

Worship for 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

Welcome: to worship for the week beginning 17th January 2021, the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. We are grateful to all who are taking part this week.

If you would like to take part, then please get in touch with the Circuit Office on swc.katetennyson@gmail.com

THE PREPARATION

Call to worship

We record these services a week in advance, and so on the week this was recorded, we have seen unrest in America, and we have seen a new lockdown introduced and school restart delayed and worrying news. At this time of separation and anxiety, I would like to start this morning's service by unifying in the Lord's prayer, so we say together:

**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**

Hymn: StF 15 – How Great Is Our God

**The splendor of a king
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice**

*How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God*

**Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end
The Godhead Three in One
Father, Spirit and Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb**

*How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God*

**Name above all names
Worthy of all praise;
My heart will sing:
How great is our God.
Name above all names,
You are worthy of all praise;
And my heart will sing:
How great is our God**

*How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God*

***How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God***

***How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God***

Chris Tomlin (b 1972), Ed Cash & Jesse Reeves
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Prayer of approach & adoration

Let us pray:

Father God, we come before you this morning not as individuals scattered and divided but as a family who have and are continuing to endure hardship and trial. Father we thank you that you have still been able to minister to us and bring us together in formats that didn't exist too long ago.

Father we pray this morning that you will continue to keep us alive and unified in you, that you will continue to bring us closer together, that you will continue to minister your word to us and encourage us and that we will grow closer to you despite not being able to meet with each other in person. Father God we pray that you will have your hand upon us, Father, and that you will guide us and minister to us this morning as we hear your word. **Amen.**

Lord God we want to lift you up this morning; we want to bring your name front and centre; we want it to be the name we look to when things are hard. Father when our lives are darkest, we need to remember to look to your light. When our legs are tired, we need to remember that you carry us; when all things seem hard and hopelessness seems to reign, we need to

remember that you are the hope that never fails, the love that never fails.

Father God, we thank you for who you are, we thank you for the way that you care for us. We thank you that your word says that none of us are forgotten that you look for the lost sheep, that you look for the prodigal son.

Father God, we thank you for who you are and for what you have done for us and we look to what you will continue to do for us despite the hardships that this week has brought and despite the hardships that the future looks like. We pray Lord, that we will keep our eyes focussed on just how amazing and wonderful your name is and Father God we pray Lord, that we would not forget how good you are and that your word says that to all your promises 'yes and amen.'

Prayer of confession

Father we live in a very fast-paced world that is constantly changing, very difficult to keep up with and not focussed on the good of everyone or following your will, but a world that is focussed sometimes on doing what's right for ourselves. Father, it's really easy to get caught up in that. Father God, it's really easy to worry about ourselves and forget that you have us in the palm of your hand. Father it's really easy to take back control of the lives we've given to you. Father, it's far too easy to worry about the troubles of today instead of focussing on what you have done for us and what you continue to do.

Father for the times that we have struggled to live up to the lives you have called us to; Father for the times that we have tried to take back control; Father for the times that we've simply not listened or ignored what you have said: we are sorry.

Father we ask humbly for your forgiveness, knowing that your word says you are faithful and just and you forgive us our sins. Your word says that you have made a way for us to reunite with you and we are sorry for the times that we have chosen to try and go it alone. But we take courage and joy from the fact that your word says that you forgive us, that you welcome us back, that you are the Father looking for the prodigal son.

Father we thank you for everything that you have done, and we pray Lord, that we try to repent for the things that we do wrong and walk in the way that you have taught us. **Amen**

Hymn: Great Things

**Come let us worship our King
Come let us bow at His feet
He has done great things
See what our Savior has done
See how His love overcomes
He has done great things
He has done great things**

**Oh hero of Heaven, You conquered the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things
We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things**

**You've been faithful through every storm
You'll be faithful forevermore
You have done great things
And I know You will do it again
For Your promise is "Yes and amen"
You will do great things
God, You do great things**

**Oh hero of Heaven, You conquered the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things**

**We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things**

**Hallelujah God, above it all
Hallelujah God, unshakable
Hallelujah, You have done great things
Hallelujah God, above it all
Hallelujah God, unshakable
Hallelujah, You have done great things
You've done great things**

**Oh hero of Heaven, You conquered the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things
We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things**

**You have done great things
Oh God, You do great things**

Jonas Myrin & Phil Wickham

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THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

1st Reading 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NRSVA)

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the 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.

⁴Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' ⁵and 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. ⁶The

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.' ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The 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. ⁹Therefore 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.

¹⁰Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Gospel John 1:43-51 (NRSVA)

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip 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.' ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' ⁵¹And 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.'

