

Worship Resources - *Take the Call*

2nd Sunday after Epiphany, Year B,

17th January, 2021

1 Samuel 3:1-10 CEV / John 1:43-51 CEV

Prelude

Footsteps of Jesus,

music by Asa B. Everett, played by church musician Annie Center,

<https://youtu.be/e2VshRWUlyc>

Intro / Call to Worship

Jesus comes alongside us and calls us by our own names and says: **“follow me.”**

A simple call. A hard call. **Because following requires leaving.**

And we look around to see who else Jesus could be talking to.

And we look around to see the trappings of the life we know.

It's hard to leave our nets and walk away from the lake.

But we have come this far, to this place, where we can listen and be transformed.

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather today for this second Sunday of Epiphany, as we listen to this beautiful rendition of Psalm 139 by Leigh Newton, let's give some thought to our relationship with our God, and how that impacts our interactions with each Other.

Reflection Video *Search Me O God*

adaptation of Psalm 139 by Leigh Newton,

used and reported under CCLI Streaming license 20261246

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZrloocavLU&feature=youtu.be>

Invocation

Something made the hairs stand up on our necks. Was it you, O God?

Was it you that we saw blowing over the water?

Was it you that we heard moving through those feet?

Was it you that we felt in the beating of our own hearts?

Was it you that called our names?

Come, O God. Come to search us. Come to know us again.

We were knit in your womb. We have tried to count your works.

Come, O God, so that we can hear you calling our names.

Here and now. Amen.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our reading from first Samuel today, we hear the story of God calling Samuel to his prophetic vocation. As we listen to these words, let's reflect on how we have been called by God in our own lives.

First Testament Reading **1 Samuel 3:1-10 CEV-UK**

Samuel served the Lord by helping Eli the priest, who was by that time almost blind. In those days, the Lord hardly ever spoke directly to people, and he did not appear to them in dreams very often. But one night, Eli was asleep in his room,

and Samuel was sleeping on a mat near the sacred chest in the Lord's house. They had not been asleep very long[\[a\]](#)

when the Lord called out Samuel's name.

"Here I am!" Samuel answered. 5 Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. What do you want?"

"I didn't call you," Eli answered. "Go back to bed."

Samuel went back.

Again the Lord called out Samuel's name. Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "What do you want?"

Eli told him, "Son, I didn't call you. Go back to sleep."

The Lord had not spoken to Samuel before, and Samuel did not recognize the voice.

When the Lord called out his name for the third time, Samuel went to Eli again and said, “Here I am. What do you want?”

Eli finally realized that it was the Lord who was speaking to Samuel. 9 So he said, “Go back and lie down! If someone speaks to you again, answer, ‘I’m listening, Lord. What do you want me to do?’”

Once again Samuel went back and lay down.

The Lord then stood beside Samuel and called out as he had done before, “Samuel! Samuel!”

“I’m listening,” Samuel answered. “What do you want me to do?”

First Testament Video

1 Samuel 3:1-10 - The Calling Of Samuel

Lectionary bible reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liScVI7L7F8>

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

This morning let's continue to keep Myrna, her neighbors, and the staff where she lives in prayer. I mentioned previously that some of the staff had tested positive for COVID19, and now it has spread to some of the residents in the other building from where Myrna lives. May God give them the healing and strength they need to recover, as well as Myrna's walking buddy who recently fell and broke her back. Myrna could use our prayers as well for patience and peace as she is now waiting until February 6th for her much needed surgery procedure.

Let's also continue to keep Matthew Schultz in our prayers for healing and strength, as well as the DeBons as they continue to work through regular physical therapy to help keep them mobile and able to function independently.

Finally, may God's peace and shalom prevail in our country this week as we approach what normally should be a peaceful transition of power in our national government, under many threats to the contrary.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Eternal God,
you are the maker of us all, and we are your creation, people formed in your image, as individuals, as community; formed and fed and furnished with understanding of who you are and of who and whose we are. We worship you today in recognition of your calling, of your communicating, of your caring to invite us to share in your creative and healing work. We are here because we have heard you speak in us and through others. Help us, dear Lord, to ever respond to you and your invitation to your grace...

God of all our moments, of our days and our nights, you speak and you act in the world around us, not only to call all people to you, but also to direct and guide us in the way of healing and wholeness. Awaken us Lord, to hear what you would say to us. Help us to open our ears, our eyes, and our hearts to your presence. Help us to know when it is your voice we are hearing and it when it is our prejudices and desires to which we are paying heed....

