

Epiphany 2 - Sunday 17th January

With Spiritual Communion

*(you may like to have a small piece of bread
ready for this service)*

Opening - *Contemporary Carol - Recorded by the Musicians
of Holy Trinity Platt Church (Soloist: Katie Ritson)*

Light of the world

You stepped down into darkness

Opened my eyes, let me see

Beauty that made this heart adore you

Hope of a life spent with you

So here I am to worship

Here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that you're my God

You're altogether lovely

Altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days

Oh so highly exalted

Glorious in heaven above

Humbly you came to the earth you created

All for love's sake became poor

Here I am to worship

Here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that you're my God

You're altogether lovely

Altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me - repeat this chorus

And I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross

And I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross

Here I am to worship

Here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that you're my God

You're altogether lovely

Altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me

Chris Tomlin

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Penitential Rite

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us
to purify a people as his own.

Let us confess our sins. cf Titus 2.

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw *us* to himself, and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins,
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.****

Collect 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**

1st Reading: Revelation 5:1-10 New International Version
The Scroll and the Lamb

5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. **2** And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" **3** But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. **4** I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. **5** Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." **6** Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. **7** He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. **8** And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. **9** And they sang a new song, saying:
"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and
nation.

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to
serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Response:

There is a redeemer
Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One

Jesus my redeemer
Name above all names
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Oh, for sinners slain

Thank you, oh my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

When I stand in Glory
I will see His face
And there I'll serve my King forever
In that Holy Place

Thank you, oh my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world. *cf 1 Timothy 3.16*

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

John 1:43-51(NIV) Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. **45** Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." **51** He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon - Revd Andrew Goodman

I was talking to some students about this passage, and one said, 'It's difficult to understand'. Do you think so? It seems a straightforward 'Call' story until you get to where Jesus says '*Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false.*' Then what happens is a 'power encounter' with Jesus for Nathaniel - Jesus says he 'saw' him under the fig tree before Philip. There's no way Jesus would have known Nathaniel was sitting under a fig tree without him seeing supernaturally. That's enough to trigger Nathaniel into declaring 'Rabbi you are the Son of God.'

Encounters with Jesus in John's gospel have symbolic meanings. Dig deeper with me.

First, the image of the fig tree. The golden age for Israel was in the time of King Solomon the wise and the great. And in his time, it tells in 1 Kings 4:25 that everyone '*lived in safety, each under his own fig tree and vine.*' The prophets Micah and Zechariah both refer to this as a sign of the coming future kingdom of peace and justice in which the rule of God is established. Micah 4:4 says:

Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid,' If you look just before, it's that famous passage:

*They will beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.*

*Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.*

So the Fig tree is a picture of Israel the nation as it should be in the reign of God. And Zechariah 3:10 confirms it:

"I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

'In that day each of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

So to Nathaniel, when Jesus says 'I saw you sitting under a *fig tree*,' he says it in a way that actually communicates - 'You're a real Israelite, AND I saw you under a fig tree...' - linking the two. Nathaniel would likely recognise that Jesus is promising his dreams for himself *and* his nation are going to be fulfilled.

Second, if that's the case, then Jesus emphasises it when he takes Nathaniel back to a different image: *Jacob's Ladder*.

Jacob was a trickster who stole his brother Esau's birthright, but was transformed by his encounter with God when he was on the run, wrestled with God all night, and then saw a vision of heaven open and the angels going up and down - Jacob's ladder. Jacob received a new name, Israel. Really Jesus was indicating, 'look, don't think you're going to see one or two remarkable acts of insight, such as you witnessed when I showed you that I knew about you before I saw you. What you'll see from now on is the reality towards which Jacob's Ladder, and even the Temple itself, is pointing, like a signpost. If you follow me, you'll be watching what it looks like when heaven and earth are open to each other. The fulfillment of the presence of God and his kingdom in Me.'

There's a lot to think about, but I'd like to suggest that the spiritual holy communion we are about to celebrate together is a kind of Jacob's ladder - the curtain between heaven and

earth opened up for us for a while in Jesus, by faith. And like the promise of the Fig Tree, that our dreams for our purpose will be fulfilled and are being fulfilled in the Kingdom of God, and what's more, they'll happen fully in the end. Be inspired, be expectant! Amen

Response:

A Spiritual Communion

This is the Lord's table.

