

Worship in the Home: January 17, 2021

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Worship in the Home

Second Sunday after Epiphany, Year B

January 17, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God.

Additional prayers for the nation and times of conflict, crisis and disaster can be found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (pp. 76-77) and in All Creation Sings (p. 49-51). The Great Litany (ELW #238) and the prayers of lament in All Creation Sings would also be a helpful resource in this time (pp. 61-66). The [worship resources composed for the Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine](#) include a petition specific to our nation and the scourge of white supremacy.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10[11-20]

At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.

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 Eli said, "I did not call; lie down again." So Samuel 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 Eli 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 the LORD 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." [¹¹Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹²On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

¹⁵Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." ¹⁷Eli said, "What was it that the LORD told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that God told you." ¹⁸So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "The LORD will do what seems good to the LORD."

¹⁹As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.]

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

¹LORD, you have | searched me out;

O LORD, | you have known me.

²You know my sitting down and my | rising up;
you discern my thoughts | from afar.

³You trace my journeys and my | resting-places
and are acquainted with | all my ways.

⁴Indeed, there is not a word | on my lips,
but you, O LORD, know it | altogether.

⁵You encompass me, behind | and before,
and lay your | hand upon me.

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

¹³For you yourself created my | inmost parts;
you knit me together in my | mother's womb.

¹⁴I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I | know it well.

¹⁵My body was not hidden from you,

while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths¹ of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written¹ in your book;
my days were fashioned before they¹ came to be.
¹⁷How deep I find your¹ thoughts, O God!
How great is the¹ sum of them!
¹⁸If I were to count them, they would be more in number¹ than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to¹ be like yours.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.

¹²"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by divine power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are parts of the body of Christ? Should I therefore take the parts of the body of Christ and make them parts of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with that prostitute? For it is said, 'The two shall be one flesh.' ¹⁷But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with the Lord. ¹⁸Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."

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 the one about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to Philip, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked Jesus, "Where did you get 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 Jesus 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."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

Sometimes we feel as if we have no word from God, no vision, no place to come and see what God is doing, no center in a time of alienation. But, as the Psalm says, God has seen us and known us. More: in our baptism, God has called us, like Samuel, Philip, and Nathanael were called. Listen to

these texts more deeply. In Jesus Christ heaven has opened. For us, the angels of God ascend and descend upon him more surely than they did upon Jacob's ancient Bethel (Genesis 28:12). In his death and resurrection, Jesus has become for us the lamp of God, the ark of God, and the house of God where we may come and see. The crucified and risen Christ, present in his word and sacraments — and present to us in the scriptures read in our homes — is today the place where we may meet God. Then, gathered into Christ's body by the Holy Spirit, we become together the temple of God, our own bodies now dedicated to bearing witness to God's love for our needy neighbors and for all the world.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Here I Am, Lord" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 574 / This Far By Faith 230), "O Jesus, I Have Promised" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 810). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[O Jesus, I Have Promised](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

As this week we observe the Week of Prayer for Christian unity, commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr., and inaugurate the new President of the United States, let us offer our laments and petitions to God, responding to each with the words "In mercy, receive our prayers."

O God, we lament the times when our churches have rejected collaboration with your worldwide family of grace — *a brief silence* — and we pray for your blessing on the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, evangelicals, and independents, that all your people will follow your call to discipleship and grow deeper into our unity in Christ.

Another brief silence.

O God, Shepherd of your people, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the ways that we and our society have misused your earth with selfish or short-sighted actions — *a brief silence* — and we pray for an increased commitment to the care of your marvelous creation.

Another brief silence.

O God, Gardener of the globe, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the occasions when our government has neglected the needs of the people of America and the calls for international cooperation — *a brief silence* — and we pray for President-elect Biden, for Vice President-elect Harris, and for all our elected members of Congress, that they fulfill their obligations to uphold and extend the common good.

Another brief silence.

O God, Shield of the commonwealth, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the uncontrolled rage and the senseless violence that recently defaced our nation — *a brief silence* — and we pray that peace reign in our streets, that our capital cities be safe, that all citizens come to accept the new administration, and that a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation mark the next stage of our national life.

Another brief silence.

O God, Peacemaker in our land, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the decades of ethnic injustices and racial prejudice that brought such suffering to many residents of our country — *a brief silence* — and we pray that you bless the Indigenous peoples, descendants of Africans, and all immigrants to this land, and that you form us into a nation in which all are honored in equal measure.

Another brief silence.

O God, Liberator of the oppressed, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the unspeakable sadness that has been unleashed by the coronavirus here and around the world — *a brief silence* — and we pray that you bring health to the sick, comfort to the dying, resilience to health workers, prompt vaccinations to everyone, and a lasting end to this scourge.

Another brief silence.

O God, Physician and Nurse, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament also our private sorrows and our hidden fears, and we pray that as with the boy Samuel, you speak to us in the night of our need.

A longer period of silence.

O God, Lover of our souls, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

We lament the lives of those who have died, in storms, in riots, and in sickbeds. We praise you especially for the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and those we name here before you. . . .; and we pray that at the end, we join with all the members of your family in your presence.

