

St Swithun's Church Family Philip and Nathaniel



17th January 2021

10am Zoom

**Or use this booklet to join
together with us in Spirit**

*Please use this booklet to **worship with us** on zoom at 10am – or read through this service knowing that we are joining our prayers together in Spirit.*

Create a sacred space – if possible gather a candle and a cross if you can find them.

The children might like to use the Sunday school resources provided by Izzy.

In addition we will be audio recording today's sermon which will be uploaded to the website www.saintswithuns.org.uk

There are various prayer resources and other things to look at on the website – if you have any feedback or anything to share please let me know.

Giving - if you usually give your collection on a Sunday morning in cash, and you are able to, please put this aside each week to bring to church when you are next able to. Even better would be to set up your giving online ('Saint Swithun's PCC' ; 60-05-11 ; 16126718 ; NatWest Bank) if you haven't already done this.

You might like to enhance your worship by singing or listening to a hymn or a song at various points – I have a few suggestions below – you tube is a great resource...

**This little light of mine
We have a Gospel to proclaim
Will you come and follow me
Great is thy faithfulness**

<https://youtu.be/QCN893hzueQ>
<https://youtu.be/B2FX0-kS7wA>
<https://youtu.be/zk6IUaIJ3sk>
<https://youtu.be/0k1WhFtVp0o>

Introduction

Today is the second Sunday in Epiphany when we hear Jesus inviting Philip to follow him and then Philip inviting Nathaniel to join the party. Nathaniel is at first quite rude in response thinking nothing good can come from Nazareth but Philip's response is one for all of us who are reluctant – it is simply to 'come and see'. Today as we worship together stop and ponder something amazing you have discovered that you can share with others about how fantastic it is. It might be something you do like a yoga class, an object such as an avocado cutter, or a way of life such as establishing routines to guide your days. What is your discovery that we can come and see?

The Gathering

The Greeting

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

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you

Prayers of preparation

As we worship God together let us remember that:
we are in the presence of
love that never ceases,
creativity that designed the universe,
hope that cannot be quenched,
justice for all.

God is good

Come and see

Amen

Prayers of Penitence

In a moment of quiet, let us say sorry to God...

Let us open our lives to God and ask for forgiveness and grace.

For those times when we have kept our faith to ourselves
and we haven't shared the beauty of God's love with others
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times when we have unwilling
to come into your presence
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

For those times when we have failed
to live in the light of your love.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

Loving God, you welcome all who turn to you
in repentance and faith,
may God forgive us and restore us
to the light of God's presence.

Amen

Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.

Rejoice knowing that God
loves us, liberates us and
makes us whole. Let us
remember our discoveries
about life that make us feel
good...



As we remember the wonderful love of God and the amazing faith we have to share with others – let us light a candle – focus on the candlelight remembering that God’s love lights up even the darkest places and fills us with hope.

As we focus on the beauty of our faith let us sing together – this little light of mine. <https://youtu.be/QCN893hzueQ>

**This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine X3
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine**

**This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine X3
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine**

**The light that shines is the light of love
hides the darkness from above
shines on me and it shines on you
shows you what the power of love can do
shine my light both bright and clear
shine my light both far and near
in every dark corner that I find,
I’m gonna let my little light shine**



**This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine X3
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine**

**On Monday he gave me the gift of love,
Tuesday, peace came from above.
On Wednesday, he told me to have more faith,
on Thursday, he gave me a little more grace.
On Friday, he told me to watch and pray,
on Saturday, he told me just what to say,
on Sunday, he gave me the power divine
to let my little light shine.**

**This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine X3
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

The Liturgy of the Word

The Collect

Eternal Lord, our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to your glory, hidden through past ages
and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading *John 1: 43-end*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon *Leon Clarke*

How are you surviving the lockdown? I hope it's not too hard for any of you, but it is a very tough time for many of us. We're hearing very encouraging news about the vaccine rollout, but we might be worrying that it'll



be some time before that is having enough effect for much normality to return.

Some words that jumped out to me from the reading were Can anything good come from Nazareth? Come and see? The suggestion of finding good things in very unpromising-looking locations sounds like what we might need to practice right now.

Nathaniel, and quite a lot of the new testament, seem to have it in for Nazareth. You get the impression the place was a bit of a dump. Was it really that bad?



Well I can report that, if it was that bad, the information is out of date. Nazareth today is a really nice ottoman town, and, when we're allowed to travel again, I recommend visiting it, wandering around its narrow lanes looking at all the old buildings.

But before we think about why Nathaniel didn't like Nazareth, let's quickly look at the rest of the passage. This is from very near the beginning of John's gospel, when the disciples are being called. In this passage, dramatic things are happening; people are deciding to give up their old lives and follow Jesus, but why? Not because of any dramatic miracles; the first one is in next week's reading. Nathaniel is prepared to transform his life apparently based on nothing more than that Jesus saw him under a fig tree.

