



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 17 January 2021**

Dear friends, welcome to another Zoom service. I am delighted to welcome also our friends from Merrylee both on Zoom and with others reading the Reflections in their own time.

This Sunday, our prayers touch once more the USA and the riots on Capitol Hill and the second impeachment of Donald Trump. Many of us not only have friends in America (in the Manse we have Mary and Rachel who stayed with us to deliver talks on Dementia around Scotland) but many church friends too: Marie for one, in her congregation in Washington.

Also we should remember in our prayers the sudden death of Archbishop Philip Tartaglia last week at the age of 70.

Locally we have two member's deaths to intimate: that of Alex Hutcheon who died on the 4th January and whose funeral will take place on Monday the 8th of February at Clydebank, and Joey MacDonald, formerly of Churchill Drive who died on the 12th.

Please also remember the Queen boys, Iain and David, for their mother who died on the 8th January and whose funeral will take place on the 21st January at Glasgow: Maryhill. As is the case during lockdown, the same rules apply of a maximum of 20 people.

Covid-wise it has been a hard week but please remember that all our hope on God is founded and that an end to this will come. The darkened days are getting shorter, the light shines, and the darkness will never put it out.

So, reflect in prayer and in Scripture. I hope you take something from this worship time.

Every blessing,
George

***Remember our helpline number, 07851 591 503,
if you are needing help with shopping through this time of Lockdown***

Sunday 17 January - Epiphany 2 (Year B)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday, the readings for this Sunday are: 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139: 1-6, (13-18); 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20; John 1: 43-51.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. The congregation in Naseby and in Kingsborough, whilst unable to sing them, have enjoyed following the words, giving them an opportunity to think more of what they mean and how they tie into the theme of the service. It also gives me the chance to 'slip in' some newer ones so that we can learn them for the future!!

Sunday's hymns are:

509 Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult; 542 Lord speak to me, that I may speak; 465 Be thou my vision; 251 I, the Lord of sea and sky.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Samuel but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

Rest in His arms read, reflect, rejoice...

CALL

Jesus comes alongside us and calls us by name.

"Follow me," he says to you.

A simple call.

A hard call.

Because following requires leaving.

And we look around to see who else Jesus could be talking to.

And we look around to see the trappings of the life we know.

It's hard to leave our nets and walk away from the lake.

But we have come this far,

to this place, where we can listen and be transformed.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Gentle and patient:

God, you are calling.

Careful and persistent:

God, you are calling.

In grieving and in praise:

God, you are calling.

Through dawn and midday:

God, you are calling.

Unexpected and planned:

God, you are calling.

In a still small voice and in power:

God, you are calling.

Spontaneous and prepared:

God, you are calling.

Willing or protected:

God, you are calling.

You, God, are eager to share with us, wherever we are in our journey.

May we be diligent to listen.

God, you are calling.

We hear that you hear our prayers, accept our failings, forgive us, and call us anew...

(The Lord's Prayer)

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 debts as we forgive our debtors
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever, AMEN



Let us turn to God's Word, found in 1st Samuel 3: 1-10
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

And now some music as we contemplate the readings.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Open our ears, O God, that we might hear your Word speaking to us in this moment. Open our ears, O God, that we might listen for your voice calling to us through Scripture. Open our ears, O God, that we might understand your promises to followers both old and young. Open our hearts, O God, that we might enter into the love you offer us. AMEN

REFLECTION

'Click and collect'. How is that for the beginning of a sermon?

It's not, the more you analyse the phrase, a line describing a romantic date! You know the kind, when you were at a school dance and there was someone there you would like to go on a date with and after a few Irn Brus and some meaningful conversation, you 'click' and you walk her/him home and as you say good-night, 'collect' a peck on the cheek!!

Click and collect, as many of you know, is ordering on line and then collecting at a location rather than trooping into the store itself.

'Click and collect' – I want you to think of these words from that most marvellous story in 1st Samuel. There are many ways to preach from it, such are the opportunities in this passage of old Eli and the young Samuel. I've always, however, been intrigued by the line — '... there were very few messages from the Lord and visions from him were quite rare.'



Sometimes I have my doubts about the truth of that sentence. I believe that God communicates with us and to us all the time.

Throughout Biblical history there have been highlighted moments through the prophets when God has used these voices as a conduit but often the words of warning were rejected or ignored.

Here in the story is an old man, tired physically and also tired of the behaviour of his sons. His eyesight dimmed, he doesn't see what is right in front of his eyes. His motivation weak, Eli does not listen in the same way as he used to and so God seems quiet. I think there is a genuineness and legitimacy in the difference between hearing and listening. If what I'm suggesting is true, that God speaks to us, how much are we actually listening and responding to?