A brief silence.

O God, eternal Arms of Mercy, hear our cries;

In mercy, receive our prayers.

Into your hands, O loving God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 676), "Send Me, Jesus" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 549/ This Far By Faith 245). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak](#)

[Send Me, Jesus](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God,

Light of the universe, Teacher of truth, Giver of goodness,

we hear your Word in the Scriptures,

proclaiming to us your wisdom

and inviting us to follow your call.

For speaking this Word, we thank you, O God.

We thank you, O God.

Your Word came among us in Jesus, our brother,

who preached your righteousness, healed the sick,

and revived the brokenhearted.

For giving us this Word, we worship you, O God.

We worship you, O God.

By your Spirit bless all who receive this Word,

that upheld by the mystery of the body of Christ,

we may be light for the world,

revealing the brilliance of your Son.

For sustaining us with your Word, we praise you, O God.

We praise you, O God.

Blessed are you, holy God, around us, with us, and in us,

now and forever. Amen.

Amen.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

Offering Prayer

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

Then speak the Blessing:

God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter + keep you in peace.

Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ](#);" "[The Everlasting Light](#);" "[Song of Thanksgiving](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday (Confession of Peter; Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins) Matthew 16:13-19. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Henry, Bishop of Uppsala, martyr, 1156) Acts 5:1-11. **Wednesday** Luke 18:15-17. **Thursday** (commemoration of Agnes, martyr, c. 304) Psalm 62:5-12. **Friday** 2 Peter 3:1-7. **Saturday** Luke 10:13-16. **Third Sunday after Epiphany:** Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

In House Church Services have been cancelled until further notice.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Wings, Steve Murdock, Bob Broberg.

Pastor's Mid-week Message – January 13, 2021

As a society, we are so confused morally that there seems to be no national consensus as to what is right, and what is wrong. And we wonder why our families are falling apart, and why more than one-third of our children are growing up in single family homes. We wonder why young people are sexually active at younger and younger ages. We seem to have a national obsession with unhealthy approaches to sex. Turn on your television, open up national magazines, listen to the latest popular song, and you will find that casual and uncommitted sex is a constant theme.

Now sex is one of God's most beautiful and enjoyable gifts to us. And since it is from God, there is nothing inherently bad about it.

A father was explaining the facts of life to his young daughter. She listened attentively for a while, then said, "Daddy, does God know about this?"

A teenager and his grandfather were talking about the facts of life. The younger man said, "Grandad, your generation didn't have all these social diseases. What did you wear to have safe sex?" The wise old gentleman replied, "A wedding ring."

It grieves me to know that some young people will never know the joy of a special and exclusive sexual relationship with a member of the opposite sex. There is a special joy that comes to two people who have reserved for one another – and only for one another – this very exciting part of their lives. No amount of playing the field can substitute for that. The best oral contraceptive when you are young and unmarried is the word, "No!"

Unfortunately, young people are not the only ones who need to be taught the one man/one woman rule. Some adults need to be reminded of this principle as well.

There was a letter in Ann Landers' column that went like this: "Dear Ann, I have been sleeping with three women for several months. Until a few days ago, none of them knew the others existed, and things were going fine. By chance, two of them met each other, compared notes, and found me out. Now they are furious with me. What am I to do? P.S. Please don't give me any of your moral junk. Signed, Trapped

Ann Landers answered like this: Dear Trapped, The one major thing that separates the human race from animals is a God-given sense of morality. Since you don't have a sense of morality, I strongly suggest you consult a veterinarian."

Now, maybe you think we don't need to discuss this in church. I think we do. Surveys show that attitudes among church members are not that much different from those of the world at large. Sex for many people has become just another recreational tool – not a gift from God for the uniting of one man to one woman for building up of the human family. And the consequences of that former attitude are taking a toll on our society.

The wise old philosopher Pericles stood on the steps of the Parthenon in ancient Greece. He looked down into the valley below on the city of Athens. Then he lifted his eyes to the Mediterranean where, in his imagination, he could see the might and power of the Persian army coming, island by island, toward his beloved city. As he turned once again to look down on Athens in the valley below, he said, "I do not fear the might and power of the Persian army from without, as much as I fear the spiritual and moral decline of our homes from within," Pericles could have been describing our society.

There is no moral or Biblical ground for the person who says, "This is my body, I will do with it as I please." Think about it for a moment. No one says anymore, "This is my environment. I will do with it as I please. If I want to dump toxic wastes, it's my own business." No one says anymore, "This is my workplace. I will harass whomever I please." The wrongness of both positions is self-evident. Why then can we not see through the argument that "This is my body; I will use it however I

choose?" No, your body is a gift from God. It is to be treated with respect. As a follower of Jesus, you are to honor God with your body. Your body is a vessel through which you offer God praise. It is to be kept pure and wholesome as a fit dwelling which is Divine.

P.S. This message is inspired by the Epistle reading for Sunday, January 17th; First Corinthians 6:12-20.