The Lord Jesus invites us to share this joyful feast.

**From east and west, from north and south,
people will come and take their places
at the banquet in the kingdom of God.**

(Luke 13:29). Common Order

As we break our bread together and apart this morning we look forward with hope to the time again soon - when as his people we may share with joy and thanksgiving in our family meal, our holy communion - one bread and one cup.

(we suggest taking half / some of your piece of bread yourself - and feeding the rest to the birds - 'missing one another' until that time when we can celebrate communion together in our churches)

I eat this (*unconsecrated*) bread as a sign that I am asking you to come again into my heart.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,

for all the benefits you have given me,

for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

I ask you to come spiritually into my heart...

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

(pause to eat your bread)

Post spiritual-communion prayer.

**Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have
sung your praise be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love
shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with your body
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you for ever. Amen.**

Our Declaration of Faith in Epiphany Season

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.**

And we have seen his glory,
**the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth. *from John 1***

Intercessions: Mr Stephen Lines - St Michael's, Shefford.

Father, we rejoice in our fellowship
with the shepherds, the angels, the magi,
the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph
and all the faithful departed.

In your unfailing love for us and for all people, hear and answer
our prayers through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Lord of Glory. Hear our prayer

Healing God,

Your son Jesus brought healing, hope and the joy of salvation to
a brutal, oppressive and unhealthy world.

Covid 19 is stalking our world today bringing fear, death, long-
term health issues and hardship.

Yet, once again you are bringing us healing and hope – new
treatments to improve survivability, and safe and effective
vaccines. The energy and speed with which these were
researched, developed, tested and made available gives us hope
for a safer future, whatever it brings.

We thank and praise you Lord.

Lord of Glory. Hear our prayer

The kingdoms of this world, every tribe, language, people and
nation have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:
Father, we ask you to grant **an abundance of peace** to your
world.

Lord of Glory. Hear our prayer.

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death:
Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless, and all
who suffer without hope...

Lord of Glory. **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth:
Father, protect in your love our neighbours,
our families and this community.

Lord of Glory. **Hear our prayer.**

We bring before you silently, from our hearts, the names of
those that we personally know to be in need of your healing,
your love and your peace...

Lord of Glory. **Hear our prayer.**

And finally Lord, we bring before you silently, from our hearts,
the names of those we knew and loved, but whose time on earth
has ended. Wrap them in your loving arms Lord and welcome
them triumphantly into your heavenly kingdom...

Lord of Glory. **Hear our prayer.**

**Merciful Father accept all our prayers
For the sake of your Son
Our Saviour Jesus Christ - Amen**

Let's pray together the prayer that 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.

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.
Notices and Birthdays**

The BLESSING

Christ the Son of God
perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts
with the good news of his kingdom;
and the blessing ...

Final Hymn -

**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 & Graham Maule

Heading Out Prayer

As we go may we proclaim

To a troubled world,
peace from Christ.

To a searching world,
love from Christ.

To a waiting world,
hope from Christ

In the power of the Spirit,

And to the glory of God the Father Amen

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“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

Write your own acrostic about lots of good things - each one beginning with a letter from the word Nazareth!

N

A

Z

A

R

E

T

H



“All good things around us are sent from heaven above...”

Write your own Thank You Prayer to say thank you to God for your favourite things.



He Knows You by Name



"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." John 1:48 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on John 1:43-51

Z R N F W P Z Q Y T D X V K P
N D L T N K D X Z G D V E J J
J E S U S I N L J A R A B B I
A H I L C Q S O I L E Q B F N
T L X Z O S F R W I N W L S A
Y S S L M N B B A L S K J D Z
S F Q P E A F P S E V P E K A
U H J H M T T R E E L L K O R
T S Z I A H K A F O L L O W E
Q R N L Y A T N K A I K O X T
J O Q I U N G D C J Z R I D H
G I H P X A Q R D B E E I N M
H E R J C E S E Z T T A R R G
L F J G R L A W E F Q P F B O
P L R S M A O P L U K X A K F

KNOW
ANDREW
JESUS

FOLLOW
ISRAEL
RABBI

PETER
CALLED
COME

PHILIP
NATHANAEL
TREE

GALILEE
NAZARETH
KING