



Weekly Worship

Fifth Sunday in Epiphany

Sunday February 06, 2022

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

We gather as God's people,
eager for words to lift,
to guide and encourage us in God's way.

We light the candle and remember that
the light of Christ illumines our path.

Call to worship

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart

These words from the Psalmist
remind us we come full of heart
to offer our praise:

Let us worship God.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional
custodians of this land and these waters. We pay
respect to elders past, present and emerging. As First
and Second Peoples walking together, we commit
ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening,
truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Holy, holy, holy (TiS 132)

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,
early in the morning
to you our praise shall be;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore you,
casting down their golden crowns
around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim
falling down before you,
God everlasting through eternity.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide you,
though the sinful human eye
your glory may not see,
you alone are holy,
there is none beside you,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty,
all your works shall praise your name
in earth, and sky, and sea;
holy, holy, holy!
merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

W: Reginald Heber; M: John Bacchus Dykes



Weekly Worship. Epiphany, 2022. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Prayer

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.

As we offer our prayers, these words from the Psalmist call us to offer our thanks and praise, O Lord.

We wonder about the way you lift the lowly.
We give thanks that you call us to follow.
We are amazed that at times we cannot help but respond to your call.

But we know too that we are not always willing. How often do we second-guess you? How hard is it to offer our whole hearts in the journey with you? How often do we allow our feelings of not being good enough to get in the way?

For these realities and the many unspoken, draw us to the light that illumines your way. As we hear of hot coals purifying the lips they touch, help us to wonder at your grace and love.

Friends, where we struggle to find our way, God reaches out to lift us. Where we are weak of heart, God responds with wholeness of heart to restore us. As we seek to faithfully follow, through Christ we are made whole.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Listening

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8 &
Luke 5:1-11

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.



Reflecting

Rev. Barbara Strickland

Jesus can use you and me, each one of us, even when we are not ready, even when we do not feel up to the task. Yet, we need to take the small, but mighty step, to leave our safe place where the boundaries are predictable and where we feel comfortable, and venture forth to where the Lord is calling us.

Luke's story of Jesus calling the first disciples is unique among the Synoptic Gospels, as only Luke tells the story of a miraculous catch of fish preceding Jesus' call. Thus, in this account, we are alerted to the dramatic wonder that occurs when the power of God shows up vividly and is displayed before our eyes in ways we could never have anticipated, in circumstances where we are numbed by failure.

Simon had been fishing all night without success, then working on cleaning his nets, probably ready to call time, go home and get some sleep. It must have seemed an imposition, then, when Jesus got into his boat and asked him to push out from shore.

Not only was Simon tired. He felt defeated. Yet, something persuaded him to say 'Well Master we've worked hard all night and have caught nothing, "but if you say so, I will let down the nets." How significant was this response to Jesus' invitation!

Jesus does not ask Simon to get his act together. He calls Simon and his partners, as they are, in the midst of their daily grind, at a moment when with low spirits they feel the weight of failed hopes. They are not special people. They are fallible. They possess no great attributes. They are ordinary. Just like us.

Yet, throughout Scripture, we know that human sin, failure and inadequacy are not obstacles to God's call. Jesus' mission does not wait, indeed cannot wait, until we are ready.

We recall that the First Lesson for today is from Isaiah 6:1-8, where the prophet Isaiah is called. In the Epistle from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul refers to his own call as an apostle. In both these

Reflecting continues





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Reflecting continues

accounts, as well as in this Gospel, each of those who is called, resists the call, feels unworthy of the call, and experiences God showing up in a way that is wondrous and beyond their wildest expectation.

This should be a great encouragement to all modern-day disciples who feel unworthy and inadequate! When Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' knees and declared his sinfulness after the fishermen caught so many fish they had to ask for help, Jesus said to him: "Do NOT be afraid... For you will be going on to bring people into my Kingdom."

God calls imperfect people, people who are aware of their unworthiness, often doubting and resistant to God's call. God doesn't wait for them to shape up. God calls them as they are and then works in them to make them into faithful disciples.

How often do we resist Jesus' claim on our lives because he is calling us to do something that seems crazy or impractical? How often do we avoid putting out into the deep waters because we think nothing good will result? Do we elevate our human reasoning over the divine call? The invitation to launch into the deep requires courage and obedience, not sticking with the safe options of the known or routine.

Jesus may ask a very simple question of us, or he might stretch us to something more radical. Where in our life at the moment do we sense Jesus questioning us, or nudging us? Jesus' mission does not wait until we think we are ready. Jesus urges us to put aside our hesitancy and launch out into the deep, so that the gospel may be brought to a broken world.

Responding: Prayers for the World and Community

We pray for our world, God of steadfast love. As we reflect on living with COVID-19 for two years we remember that it has been hard for many. Large parts of Africa have little or no access to vaccines. In many places vaccines, or protective equipment are offered for political gain. We pray for places where corruption or mismanagement impact on vulnerable

communities. We pray for the individuals, families and communities behind the statistics we hear.

Our prayers go out to Tonga and other places impacted by disasters. Where there is fire, flood, famine, volcano or similar difficult events, open our hearts to compassion, and show us how we might act with love and compassion.

We pray for Australia, as we face uncertainty and division due to Omicron, divisions through vaccination status, promises and counter-promises offered by politicians as an election looms. We pray for those without freedoms we take for granted, such as the refugees in ongoing detention in a hotel in Carlton.

We pray for our churches, that we may find hope and courage in your steadfast love towards us and the whole of creation. May we hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?", and may we respond to your steadfast love and say, "Here am I; send me!".

As part of our response, we pray for those people and situations that are near to our hearts ...

We pray for those who are sick, those who struggle to feed their families, those who cannot find a place to live with dignity. As we recall the needs we have and the needs of others, we are drawn to say again your prayer:

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

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Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Offering

*The apostle Paul recognises the incredible gift of God's love and restoration as he says:
But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain.*

God of grace, as these gifts are offered in your name, may we see and understand your grace, and offer ourselves to you with the whole of hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.



Singing: Here I am, Lord (TiS 658)

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?

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?

Here I am, Lord...

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
Till their hearts are satisfied;
I will give My life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord...

²W&M: Daniel L. Schutte





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Blessing

From the prophet Isaiah:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

As we go from here we go in the steadfast love of God. We go knowing the abundance of Christ's love through stories of heavy-laden fishing nets.

In all we are called to, in all we respond to, the blessing of God be with you, upon you, surround and uplift you - in the name of our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, may it be so. Amen.

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Presbytery of Gippsland

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