



Sunday 17th January 2021

(Revd Dawn Saunders and Deacon Sally Wheadon)

“Calling...” – Vocational?

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening - Call to Worship

Psalm 96

Sing unto the Lord a New Song

Sing Unto the Lord all the Earth

Welcome and

Lighting of the Candle

Hymn StF 034

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!

bow down before him,
his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience,
and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him,
the Lord is his name!

Low at his feet
lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart
he will bear it for thee,
comfort thy sorrows,
and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps
as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter
his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth
thou wouldst reckon as thine:
truth in its beauty,
and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings
to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them
in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept
for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy
give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling
and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord
in the beauty of holiness!
bow down before him,
his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience,
and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him,
the Lord is his name!

A Prayer of Adoration

Creator God, how awesome are you!
Our lives were known to you before we
came into being. Marvellous Lord,
everything we do, think and say – you
know about. - Such infinite wonder!
Eternal, loving Lord, Ever helping us to
see and be more like you. How
awesome you are, glorious Lord.
Everywhere we go your hand is with us,
always guiding and revealing your
blessings – as we praise, listen and act.

Amen.

A Prayer of Confession

Sometimes, Lord, we forget that you
have welcomed us into your kingdom,
and prefer to walk within a world
that daily tempts us. Sometimes, Lord,
we forget the freedom given us in your
kingdom, and prefer the shackles that
we knew before you called us.
Remind us, Lord, of the price you paid
so we can enter into your kingdom.
Forgive us, and accept our gratitude
for such grace shown to us. **Amen.**

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks for your call to be your
witnesses and bring the light of Christ
into this world. We give thanks for your
call to where you lead us, for you will
keep us safe within your arms.
We give thanks for your call to be a
powerful voice where there is injustice
and suffering. We give thanks for your
call to show your love and grace in our
lives as our thanks-living offering. We
give thanks for your call and ask that
you empower us by the Holy Spirit to
follow you. **Amen**

*John Blrch The Act Of Prayer:
"Praying through the lectionary".*

Reading 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Reading John 1: 43-51

Hymn StF 662

Have you heard God's voice;

has your heart been stirred?

Are you still prepared to follow?

Have you made a choice
to remain and serve, - though the
way be rough and narrow?

Refrain (except the last time)

Will you walk the path

that will cost you much

embrace the pain and sorrow?

Will you trust in One

who entrusts to you

the disciples of tomorrow?

Will you use your voice;
will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand
your ground - when the crowds
are turning violent?

In your city streets
will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when
friendships start, - will you share
your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news
with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views
using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path
that will cost us much
and embrace the
pain and sorrow.
We will trust in One
who entrusts to us
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Jacqueline G. Jones

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STOP
MAKING
EXCUSES

Do you think we make excuses up for not fulfilling our roles as disciples, not all the time but perhaps when things are tough. Perhaps we aren't always really honest with ourselves about the depth of our commitment. It is interesting that we might consider it easier to think of ourselves as Christians but find it more challenging to think about ourselves as disciples.

Superintendent Rev'd Dawn:

Reflections:

I found some letters to schools to excuse an absence, they were online, so who knows – genuine? Probably not.

"Please excuse Josh for being absent. I forgot to wake him up and I did not find him until I made the beds -- by then it was too late.

"John didn't come to school yesterday because he felt like he was going to be sick. Thankfully, he wasn't!"

"Please excuse Sophie from school. It was Take Your Daughter to Work Day. So I made her stay at home and do housework."

This one is my all-time favourites!

"Please excuse Mary for missing school yesterday. We forgot to pick the Sunday paper off the doormat and when we found it on Monday, we thought it was Sunday."

Here is an interesting fact – the word disciples occurs 269 in the New Testament – The word Christian only 3. – I will leave that with you as I carry on reflecting.

When we explore scriptures, there are so many examples of people called by God – who didn't question or make up excuses for following.

Throughout His life Abraham followed God in faith. He believed what God said about his future. When instructed by the Lord to leave his land, he left it, without even knowing where he was going... he didn't say "I have faith, but I'm staying in Ur". Rather he left his home, his properties, his family and friends, and left... that's faith... with a challenge.

Peter was called to be an apostle, called to change his life, called to serve the Lord Jesus as a witness to God's grace in his life.

Paul's watchword became, "Not I, but Christ". His concern was to be sensitive to the voice of God who had called him.

"And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him." this is the story about the calling of Simon, Andrew, James and John. from the first chapter of Mark.

Matthew's calling, is the slight exception this is not told in the context of the calling of other disciples; instead, it is followed by an example of the kind of life to which he was being called.