God, we pray that your church may rise up with renewed commitment in answer to your call, that your people may be instruments of your grace and love....

We pray for those who consider themselves inadequate and dismiss or avoid your calling in their lives. Give them a new vision, a vision in which you are their strength and their hope...

We pray for those who, in answering your call, must leave the known for the unknown, the oasis for the desert, the comfortable for the uncertain. Grant them courage and steadfast faith...

We pray too, today, O God, for those in want and need – for those of us and of the larger community who suffer in body or in soul. **Lord, hear our prayers**

Loving Father, bless us all with an abundant faith, a fruitful ministry, a joyful life. Bless us and all those who gather together to continue the work of Jesus, who came to heal, save, and deliver us all, and who taught us to pray as one family, saying...

.....

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

In our gospel lesson this morning, we hear the story of Jesus calling his first disciples and their reactions to that call. As we listen to these words from John, let's think of how Jesus calls to us today, and how we choose to respond, as individuals, and as a community of faith.

Gospel Lesson John 1:43-51 CEV-UK

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. There he met Philip, who was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. Jesus said to Philip, "Come with me."

Philip then found Nathanael and said, "We have found the one that Moses and the Prophets[a] wrote about. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Philip answered, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said, "Here is a true descendant of our ancestor Israel. And he isn't deceitful." [b]

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree."

Nathanael said, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God and the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered, "Did you believe me just because I said that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see something even greater.

I tell you for certain that you will see heaven open and God's angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man."

Gospel Video John 1:43-51 - *The Calling Of The First Disciples*

Lectionary bible reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5icRvNlsjEM>

Message – *Take the Call*

It's a common scenario. The phone rings, whether it's a cell phone or landline, and the first thing we do is look at the caller id. Who is it calling? Is it someone I know, or if so, is it someone I feel like talking to right now? Or even more frequently these days, a message or Snap pops up on the cell phone and we look at it and decide if we want to respond to it. Regardless of the format, we face that choice, answer or respond to it now, or ignore it and send it to voicemail for later. Our modern technology affords us multiple options to choose from in answering calls from other people. We can hit ignore on our cell phone and send it right to voicemail, and we can ignore other message formats as well. My personal favorite is when you are on a call with someone, and they get a call from another friend, and then come back to you and say they'll call you back. Which means you just lost the popularity contest.

But it hasn't always been this way. There was a time when the phone rang, you had no way of knowing who was on the other end. There was no caller id, not text messaging, no Snap chat or messenger, just a phone ringing. That made the choice simpler but also required some bravery and fortitude on the part of the one picking up the phone. It could be anyone on the other end: a good friend; a favorite family member; a not so favorite family member; a salesman; a bill collector; the sky was the limit. Now for me, those days are hazy memories from when I was just a wee lad, but I'm sure many of you remember those days when answering the phone was stepping out in faith a little bit, dipping your toe a little into the unknown.

In our gospel story this morning, we take that communication even one further step back to a time when most communication was done face to face. There was no real way to avoid the encounter with someone you'd maybe rather send to voicemail or respond to their text later. They were in your space, right in front of you. That's where Nathaniel found himself. Philip called on him, and gave him the news in person that he had to meet this new guy in town.

That's a major difference between this story in John and the other gospels. In the other gospels, Jesus says follow me, and the disciples drop what they're doing and leave their lives and livelihoods solely on blind faith. But in John, there's more of an emphasis on the testimony of others. In the previous section of this chapter, John the Baptist testifies to his disciples, Andrew and his friend the Beloved Disciple, that Jesus is the Lamb of God. Andrew then testifies to his brother Simon, who becomes Peter, about what he has seen and heard from Jesus. They weren't getting those cold calls without caller id. They had their own version of caller id in the testimony of others before encountering Jesus.

Now Jesus has moved on to the hometown of Andrew and Peter, calls Philip, and now Philip is testifying to Nathaniel. But Nathaniel doesn't have much time from seeing who

was calling to meeting him face to face. He doesn't really have the time to get the details, the 411 from Philip before he's face to face with Jesus, this man from Nazareth, a place where nothing "good" ever comes out of. Even though he approaches this encounter largely as a cold call, he decides to accept it anyway.

Jesus proves to Nathaniel that he knows who he is, that he knows the secrets of his heart. He knows he is a righteous man, and shows Nathaniel he has been keeping track of him all along. He saw him "under the fig tree" and promises him that he will see much more as his disciple, using the allusion of Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven.

