

Whitehorse Uniting Church  
Service of the Lord's Day  
at Mitcham  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Epiphany 2



Image: [Calling Disciples](#),  
He Qi, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*,  
a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

**INTROIT:****TiS 220**

*"This, this is the God we adore.*

This, this is the God we adore;  
our faithful, unchangeable friend;  
whose love is as great as his power,  
and neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus the first and the last  
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
we'll praise him for all that is past,  
and trust him for all that's to come.

Joseph Hart 1712-68 alt.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Lord you seek us, and see us, you have known us even as we were being formed;  
you know all our days before they dawn within us.

Whether we are alone or gathered, we are still with you. *(based on Psalm 139)*

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION:**

Lord, we are mindful of your goodness and mercy today. We invite you to be present amongst us, to help us experience the power of your Holy Spirit. Father, we declare that we love you. We thank you that you have made the way of love known through your son Jesus Christ.

**HYMN:**

O Lord, You Called Disciples - Tune TiS 361 - Ellacombe

Jesus, you once called disciples, choosing twelve to follow you:  
Simon (also known as Peter), Andrew and Bartholomew,  
Philip, Thomas, James and Matthew, Simon, Thaddaeus, John, and James  
Then there was the one called Judas. These were your disciples' names.

Women, too, were your disciples, sitting, learning, at your feet.  
Mary knew your word was precious, even more than food to eat.  
Martha trusted in your power when her brother Laz'rus died.  
Women shared your journey, Lord, and stayed when you were crucified.

Lord, so many heard and followed, like the woman at the well.  
 Meeting you, the living water, she sought others she could tell.  
 Like the boy with loaves and fishes, like Zacchaeus in the tree,  
 Many gladly heard your message; many shared your ministry.

Jesus, still you call your people, "Come and follow me today!"  
 Some, like Paul, feel sudden wonder; some are brought up in your way.  
 Lord, no matter how we meet you, by your Spirit, make us new.  
 May we know your living presence; may we daily follow you.

Text: Copyright © 2002 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved  
 Used with permission.

### **GREETING AND INTRODUCTION:**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### **PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

O Lord you have searched us and known us. You have watched over us as we were being knit together, as you called us into the miracle of life and breath and spirit.

Even still, we cannot resist being masters of our own destiny. We want wriggle room, separation, freedom to go about and do our own thing. Even as you hem us in, we often step back. Even though you know us deeply, we try to keep secrets from you.

Forgive us when we forget your relentless love for us. Forgive us when we seek things that take us far from you. Forgive us when we deny your love and call upon us...*(silent reflection)*

As Jesus found Philip and called him to follow, so Jesus continues to find each of us and says, "Follow me". As we respond it is a choice to live in the light and love of God. In the name of Christ, we are renewed and restored.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **SHARING THE PEACE:**

The peace of The Living God be with you all

**And also with you.**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:**

God, source of all light, by your Word you give light to the soul. Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and understanding that our hearts and minds may be opened. Amen.

### **THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES:**

#### *1 Samuel 3: 1-10 NRSV*

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 when the LORD called out Samuel's name.

"Here I am!" Samuel answered.

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.

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?"

### **THE PSALM**

#### *Psalms 139*

You Have Searched Me, Lord, And Known Me

Tune TIS 392 Nettleton

You have searched me, Lord, and known me!

All my life is in your care.

When I lie awake in evening,

You are always with me there.

When I rise to greet the morning  
 In an attitude of praise,  
 What I learn from you is humbling:  
 You already know my ways.

Lord, you know the song I'm singing  
 and my words before I pray.  
 You're behind me and before me  
 As I travel through each day.  
 You once knit me all together;  
 You created me by grace.  
 In your eyes, you see and love me  
 As you treasure all my days.

Lord, I try to learn your wisdom,  
 But I cannot understand.  
 Yet your love is all around me;  
 I am part of all you've planned.  
 Let me sing your praise each morning,  
 Let me serve you all day through,  
 And in evening, make me peaceful,  
 Knowing this: I'm loved by you!