Psalms 139:1-6,23-24 (NRSVA)

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

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

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

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

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

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

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

²⁴See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Sermon

By the time you watch this, I do not know what the circumstances of our lock-down might be. However I suspect that in the recent past you have wished that you could say to someone, "why not come and see us?" It's not possible just now, but Jesus made an invitation like this to two of John's disciples. In a passage in John's gospel just before our reading, in response to a question about where he was staying, he replies, "Come and see".

Jesus didn't use those words to Philip, according to our reading. However Philip himself spoke them to his friend Nathaniel. Imagine the enthusiasm. "Come on. Just wait till you see this!" When we have something exciting, we want to share it whatever age we are. The toddler insistently pulling at mother's or dad's arm. The grandparent encouraging a young person to discover something that delighted them as a child.

Or a Samaritan woman who had been to fetch water from the well, racing back into the village to tell them about the man she had met there. “Come, see, could this be the Christ?” And many did come and believed because they heard for themselves, rather than for what they had been told.

But it may not always be easy to recognise the invitation. We might be too bound up in what we are currently doing to notice the tug at our elbow. Samuel didn’t recognise his call even three times. It took old Eli to tell him what was going on – and how to respond. Was Samuel thinking to himself, “Really? These days the word of the Lord is rare”.

I wonder if that might have been the way Nathaniel was thinking when Philip found him. Nathaniel came from Cana, about ten miles from Nazareth and perhaps rather a superior village in their own eyes. Was the feeling reversed in Jesus’ Mother’s eyes when they went to Cana for a wedding? Nevertheless, Nathaniel went along with Philip to Jesus, and despite all his prejudices and questions became convinced that he had found one born to be King of Israel. He came rather doubtfully and went away assured of even greater things to see.

Eli too was not the perfect man. The weak, old man was becoming blind; blind to daylight and blind to the activities of his sons. He should have recognised what they were up to and stopped them. But he didn’t. Even so, Eli was able to recognise the voice of the Lord and to know what the Lord was seeking – someone who would listen to what was required, and then do it.

That’s encouragement for us also in our own weaknesses. When we are blind to what is happening around us, when our judgement is

weak, when we are half asleep, it is still possible for us to discern the voice of God. We can be called to be part of God’s team. We too can be called just as we are even when we are full of questions and wondering how this can be.

Perhaps you have had occasion to buy a car. The salesperson brightly encourages you to examine a model and your mind is full of questions. So they suggest, “Come and test drive the car, and see for yourself”. An attractive offer. How should you respond? Maybe like this.

First, bring with you what you need to carry on your journeys. The sizes of the bags you carry, perhaps a mobility aid, think of the bits and pieces you store in the car. Will it carry the load?

Secondly, test it on familiar roads, where you know the bumps only too well. Will it run easily?

Finally, bring a friend with you, who will give you advice and confidence. Can you get an answer to every question?

Philip said to his friend Nathaniel not “Go and see” but “Come and see”. What a difference! I’ll be with you when you ask questions about how this man will carry your burdens. Together we will travel the familiar ups and downs of life in his company. We will share the delight of new insights as the road opens up. That’s the kind of friend we need when we are wondering where a new year is taking us and whether we shall have more surprises. Someone who can share experiences and swap questions, but who can encourage us on the Christian way.

Virtually everyone who is called has someone else with them on the way. For Samuel it was Eli, despite the old man’s weaknesses. For people training to be Local Preachers or Worship Leaders in the Methodist Church we appoint

Mentors, not to teach but to support and paint a vision.

For my part, I can recall devoted Sunday School teachers in North Wales, a patient Minister in Dorset who overlooked sitting alone one evening at the chapel when I forgot to turn up and an inspiring and gentle University Chaplin at Sheffield, who was not disturbed by any question.

Can you look back and identify someone who took that role for you? Now, in turn, to whom do you need to say, "Come and see"?

Yet I must say a word of warning here. We have to be careful accompanying someone. The intention is to go with them helpfully and not be a distraction. Let's not chat incessantly when they are concentrating on driving a strange car.

An old man was once asked what was the secret of trout fishing. "Ah, three things", he replied. "First, keep out of sight. Second, keep farther out of sight. Finally keep farther still out of sight".

As we say "Come and see Jesus", we should be present but out of sight. The opposite of the Victorian child – heard but not seen. The focus should be on Jesus.

It's tricky at this incredible time to say "Come" to anyone in a physical sense. However we may still invite them to see with both mind and eyes. So many of us now know how to use Zoom or Teams and churches have started using Facebook and Youtube videos. See how God is always providing new opportunities and working for good. The invitation to see stands in a new way.