In John's gospel, Jesus makes clear right up front with his disciples who he is, the Son of Man, the ladder and connection between God's realm in heaven and the earthly realm. His disciples knew who they were following, and chose to accept the call. What about us? Do we accept that call when it comes from Jesus?

Like the disciples, we have plenty of testimony about who Jesus is and what the promises of taking that call are. At some point in our lives, most of us answered that initial call in one form or another, and were probably baptized or formally made a commitment to Christ. But does that call only come once? Or is Jesus more like our bestie, our bae, calling every day, multiple times per day? Do we have a chat going constantly with Jesus, or do we hit ignore and send it to voicemail more than we answer. And what exactly does Jesus' caller id look like? Is it always the same? After all, Jesus can wear many faces. The face of the sick, the prisoner, the hungry, the stranger, the poor and naked all are different faces of Jesus.

As our story points out today, Jesus hailed from Nazareth, that little backwater town that according to Nathaniel, "nothing good" ever comes out of. I can't help but notice the similarity between that statement and statements we've heard in the public discourse in our own country in recent years. We've heard a lot about the importance of building walls, of keeping those less "desirable" out and away from us.

Do we heed the call of Jesus in the face of the Mexican, the Honduran, and the African? According to Matthew 25, whatever we do to the least of these, we do to Him. Do we answer all the calls we get from Jesus? The call to daily discipleship, the call to help those who have less than we, the call from the stranger, the hungry and thirsty, the sick and the prisoner, the poor and the naked.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is someone I've been reflecting about a lot recently, as I watch the turn of events in our country and the world. If you're not familiar with him, he was a Lutheran pastor during Hitler's rise to power in Germany. As he saw the mainline churches in Germany colluding more and more with the Nazi regime, he felt compelled to start his own seminary and church, the Confessing Church, to try to stay true to the teachings of Christ in contrast to the compromised mainline churches. In his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, he addresses this contradiction of being called by Christ yet still viewing

others as simply that, “others,” as somehow different or less than ourselves. Bonhoeffer states, “Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are.” He goes on to say, “Every moment and every situation challenges us to action and to obedience. We have literally no time to sit down and ask ourselves whether so-and-so is our neighbor or not. We must get into action and obey—we must behave like a neighbor to him... he concludes with, “Discipleship means adherence to Christ”

How much do we differentiate between people or peoples? Do we have different values for those who are brown or black, who look different than us, who worship in a different faith than us, whose lifestyle is different than ours? In God’s eyes and under the auspices of God’s grace, can any human be lesser than another? So what do we do? How do we answer Christ’s call to “come and follow me?” Well it’s clear it involves action, not inaction. To follow Christ is to do all those things from Matthew 25, taking care of all those listed, including and especially the stranger. It’s caring, it’s showing compassion to those others that tell us we should fear. It’s standing up for justice over discrimination and oppression. It’s doing something. Doing nothing is not an option.

As we approach Martin Luther King Day tomorrow, let us remember his words as well, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” Like Philip and Andrew, we have the opportunity to testify to the living Christ through our actions, or not testify by inaction and apathy. Jesus is always calling, calling us to follow him, not just once, but everyday of our lives. The question is, will we answer that call daily, or will we ignore it. The choice is ours and the many faces of Christ depend on that choice. What will you choose?

Call to Serve.

God knows you by name. God knows all that you can do.

God appears in your works for justice.

God is revealed in our hope for change.

Let us carry this spirit into our giving. As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. This morning, as Annie shares the following song, let's give some thought as to how

God is calling us to further God’s work in this world, and how we might take that call.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video] *I Will Serve Thee*

music by William and Gloria Gaither,
played by church musician Annie Center,

used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

https://youtu.be/9B-m3_AWdsg

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, you offer us wonderful gifts.

In these offerings, may we make for change that doesn't yet exist.

May we give it a name. May we move through our fears.

May we dare to call this hope wonderful, in the hope of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

Send us, O God.

Send us to search for your name.

Send us to count your works.

Send us to feel you calling our name.

Send us, O God, into your dream.

As we extinguish this candle, carry its divine spark into your lives this week, sharing God's love and light with all you encounter. Amen.

Postlude *Two Fisherman*

music by Suzanne Toolan

performed by church musician Annie Center,

<https://youtu.be/KYXiWAQQjzQ>

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