Text: Copyright © 2014 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

### **THE GOSPEL:**

#### *John 1: 43-51 NRSV*

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 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."

"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."

In this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

### **HYMN: TIS 597**

*"Master speak, thy servant heareth."*

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?

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.  
 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 1836-79

### ***Reflecting - Rev Moira Dodsworth***

---

On this second Sunday of the New Year when we have perhaps been making some resolutions, considering what this year will hold for us and maybe even

doing some planning. I have invested in a white board calendar for the year, this is an attempt to be more organised.

The lectionary readings are about “call” and our relationship with God. Psalm 139 is a favourite of mine as it reminds us just how intimate our relationship with God is, no-one knows us as well as the one who is: “acquainted with all my ways.”

We hear in Samuel 1:3 *The word of the Lord was rare in those days, visions were not widespread.* One feels this could be referring to us now, in our secular world where “I” is much more important than “we” and our life is full of busyness, enjoyment and accumulating things. But God speaks to Samuel, God “calls” him. Samuel answers that he is God’s servant and listening and he grows in God’s ways and becomes *a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.* (v20) What an affirmation, something to aspire to!

Many years ago, in my early years of High School, I came home from a church day of prayer and study and announced that: “God has called me to be a teacher”. I’m sure there was eye-rolling from my brothers, but my parents accepted this calmly and with few diversions from the path, I became a teacher. At times I questioned God about this as I did not seem to have much effect in changing the world, my other lifetime ambition, but I think I did make a difference in some children’s lives, even if not receiving the affirmation that Samuel did. It was forty years before God spoke to me again and I answered my present call and then I doubted and took time to answer.

The reading from John tells us about the calling of disciples, particularly of Nathaniel, *an Israelite in whom there is no deceit* (John 1:47), another affirmation to aspire to. But most of the disciples were very ordinary people, with emotions and actions that are very human, surprised to be called by God. Surprise and acceptance seem to be part of the reception of a call by God but there is also response and action.

God calls disciples, all shapes and sizes, ages, with varied gifts but they are the church. Some are leaders, all are servants, and make a difference, some in big ways, others in small but without each one, the church does not function. In answering God’s call, we are part of fulfilling the prayer Christ taught us: “your kingdom come”.

At the beginning of this year 2024, what is God calling us to do? Our church, as we revisit what we think the Uniting Church should be; our congregations in our everyday worries about dwindling workers, mission and ministry; ourselves, as

we think out our call, who does God want us to be and how do we do that in the world we see and sometimes despair of?

Let us say, like Phillip: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God”, like Samuel: “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

## **HYMN: ATOK 413**

### The Summons

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
 Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
 Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
 will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?  
 Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
 Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?  
 Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
 Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?  
 Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,  
 and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?  
 Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
 Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around  
 through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
 Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
 In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.  
 Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.



### **OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

Bless all that we offer, relentless loving God. May our gifts and every day be offered as love and life in your name. Amen.

### **SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS:**

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:**

God of our world and community, there is no place beyond your knowing, your presence, your love. We pray for our world, our community and our church that your love and presence may be known.

We pray for places globally that need your love: The Gaza Strip, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Papua New Guinea.

We pray for places locally and across our country that need your love, especially those affected by recent floods. We pray for all those who are responding to emergency calls and are assisting those in trouble. We pray for those who are unwell or recovering from illness or surgery and ask for your blessing on them. May they experience your love through the hands of those who are helping them.

We pray for the church in all her forms, and especially places that need your love. We ask your blessing on all the volunteers who tirelessly work to bring joy and help to others through the Op Shop, Centre 81, LinC and Kids Hope. We pray for our Church Council members and their steadfast work to prepare us for decisions which lie ahead and all those who work quietly in the background to keep the wheels turning. We thank you for their energy and willingness to help.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

#### **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 forever.

Amen.

**HYMN: TiS 688***"I the Lord of sea and sky."*

1. 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?

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
 I have born my peoples 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, 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.*

*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.*

3. 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 be satisfied.  
 I will give My life 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.* Words: Daniel L Schutte

**DISMISSAL AND BLESSING:****The Aaronic Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
 the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;  
 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.