Today we heard about Samuel and his first encounter, listening for the voice of God, recognising that God was calling, not Eli.

The other reading from our gospel of John speaks about Philip and Nathaniel being called by Jesus. What faith these examples show us, of taking a journey, walking with God and not always knowing where the path will take us.

That is what faith is in the end. - Faith is a difficult thing to describe we can't see it, hear it, smell it, or taste it and it is ever changing. Our definition of what our faith is, changes as we grow. it isn't a concrete factual thing.

But part of it is about setting forth on a journey without knowing the details of what the path will bring but knowing that the one who brings the path to us will do everything that he has promised to do.

Jesus recognized Nathaniel as the one who was sitting under the fig tree. I don't know how many of you, like me, enjoy people watching. I find it fascinating to sit perhaps in a cafe or in the park watching people go about their business, not because I'm nosey, all though I am a bit, but I like to see how people react - you can tell a lot about a person by the way they react to a certain situation. Our human responses are a real give away sometimes anyway to aspects of our personality.

This is also true of our churches, we as a body of people, within and somewhere other people might look to see how we as Christians respond to certain issues or situations. This presents us all with a huge challenge.

Jesus, our example, from Him, flowed healing, wisdom, compassion, caring, vision, hope, and life itself. He called His disciples to continue His work and ministry, and He calls us too. If we are to respond in faith to the circumstances we find ourselves in and with the challenges we face then we must learn to completely trust in God.

Proverbs 3: verse 5 says

*Trust in the LORD with all
your heart and lean not on
your own understanding; in
all your ways
acknowledge Him,
and he will make your
paths straight.*

It is a daunting responsibility, and we may sometimes feel as though we can never live up to the calling of a disciple. But I find comfort in the fact that the first 12 disciples weren't anywhere near perfect after they'd been chosen their lack of understanding comes up time and time again.

Whilst Jesus was trying to teach them about servant hood they were fighting over who was the best disciple On one of the most important nights of Jesus life in the garden of Gethsemane Peter James and John fell asleep. At the time of the arrest Mark's account says they all deserted him and fled. He was arrested because Judas betrayed him and not long after that Peter denied even knowing him

Lets face it they messed things up quite spectacularly, but Jesus picked them and he has picked each one of us here too! Yes – a disciple is one who gives up everything to follow Jesus – yes a disciple is one who messes up from time to time – but a disciple is also one who is willing to learn and grow and take up the challenges to which we are called. **AMEN**

Hymn StF 673

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.

*John L Bell (born 1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2019)
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Prayers of Intercession

We give you thanks, O Lord,
for you have called us to know
you and to proclaim you.
Lord, make us worthy of our calling;
may we be faithful to you
in our discipleship.
We pray that each in their calling may
seek to do your will; that your church
may be attentive to your word and
seek to do your will, that we may share
in the mission and saving work of
Christ our Lord.

**Lord, you are our strength
and our salvation.**

We pray for all who are seeking to live
up to their calling,
for all who are striving to keep the
ideals that they see.
We remember all whose work
has been frustrated,
by evil or by accident.
We pray for the underprivileged, the
unemployed, for the work
weary and for the exploited.
**Lord, you are our strength
and our salvation.**

Lord make us aware that you are ever
calling us to new
ventures, new visions:
you call us to extend ourselves.
We pray for the communities to which
we belong and in which
we have an active share.
May we see our daily work
as part of our discipleship and
discipline.

**Lord, you are our strength and our
salvation.**

We pray for all who feel
they have laboured in vain,
for all who have toiled hard
and achieved nothing,
for those whose world
has collapsed around them.
We remember all who have been
recently made homeless,
those who have lost loved ones
or possessions.
We pray for all who
through illness
are unable to fulfil themselves,
for all who are frustrated with life, all
who feel like giving up.

**Lord, you are our strength and our
salvation.**

We give thanks for all who have been
faithful disciples,
who have heeded your call and obeyed
your commands.
We pray for those who now serve you
with the saints in glory.
**Lord, you are our strength and our
salvation.**

God who called us to work with you,
strengthen us by the power of your
Spirit, that we may be worthy of your
calling. For we ask it in Jesus' name.
Amen.

David Adam "Radiance of His Glory"

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father ...

Hymn StF 504

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self-abasing,
this is victory.

May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Blessing:

**Lord God, surround us with your love,
fill us with your grace,
and strengthen us for your service.**

**Empower us to respond
to the call of Jesus –
to follow him and be your disciples.**

**And may the blessing of God the Father,
Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, be with
those we love and those we struggle to
love this day and always.**

Amen.