This is a rather good example of something that I'm sure I've gone on about in sermons before; God is to be found in the ordinary. If you want to look harder for God, look somewhere more ordinary. And that could be a good thing to think about now,

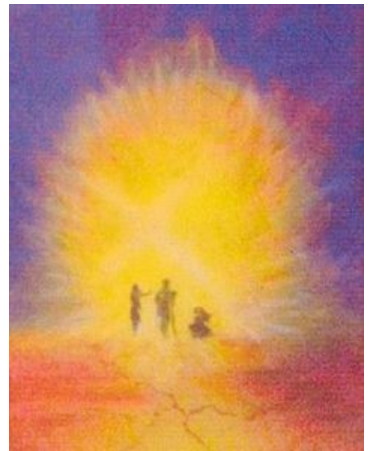
when we seem to have rather more of the ordinary than we might have been expecting, now that we can't go off to all the extraordinary places we'd like to be visiting.

So I now need to try harder to explain what I mean by this. I'm not saying that special places, such as churches, don't matter, but that fundamentally God is everywhere, and there's a sense in which the presence of God in the most ordinary places is actually more profound than the presence of God in the most holy places. When you stand in a place of awe-inspiring holiness, when you know you are standing on holy ground, then of course you can feel the presence of God. When you can discern, far more faintly, that same presence in the most ordinary places, that is even more powerful. Then you see that the presence of God is the same, even in that most ordinary place, and if you see how God fits into that most ordinary place, you will see how God pervades everything.

I'm reminded of the transfiguration; there is a great vision at the top of the mountain but the disciples must return down to the ordinary world, where the real work is to be done. We're certainly not on the top of a holy mountain now. We're in the ordinary world, and we need to get on with that work.

Nathaniel expected the Messiah to come from some place of great significance, but what could that mean to us? How could we, unable to visit that holy place, connect with Jesus. It is far more powerful, far more transformative, to know that Jesus grew up in a place of no great significance, that could have been like everywhere else.

Or maybe Nathaniel's problem with Nazareth wasn't quite that it was an ordinary place of no great note. Maybe he thought he knew what people from Nazareth were like, and didn't like that sort of person. And maybe that's something for us to reflect on



today too. I worry that this pandemic is creating lots of divisions, not necessarily the divisions we thought existed before but between those who are being affected by this very differently, those who are terrified of the impact of the virus on them and their loved ones, and those who are terrified of the impact of economic disruption on them and their loved ones. As we are back into another lockdown, it's worth thinking, who are our 'people from Nazareth', and how should we be looking for the good they might bring, looking for their different perspective that we might need.



So, as we're, as it were, stuck in Nazareth, stuck in one place unable to do all the extraordinary things we had planned, from going to church on Sunday to going to exotic holidays, what should we be doing? What I'm trying to do is to look back to times when finding the love of God seemed easier, when the voice of God seemed less drowned out, and then search for that same voice in these tougher times. And when I slightly find it, I can know that God is always with us. But I won't tell you I'm finding this easy; this is the sermon that I think I need to hear, at least as much as anyone else might need to hear it.

Affirmation of faith

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers *(Enita)*

Dear Father, we give thanks to you God and King of the Universe, hear us as we bow before you in humbleness and Prayer. We ask your presence with us at this time. Give us the gift of the Holy Spirit that we may be filled with Wisdom and Love. We thank you for the strength to face today to see the many Blessings that it contains. Guide our thoughts so that we walk in Love and Peace with gratitude. Thank you for the Technology of bringing us together, near but yet apart in these worrying times, knowing that you are with us wherever we are.
Let us pray: **God, have mercy.**

Dear God, in these present times as we face the Pandemic of Covid 19. Where there is sorrow and grief among us, we pray that you will soothe our pain and bring comfort to those who are lonely. We pray that you will look down on us with pity and lead and guide us as you did with our forefathers.
Give us the courage to walk on no matter how long the path or how many turns the road holds. The road seems very rough at present but we put our trust in you.
Be our Shield and Defender today and always.
Let us pray: **God, have mercy.**

We pray for those who have asked for our prayers: Lamar, Maureen, Karen, Paulette and of their family, Catherine and Alfrina and family, Betty, Fr Richard, Martin, Rossy and family, Kevin, Gwen, Pamela, Neil, Debbie, Elaine and family, Clinton, Francis, Cynthia, Diane, Harold, Ivy, Sean, Taneisha, Talabi, Susan, Edith, Vanda, Lorna, Ena and Stephen. Let them feel your presence and know that you are with them.
Let us pray: **God, have mercy.**

Those who have died Joseph, Sydney and John.
May they find eternal rest with thee.

Merciful Father

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

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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.**

The Peace

The angels sang, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

The Peace of the Lord be with you
And also with you.

The Notices

- *We will continue with our services on Zoom – links will be shared via email and text; due to covid at the vicarage and the state of emergency currently in London we have decided not to go into the church building for the time being – we do hope that as soon as it is safe to do so we will be able to offer communion in person.*
- *We will continue to upload the services and the audio sermons on the website.*
- *Happy Birthday to all those who have a birthday this week – especially Charlotte and Naomi who will both celebrate their first birthdays this week.*



Dismissal and Blessing

The Blessing

May God our loving parent, from whom every family in earth and heaven receives its name strengthen us with the Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith and that we may know that we are beloved; and the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer and Spirit be among you and remain with you always
Amen.

The Dismissal

We have seen God's glory, the glory revealed to all the nations.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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