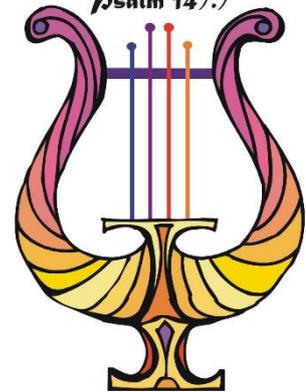


*Pilton, Croscombe, North
Wootton and Dinder.
Morning Prayer for Epiphany
Season 17th January 2021.*

*Sing to the Lord
with thanksgiving;
make melody to our
God on the lyre.*

Psalm 147.7



Invitation to worship

God reveals himself to us. We are in the light and love of the Lord,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

May Christ the daystar dawn in our hearts
and triumph over the shades of night.

Hymn: I the Lord of Sea and Sky

https://youtu.be/CE9yZZ7a_i8

Confession

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour
Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his
own. Let us confess our sins

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive *us our sins*
and make *us* holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Candle lighting

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived
in a land of shadows, but now light is shining upon them. You have
given them great joy, O Lord; you have made them happy.

(Isaiah 9: 2,3)

You may like to light a candle at this point

Jesus, Word made flesh dwelling among us,
come, lighten our darkness.

Jesus born of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
come, lighten our darkness.

Jesus, adored by the wise men,
come, lighten our darkness.

Jesus revealed to the world,
come, lighten our darkness.

Jesus here and with us now,
come, lighten our darkness.

The word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory,
as the glory of the only son of the Father full of grace and truth.
(John 1:14)

Blessed are you Lord our God for you have called us out of darkness to
be children of light. The bright light of your presence scatters the
darkness with us and is a lantern to our paths. Bless these lights that
they may remind us of your presence among us and your love for us:
through him who is the Light of the World, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ministry of the Word

Psalm 139

This week our musical version is the hymn by Bernadette Farrell.

https://youtu.be/mEGc3_D19Vo

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea

1 Samuel 3: 1-10

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

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.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 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. Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!'^{*} and he said, 'Here I am!' 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. 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.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 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. 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.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’

The Gospel

John 1: 43-end

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, ‘Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael asked him, ‘Where did you come to know me?’ Jesus answered, ‘I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.’ Nathanael replied, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered, ‘Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.’ 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 by Philip

...Can anything good come out of Nazareth?...

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Philip or Nathanael? When you read today's gospel I wonder who best represents you? Whose words sounded most familiar to you, *Philip or Nathanael*? For me, each time the apostle Philip appears in the gospel, alarm bells ring and I think 'ah...this must be a message for me...'

But today the gospel rang a different bell. In these long dark days, with its disturbing news, talk of climate change, political instability, economic hardship and a stubborn pandemic reaping havoc, it is the rather derogatory and sceptical reply of Nathanael...*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*.. that seems to ring the loudest bell.

And yet in today's reading, Nathanael's blunt honesty is commended...*Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.* And he is rewarded for his response to Jesus with the promise that he will see *greater things*.

Today's reading from John's gospel shows us Jesus beginning to build his following. The passage is set on the day after Andrew and Simon Peter have moved on from following John the Baptist, to follow Jesus, and before the first of Jesus' signs at the wedding at Cana in Galilee.

I wonder what may have rung a bell for you? Which follower might you be...either, neither, Philip, Nathanael? In Philip we see a disciple found and called directly by Jesus...*follow me* he says and Philip obeys. His immediate action is to share his news. Brimming with hope he quickly passes on the invitation to Nathanael to *come and see* and he takes him to Jesus. And like Philip we are all called in our own particular ways to pass on the invitation to *come and see*, to tell the story, to spread the good news.

His job done, Philip leaves Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael is left shaken by Jesus' knowledge of him, his grasp of who he is. He has been seen and understood before he had even clasped eyes on Jesus. Nathanael

responds with wonder and with confidence that he has met the *Son of God*, the *King of Israel*. Yet Jesus offers Nathanael the prospect of seeing far greater things...of seeing the *Son of Man*, the judge at the end of time, as 'Jacob's ladder' bridging heaven and earth (Genesis 28:12).