We live in a world where it seems 'the word of the Lord is rare' when you see the actions of some in the USA who purport to be Christian. We see brokenness when there should be togetherness, division and anger when there should be unity and love.

But we believe in a God who never stops speaking to us: a God who longs to reveal his mercy, healing and hope and, as we have said often through the Christmas season and now Epiphany, a God who takes on human life and understands.

The story of Samuel not recognising God's voice is a well-known one from our Sunday school days. He hasn't heard it before, so thinking it is Eli, asks about being called, and Eli responds in the way any elder would and Samuel is sent packing, back to bed. It hasn't 'clicked' for Samuel but it hasn't 'clicked' for Eli either, who should know better.

Then it dawns on Eli after three interruptions: Eli has an epiphany and his mind is illuminated in a similar way to the lamp in the Covenant Box and he realises that it is the Lord and so instructs Samuel to say 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'

'Click' – it all falls into place.

But what about 'collect'?

If I can stretch the analogy further, you cannot collect unless you click? It requires us to listen and to speak prophetically. It requires us to challenge our own assumptions about God and faith, so that we can find Him in unexpected places, places disreputable and disgraceful in our eyes, so much so that we have been blind to see.

In our story, Eli no longer expects to see or hear from God, not because God has abandoned him but because he can't find the courage, the effort, the will-power or the determination to do what is right. Eli's sons are priests too but they are priests that have lost their way, priests who have brought shame on their position, being greedy and self-indulgent and immoral. Since Eli has failed so dramatically to get his sons to toe the line, God turns to a child, to a boy in the periphery, on the margins, whose eyesight has not been tainted and his hearing compromised by the interests of his elders.

Samuel is a child who responds to an unfamiliar voice and also responds to prophesy about the fall of the house of Eli, to call out the corruption. Perhaps that's why we've stopped listening: not just because God's calling can be heard in different places but because when you hear that voice and click, where God challenges you to go (to collect) are in surprising areas, saying truthful things that need to be heard.

I suppose it is like the 'click and collect' when you arrive to pick up your pack-

age, take it home and discover that's not what you ordered. It doesn't fit. It's the wrong size.

Welcome to truly listening to God!

I started the reflection tongue-in-cheek about the old school dance and 'clicking'.

There is much truth in the relationship we develop with each other that it has to be right... and this applies to God. God has expectations on how we behave and how we respond to the challenges of the world. What we expect is sometimes different when it arrives.

Samuel discovered this.

The disciples who followed Jesus discovered this.

We know that in prayer the answers we look for when revealed are different. When you hear that call, as we all have in our own situations, and we respond with 'Speak your servant is listening', after that call comes challenge to pick up the demands and direction of God.

'Click and Collect', curtailed by our government during this lockdown.

'Click and Collect' the Biblical version, from a young boy who hears, reacts and then faces the dilemma of where God has called him to.

For us, let's re-focus, listen intently, re-connect and click once more with the God who loves us but be warned that once you say 'Here I am', God may send you where you least expect!!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

(As we do in the sanctuary, we make our offerings of body, mind and soul, as well as in a monetary way.)

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy God, like the first disciples,
we have heard the call to follow Jesus!

Yet too often we have failed to introduce him to others,
not willing to take the risks that go with true discipleship.

As we bring our offerings to you this day, make us bold in following.

May we give more readily, love more deeply,
show mercy and compassion more extravagantly,
and seek justice for others courageously.

Help us to walk in the steps of the one we follow.

In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen

(We turn to our world)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

O God, giver of all good gifts, you have given me life.

You have bestowed upon me your love
and that love includes your plans for me.

What am I to do?

All life is a call and a response.

I pray for grace to hear God's voice and a heart to respond.
I am ready to listen.

Help me to listen to the rhythm of each day, day by day,
so that I am not overwhelmed with thoughts of the future.
Yet guide me into that future so that I know who and whose I am.
I shall listen.
I shall listen to the voices of those witnesses who have lived before me.
I shall listen to those who are here to give me guidance and encouragement,
for it is clear that whatever plans you have for me,
I will never journey alone.

I will listen to my feelings as I grow and change:
processes that I know will be lifelong.
I shall listen to you.

And even though I want easy answers,
I know that what you want is a relationship.
So when I answer you,
may my response be to my potential
and to your love of all creatures on your good earth.
Let me serve with the gifts you give me.
O God,
I know that vocation is truly a gift of your love.
I know you call me and us all.
What am I to do?
What are we to do?
I am ready to listen
and respond.
AMEN

BENEDICTION

Go now.
Listen for the voice of the Lord.
Allow no room within yourselves for deceit,
but offer yourselves as a temple for the Holy Spirit.
And may God be with you and speak through you.
May Christ Jesus be with you and raise you to life.
And may the Holy Spirit dwell within you and make you holy.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. AMEN