

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Sunday, January 17, 2021 Epiphany Two

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	David Paradis	

SUNDAY JANUARY 17, 2021
Epiphany Two Morning Prayer

10:00 a.m.

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Officiant: Lord, open our lips,
People: **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**
Officiant: O God, make speed to save us.
People: **O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**
All: **Alleluia!**

To us a child is born: O come, let us worship.

Venite

Psalm 95.1–7

Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also. The sea is his for he made it, and his hands have moulded the dry land. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

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

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

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

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

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

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

I try to count them -- they are more than the sand; I come to the end -- I am still with you.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL (3:1-20)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the 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.

Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and 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. The 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." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The 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. Therefore, 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.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then 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.

On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For 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. Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." Eli said, "What was it that he 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 he told you."

So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him." As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

A READING FROM FIRST BOOK OF CORINTHIANS (1cor: 6:12-20)

"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. "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. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or 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? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO JOHN 1:43-51

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip 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." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And 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."

The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

SERMON

God of Hope

Samuel was the first son of a very devoted couple Elkanah and Hannah. Hannah struggled to have children and in desperation, she bargains with God that if she had a son she would commit him in service at the Tabernacle in Shiloh. She eventually gives birth to Samuel, "heard of God", and brings him to live with Eli the priest in Shiloh once he is weaned.

While Hannah gives Samuel new robes for his role in the worshipping life of the Tabernacle, he is primarily raised by the elderly priest Eli. Eli's own two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, have abused their position of

privilege at the Tabernacle. Their reputation is so bad that a prophet comes to tell Eli that his sons are to be the last in the line of his family to serve as priests.

In contrast God appears to the boy Samuel in a voice that repeats his name. He repeatedly thinks it is Eli, but Eli eventually cottons on that this might be God so he encourages Samuel to say “Speak, for your servant is listening” next time he hears the voice. What we then have is the confirmation of the loss of the priestly role of Eli’s sons and the calling of Samuel to fulfill this role.

In fact Samuel becomes a type or picture of Christ in his service. He faithfully leads the people of Israel as the last judge and anoints the first two kings, Saul and David, of the People of Israel. He becomes the backbone of the faith during a period of incredible transformation that leads up to the great prosperity and stability of the reign of Solomon.

In essence, Eli’s bad news of the neglect of faith is turned into the good news of faith as God works around the given norms of Eli’s day in order to bring a new message of hope to these people. In choosing Samuel, God demonstrates God’s ability to create hope in a situation of loss.

In the time of Jesus it was an incredibly rigorous process to become a disciple of a rabbi. First boys would be required to memorize the first five book of the Bible, the Books of Moses, as part of their basic education. Then the cream of those boys would be encouraged to memorize the remainder of the Hebrew Scriptures. Then a very small handful would then seek out a rabbi and, if they proved themselves good enough, they would be called to be a disciple. In reality, the vast majority of boys would get through the first process and then enter a family trade or business, much like Simon and Andrew or Philip and Nathanael who went to work with their respective fathers in the fishing industry.

Jesus first encounters Philip and calls him to become a disciple. Philip, now so enthusiastic about this rabbi called Jesus who calls the relatively unlearned to become his disciples, introduces him to his brother Nathanael. Now these fishermen are from Bethsaida - literally “houses of nets” – a really rough small fishing town on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. It is so rough and ungodly that Mathew (11:21) records Jesus cursing it for its wickedness and Christ is so disparaging of it that he suggests that there is more faith in the Gentile seaside towns of Tire and Sidon than there is in Bethsaida.

What now follows in John’s Gospel is an interaction between Jesus and Nathanael that we could read in a number of ways. One option is to read it as a very humorous interchange that plays on the rivalry between these two slum towns, one rural and one coastal, of Nazareth and Bethsaida. Another would be to see it as a true affirmation of Nathaniel’s strong religious conviction and knowledge, possibly as one shunned from being called as a disciple in spite of his incredible knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. So we might assume that when Nathanael hears that this rabbi called Jesus is from the rural slum called Nazareth he sees it as being even more despicable than his hometown of Bethsaida. We might then assume that Jesus’ response to him “Here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” is a humorous rebuttal to Nathanael’s prejudice.

Another way of reading this interchange is to see Nathanael as a man who desired to be called a disciple of a rabbi but was turned down. He has a good understanding of the prophetic idea that the Messiah was to be from the city of David – Bethlehem – and that Philip’s assertion that Jesus was from Nazareth did not match his knowledge of the Scriptures. Jesus response to him is not a rebuttal, but an affirmation of his desire to follow the true Messiah – the one who is to be the fulfillment of the hope of Israel.

God, yet again, sidesteps the given order of things to continue to reach out to humanity in new ways. As God sidestepped the priestly class in calling Samuel, Jesus sidesteps the usual rabbinic process in order to call the “uneducated” from the rural and industrial slums of his day to proclaim the Good News that God is at work in our world. That God has not missed these folk even if they might feel neglected.

God is actively at work constantly extending the reach of the Kingdom of God to new communities at the margins of society. For in Christ not only does God extend that Kingdom to these uneducated men, but to women and children who are at the very bottom of the social heap. And then, through them, to those outside the faith namely the Gentiles of Epiphany. God is constantly finding new ways to increase the circle in a way that affirms the understanding that God knows us and calls us afresh in new ways.

Pray God that when we feel isolated and wonder if God is at work around us, that we may see that God is constantly working in unexpected ways, even if it means sidestepping the obvious and given way of doing things and working around what we might have thought was the solution. And when we might feel we are on the very margins of what God might be interested in doing, that we may realize that God constantly extends God's compassion and grace to those who are marginalized.

People: **Amen**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - THE APOSTLES' CREED

All: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Litany 13 Incarnation

Officiant: In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe, saying, "Lord, grant us peace." By the good news of our salvation brought to Mary by the angel, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: By the mystery of the Word made flesh, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: By the birth in time of the timeless Son of God, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: By the manifestation of the King of glory to the shepherds and magi, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: By the submission of the maker of the world to Mary and Joseph of Nazareth, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan, hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

Officiant: Grant that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; hear us, O Lord.

People: **Lord, grant us peace.**

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People: **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.**

DISMISSAL

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

NOTICES

Blessing

Officiant: The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and grant us peace.

People: **Amen.**

Assisting Father Simon Bell today:

Officiant/Preacher: Fr. Simon
Video: David Paradis
Music: Gayle Haley

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Sean; Brian W.; Jenn Reid; Kevin H.; Diane M.; Cecilia Mowat; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Sophia L; Marianne S.; Amanda Stewart; Kathryn; Kadeem Broomes; Anna Sellers; Marty; Brenda & Brian.

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Brenda Jesse; Jen Galicinski; Sheri Scott; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Stephanie; Fr. Murray; Amy P. & Family; Marg Abbott; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jordan; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Donna Wilson; Garn Mennell; Margaret & Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Jim Tomkins; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Martin & Stephen Bertelsen; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe (Ireland) and Spokane (USA)

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Bishop's Committee on Discipleship.