Today's gospel shows the calling of two very different disciples. For Nathanael it involves a display of visionary power and an appreciation of his blunt honesty, the honest responses of a plain-speaking sceptic...*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?* We recognize the tone, its derogatory and it echoes the casual way that some are deemed as less worthy than others. It echoes our failure to see value in people and places that appear different, inferior or not special enough, not chosen.

Nathanael may be more like us than we like to think. We all have our Nazareths, our blind spots. They are about other people, places and even our own lives. Nazareth was considered far too ordinary, and a son of God should really have a background more deserving, more special and, holy. The Nathanael in us imagines that God cannot use some people, or even ourselves, because we are just not special enough. But God shows up where we do not expect him. God is not limited by our assumptions.

So what can we take from today's gospel? Well, for the times we are Philip we are to keep responding to Christ's invitation to *follow me* and we invite others to *...come and see...*to meet Jesus.

And for those times, or the part of us that may be Nathanael, the honest sceptic, we don't turn away, we continue to engage, we continue to *come and see*. And in doing so we learn that we are seen, known as only God can know us, warts and all. We cannot hide our scepticism, our assumptions or our doubts from God. He can work

with our honesty if we engage, if we are in communion with him. And when we *come and see*, we find we are seen, and through our open engagement comes the promise of seeing *even greater things*.

So don't be afraid to be honest with God. We are who we are....whether we are humble Nazarenes, guileless Cananites, or fishermen from Bethsaida...There's no hiding who we are from God. He sees us *sat under the fig tree* and we know that he appreciates *an Israelite in whom there is no deceit*.

Amen

Affirmation of Faith

We continue with the Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

Intercessions from Sue

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father

Lord, you have called us to be your Church here in these villages, make us worthy of that calling, faithful in our prayer and in our worship. We pray for our church ministers and for all who take responsibility on our behalf especially our Churchwardens. Grant us the will to be your servants as we seek to build up the Church here.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Our world faces precarious times and we pray for wisdom for all leaders and for those in positions of authority This week we hold the United States of America and the new president in our prayers. May ways of justice and peace prevail in these troubled times.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, hear our prayers for all who are called to serve you in the particular difficulties being faced at the moment. We think of the images we see from hospitals and we thank you for the dedication of doctors and nurses who are putting themselves at risk and working such long hours. We hear the news of care homes where staff are called to go the extra mile by giving the emotional support that families are unable to provide at the moment. There are carers in communities who provide the extra care needed by the vulnerable to keep them from being a further drain on the health service. We remember too the many people who work in the background but provide the services required in our hospitals and care homes. Bless them all and grant them your gift of peace.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

We pray for our local communities and we thank you for all who are good neighbours one to another. We take a moment to think about the people in our communities who are special to us.

We think of the children and young people,

the people having to work at home,

the elderly,

all who are here in our villages of Pilton, Croscombe, North Wootton, Dinder and Dulcote.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, we all know people in particular need today. We think of our own families and friends; from our villages we pray for all who are vulnerable and we remember people with particular health problems: Wendy Lynn, Jeff Macklin and Michael Comer. In a moment of quiet we pray for these and others known to us and for whatever is uppermost in our hearts.

Bring your gift of peace to all in need.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died to this life especially Betty Wills of Pilton and Tim George of North Wootton. Comfort all who miss those they love and bring us to share with them in fullness of life with you in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, as you called the disciples, open our hearts to your calling that we may serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom.

Merciful Father, *accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen*

Before the Lord's prayer let us listen to The Prayer by Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion and make it our prayer, (some of it is not in English but the majority is).

<https://youtu.be/IDsyvKJZz7g>

We continue with 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen**

Hymn Will you come and follow me?

<https://youtu.be/eAYM8pWCwWk>

Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;

and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and our loved ones now and always.

All Amen.