous
your ways!
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
And yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
Your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
Your presence to shield me, whatever betide.
- 5) Lord of all being, I give you my all;
If e'er I 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.

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Blessing

Lord, you have called us to love and serve you; and with your help we will.
Give us the wisdom to know what we should do, the courage to keep on loving and giving, and the faith
that will see us through. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who died that we might truly live.
Amen.