Nathaniel was not sure about the invitation at first. Maybe some of you watching feel that too. Hear this good news. If you simply wonder if you

have heard the call of Jesus, then his grace has already touched you.

So when we hear "Come and see", we can say with confidence like the psalmist, "Know my anxious thoughts.....and lead me in the way everlasting". Amen.

Let us affirm the faith of the Church.

**We believe in God the Father,
who made the world.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ , his Son,
who redeemed humankind.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God.**

Hymn: StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

- 1. 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?**
- 2. 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?**
- 3. 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.**

- 4. 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?**
- 5. 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.**

John L Bell (b1949)
and Graham Maule (b1958)
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THE RESPONSE

Prayers of thanksgiving

Lord God, we thank you for your word, the word that Russell has brought us. We thank you for teaching us through him; for showing us your way through the many things that Russell has said.

Father God we pray this morning, that we would not forget your desire for us, Father that you would continue to minister to us. Father, thank you for everything, that you have done for us, Lord, and we thank you in advance for all the things that you are going to do this week. Jesus you are the rock on which we build our lives and we thank you for that. You show us the way and teach us to walk in it, and we thank you for that, and you've sent your Spirit so that even though we can't meet in person we can commune and

enjoy fellowship with you and we thank you for that as well.

Hymn: 10000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name**

**The sun comes up; it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before
me
Let me be singing when the evening comes**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name**

**You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing
10,000 reasons for my heart to find**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name**

**And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
10,000 years and then forever more**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name**

Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name

Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name
I worship Your holy name
I worship Your holy name

Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name
I worship Your holy name
I worship Your holy name

Matt Redman

Prayers of intercession

Father we come now to the time when we pray for other people that we know to be unwell. Father, we pray for our families some of whom are unwell, we pray for those who have had to start shielding again, we pray for those that have had to start shielding for the first time. We pray Father God, for students without teachers and teachers without students, we pray for those who are struggling because their work has become difficult. We pray for those who are struggling because the times have become harder to earn again.

Father we pray for the families that make up our community and Father we pray for the communities that make up our Circuit. We pray for those for whom they feel very distant Father, we pray for the communities that are struggling at the minute. Father we pray for those for whom it's colder and that brings a new set of difficulties. We pray that our Circuit would

continue to be joined together Lord, in seeking to do your will and following the vision of your Church. And Father we pray for the Circuits that make up our country – a country that at the moment, is struggling in the light of new news and for whom morale might be quite low; but Father you are the joy that gives us strength. Your joy uplifts us and your word says that we can run and not grow weary and walk and not faint, and Father God, I pray that you would help us to cling to that. Father I pray that we will take the joy that you have given us and use it to fuel the desire to do your will and to be your people.

Father God, I pray for our world that seems a little fractured at the moment, our world that has witnessed uprisings and trade negotiations and a very new world from the world that we knew the last time we were able to meet together. But Father you are still the King of heaven and the King of earth, and Father we pray that in these moments of difficulties we would look for you and your wisdom. We pray for the leaders of our land that they would look for you and your wisdom, and Father we pray despite the fact that we know we don't always agree with them for those who are in government over us that they would have wisdom from you as well at this time where nobody really knows what comes next.

Father we ask these things in the precious and holy name of your Son, Jesus Christ who died for us.

Amen

The Offering & prayer

Lord Jesus, although our buildings be closed at the moment and our congregations be unable to meet as they normally would, we thank you that people still offer of their time, offer of their hearts, offer of their love, and that some people

still offer of their finances through standing order Lord. And we pray that whatever our offering is this week, that you would bless it Father, that you would use it for the advancement of your kingdom, that you would take our offering and grow it so that it affects more and more people. Lord God we thank you for the parables that you spoke to us that say that when we give of ourselves, the effects are far bigger than we ever know. Father I pray you'll bless our offering this week.

Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Hymn: StF 254 – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

- 1. Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you;
Allelu-, Alleluia:**

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!*

- 2. Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened unto
you;
Allelu-, Alleluia:**

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!*

- 3. We shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord;
Allelu-, Alleluia:**

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!*

Karen Lafferty (b 1948)

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Prayer & blessing

I want to thank you for worshipping with us this morning, it's been a privilege to share God's word and God's love with you and I pray that as we go into the world, that God would keep us fuelled with his joy, armed with his love and safe in the knowledge of his eternal grace. May God bless you.

Amen

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Hymn Words:

StF 15 – How Great Is Our God

Chris Tomlin (b 1972), Ed Cash & Jesse Reeves

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Great Things

Jonas Myrin & Phil Wickham

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StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

John L Bell (b1949) and Graham Maule (b1958)

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10000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

Matt Redman

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StF 254 – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

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