

Morning Prayer 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

The Second Sunday in Epiphany

Morning Worship with William Teale



Personal preparation before the service begins.  
Please take time to remember where you are,  
and why you are here.  
Give thanks and become still  
in the presence of God

Prelude

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with us.  
This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Let us listen to words from Psalm 139

ACF96: O God, you search me and you know me  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JPGY1w-674>

O - God, you search me, and you know me  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze  
When I walk or lie down, you are before me  
Ever~the maker and keeper of my days

You - know my resting and my rising  
You discern my purpose from afar  
And with love everlasting, you besiege me  
In~ev'ry moment of life or death, you are

Be - fore a word is on my tongue, Lord  
You have known its meaning through and through  
You are with me beyond my understanding  
God~of~my present, my past and future, too

Al - though your spirit is upon me  
Still I search for shelter from your light  
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you  
Even~the darkness is radiant in your sight

For - you created me and shaped me  
Gave me life within my mother's womb  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you  
Safe~in~your hands, all creation is made new

Bernadette Farrell  
CCLI: 80099

The Collect for today, the Second Sunday of Epiphany

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of  
your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

SoF 42: Be thou my vision

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfatlYTTkJ8>

Be thou my\_\_ vision, O\_\_ Lord of my heart  
Be\_\_ all else but naught to me, save that thou art  
Be thou my\_\_ best\_\_ thought in the day and the night  
Both waking and slee\_\_ping, thy\_\_ presence my light.

Be thou my\_\_ wisdom, and\_\_ thou my true word  
Be\_\_ thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord  
Be thou my\_\_ great\_\_ Father, and I thy true son  
Be thou in me dwe\_\_lling and\_\_ I with thee one.

Riches I\_\_ need not, nor\_\_ man's empty praise  
Be\_\_ thou mine inheritance, now and always  
Be thou and\_\_ thou\_\_ only the first in my heart

Sovereign of hea\_\_ven, my\_\_ treasure thou art.

High King of\_\_ heaven, thou\_\_ heaven's bright sun  
O\_\_ grant me its joys, after vict'ry is won  
Great heart of\_\_ my\_\_ own heart, whatever befall  
Still be thou my vi\_\_sion, O\_\_ ruler of all.

CCLI: 7056332

The reading is taken from 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God  
**Our hearts and our minds are open**

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli.  
In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were  
not many visions.

One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that  
he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place.  
The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel  
was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark  
of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and  
said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So  
he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up  
and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of  
the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got  
up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called  
me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So  
Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you,  
say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So  
Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Homily

As some of you may know, I am not a vicar. Neither am I a lay minister or even half the time a particularly good Christian. I am standing before you this morning as a fellow congregant, but one who has been asked to say a few encouraging words. When doctors start their careers, they are given a simple mantra that is very effective at guiding them through their decisions: „do no harm“. And that is my rather modest goal today: not to put any of you off church for life. My other goal is to give you any little encouragement that I can through this interregnum time. As Christians, we are called to encourage each other, and I find today's reading to be a very encouraging one. It features God speaking to a boy who mishears his voice and mistakes Him for someone else.

But my relationship with this story is a mixed one. I remember very clearly a Sunday school talk about the nature of our relationship with God which may well have been based on this passage. At the time, I was probably about the age Samuel was in the story. The point of this particular talk was that prayer is too often like writing a postcard to God, a wish-list of things we would like to happen. This is all wrong, said my teacher.

Prayer should be more like a telephone call with both sides listening and speaking to each other. Like an evolving and intimate conversation with a loved one. A time of hearing God's voice and understanding His intentions and plans.

The talk certainly stuck with me, and here I am, thirty five years later in church standing in front of you all; so why do I have mixed feelings? Well, simply

because the telephone call was not my own personal experience of prayer. At the time, prayer still felt to me much more like a postcard. Even now, I find hearing God's voice (and even listening for His voice) to be very difficult. Sometimes if I am still and have no distractions, and can concentrate I get a sense of something beyond my experience, something very difficult to define, I have heard such a sense compared to the thinnest wisp of smoke, there and suddenly no longer there. Whatever my personal experience of God, however, it is safe to say that prayer for me is still certainly nothing like a phone call.

So why am I so encouraged by this passage? Because it tells us that God is persistent, He is resolute. It tells us of a Holy voice which keeps calling out, even when we don't listen or when we mishear – even when we go straight to voicemail. Of a call which comes from an unexpected place, a call which may even be unrecognizable to many of us. And yet here we all are, still listening. His voice has led us here, somehow. To a community which keeps looking for His grace. And for that I am very, very grateful.

ACF66: I, the Lord of sea and sky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcXOkht8w7c>

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people's cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save (pause)  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord, is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me  
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them.

They turn away. (pause)  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord, is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me  
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save. (pause)  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord, is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me  
I will hold your people in my heart.

Daniel L. Schutte  
CCLI: 522161

## Intercessions

Lord -- 2021 so far does not look like a new year. I am pretty sure it is just an extension of the old one. It will be months before we can meet again. It will be months before some of our congregation who are battling murderous diseases will be reunited with us. It will be months before we can store away the facemasks for the next pandemic. Help us remain steadfast in our resolution to trust in you

Some things, however, will be over soon -- three more days! --- Mind you, there are millions of people who would have loved four more years. Or even eight more years. The recent events in Washington, and in fact the last four years can serve as a reminder that our political system is not as stable as we would like it to be. We





## The Blessing

The Lord bless us and watch over us,  
the Lord make his face shine upon us  
and be gracious to us,  
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace;  
and the blessing  
of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us now and always.

**Amen.**

## The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

SoF 361: Lord, the light of your love (shine, Jesus,  
shine)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTIGVlcHsFE>

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth your word  
Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to your awesome presence  
From the shadows into your radiance

By the blood I may enter your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness  
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth your word  
Lord, and let there be light

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
So our faces display your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story  
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth your word  
Lord, and let there be light