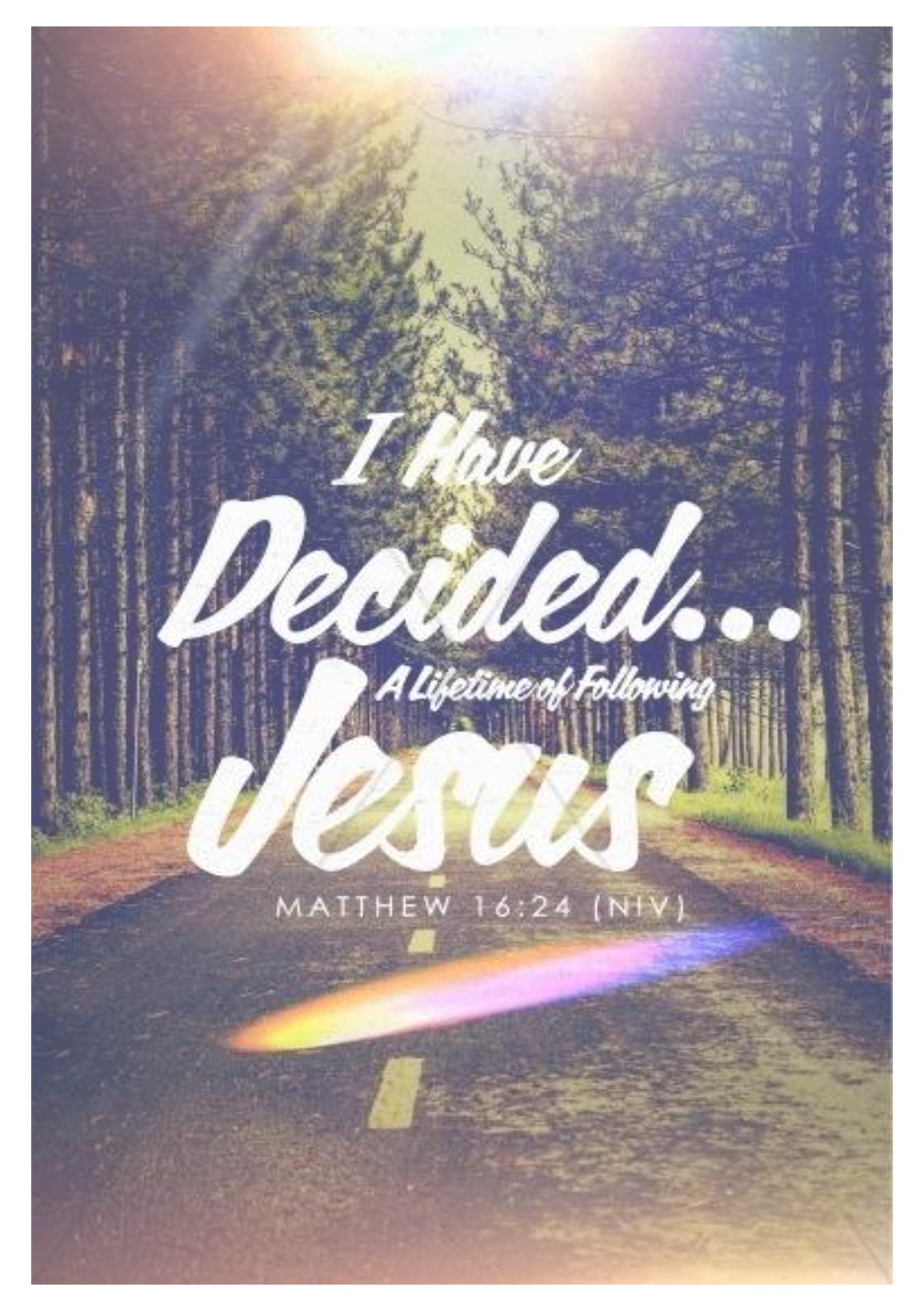
Our Calling

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

It does this through

- Worship
- Learning and Caring
- Service
- Evangelism

The Methodist Church  www.methodist.org.uk
Methodist Church in the United Kingdom

A photograph of a paved path leading through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a bright, hazy glow at the top of the frame. A vibrant, multi-colored light streak, resembling a rainbow, is positioned horizontally across the lower half of the path. The text is overlaid on the image in white, with 'I Have' in a smaller script, 'Decided...' in a large, bold script, 'A Lifetime of Following' in a smaller script, and 'Jesus' in the largest, most prominent script.

I Have
Decided...
A Lifetime of Following
Jesus

MATTHEW 16:24 (NIV)