



Written Service Sunday 21st January 2024.

A service of worship for use at home

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Epiphany 3 - 'Called to shine'

Charity number 1134226

Call to worship

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" *Matthew Ch 5 vs 16.*

Introduction

In the calendar of the Christian year, we find ourselves in the season of Epiphany. Epiphany meaning 'manifestation of Christ to the world.' I read that the ancient root of the word translates as 'to shine,' Our lectionary gospel reading for today is the call of the disciples. We, in our turn, are called 'to shine' reflecting God's love.

Hymn Shine Jesus shine StF 59

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 ...

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 ...

Graham Kendrick

Prayers

A prayer of thanks and praise

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
We praise you and give you glory:
We bless you for calling us to be your holy people.
Remain in our hearts,
And guide us in our love and service.
Help us to let our light shine before others
And lead them to the way of faith.
For God has made us his people, his Church,
And calls us to sing his praises.

All honour and glory and thanks are his,
And praise and worship belong to him.
To God be glory in his Church
For ever and ever!
Amen¹

A prayer for the week of Christian Unity (18th – 25th January 2024)

Empower your Church, O Lord, to remain faithful in steadfast purpose,
And to keep your commandments whole-heartedly.
We have come to know and believe the love that you have lavished upon us.
Through the gift of your Spirit, abide with us all and perfect your love in us,
That we might eagerly love one another in word and deed.
May the life of your Church of all denominations reveal you in this world,
Proclaiming through faithful witness that Jesus has triumphed! Jesus is exalted! Lord Jesus, who
prayed that all might be one, we pray to you for the unity of all Christians, according to your will,
according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Tender God, we have been caught in the nets of our own lives,
living in the small boats of our own ways, our own fears and desires.
We confess that we have become entangled.
In our fear and hurt we have hurt you and others.
We have not brought forth life as you have called us to do.
We confess our self-centeredness and ask your forgiveness.
Call us out of our lives into yours.
Help us let go of all that holds us back, all that traps and entangles us.
Set us free by your grace, free to follow you and serve you all our days. **Amen.**

The Lord's prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Reading: Jonah Ch3 vs 1 -5, 10

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

¹ catholic.org/prayers

Gospel Reading: Mark Ch1 vs 14 – 20

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Word for Today

Any ‘Whovians’ out there, (that is followers of the BBC Dr Who series)? Can’t say I am a particular devotee but there are some folk who take it to extremes and get a lot of fun from it. , a New Doctor has just metamorphosed. I do however remember watching many years ago when it first burst on to our TV screens in 1963, because I am old! In episode one of series one the Doctor invites a girl named Rose to be his traveling companion after a minor adventure. She asks him, “Is it always this dangerous?” and The Doctor replies, “Yes.” She makes excuses and declines his offer. The Doctor steps into the police box, and as it fades away making a distinctive sound, Rose walks away with her boyfriend. Suddenly, they hear it come back. The Doctor peeks his head out and says, “By the way, did I mention, it also travels in time?” and leaves the door open. Rose doesn’t hesitate but runs to the open door... to a new, unexplored unknown life.

In our Gospel account today, Jesus comes across the four fishermen. An unexpected encounter and an ‘out of the blue’ invitation to follow him. Mark doesn’t mention if the fishermen had ever heard of Jesus—this was their first encounter. God broke into their ordinary world in an extraordinary way through Jesus’ call and that call demanded a response. These four were established fishermen, they had a trade and maybe a little education. They were nobodies to the aristocracy of the time, but so were 99% of the people. They weren’t on the margins. Simon Peter was married and his family home in Capernaum later became a centre for ‘Operation: Good News.’ James and John were part of their family’s successful fishing business that actually had hired workers. These were not starry-eyed youth, but grown men who were established members of their society. This decision to follow Jesus placed a burden on all their families in one way or another. And yet, they did it. Would we? Do we? They presumably must have known following an itinerant preacher would be dangerous or at least a precarious life away from their relatively comfortable life at home. Yet they followed into the unknown. Where in our lives are we asking God, “Isn’t this dangerous?” Where in our lives is God waiting for us to discover the joy in living dangerously? The door is open and God’s hand is extended. Will we follow?

So often, we want to be like Jonah from our Old Testament lesson today. We hear God’s call and we turn the other way and run, not walk, as far as we can go. We don’t want to disrupt things, especially things that we’ve worked so hard for. We hear other voices saying that we can’t make a difference, so we just need to make do—and we end up with Jonah in the belly of a great fish, out of touch with God and out of touch with our meaning and purpose that God has for us. To “repent and believe in the good news,” as Jesus asks us in our Gospel lesson, means that we must turn to God and turn away from all the voices calling us to walk some other path. It may of course be unknown or even dangerous, as Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 8 verses 10 – 22 there is a cost

of following Him ...”Foxes have their holes and birds their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” v20..We may not need to wander around following Jesus as an itinerant preacher, as the disciples did and we certainly won’t need to get into a police box and fly off through time and space, but we are called to ‘shine like the stars’ reflecting God’s love and Jesus’s message of love and peace we are called to follow is radical and who knows where it will lead us into the unknown?

Hymn Will you come and follow me? 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

Prayers of Intercession²

God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands.
You are closer to us than the air we breathe.
Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light.
Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world.
Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light inside ourselves. Renew in us a sense of joy, painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation.
Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed.

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of power and might, your broken world cries out from the depths,
a world dominated by the darkness of war, terror, pain and suffering.
We think of the on-going and deepening conflict around the world.
We share the pain and anguish of those who have had to flee from their homes,
countries and livelihoods, who risk their lives,
desperate for a new start free from fear and war.
May they see your light, feel your strength and power

² Adapted from: worshipwords.co.uk/prayers-for-our-world-intercessions-katherine-baxter-uk

and know the truth of your promise
that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life
or the darkness of human nature.

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of compassion and grace, we share with you our love and concern
for people in a dark place today.

We have on our hearts the friends and loved ones of the victims of violence and hatred.
We pray that they will find your strength in the compassion and love of those around them.
We pray for tolerance in our society.
Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering.

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of life, we ask for your healing power on those who are enduring pain and illness.
We especially think ofall those we name quietly in our
hearts.....

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine**

We share the grief of people, who have recently lost loved ones. We especially think of
.....

We know your everlasting light shines with us in moments of great sadness and great joy.

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of love and hope,
Renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you.
Help us to be aware of your presence each and every day.
Abide in us and make us instruments of love and praise.
May our words, actions and lives be shining living examples
of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love.
Amen.

Hymn Jesus call us! O'er the tumult StF 250

1 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
saying, "Christian, follow me."
Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more."

2 In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still He calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these."
Jesus calls us- by Thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear Thy call;
give our hearts to Thine obedience,
serve and love Thee best of all.

Cecil Frances Alexander

Blessing

May the beauty of God be reflected in your eyes,
May the love of God be reflected in your hands,
May the wisdom of God be reflected in your words,
and the knowledge of God flow from your heart,
that all might see, and seeing, believe **Amen.**