



# ST JAMES' CHURCH, ISLINGTON N1 8PH

17 January 2021 EPIPHANY 2 Year B 21/3

Welcomers: Lockdown: Service of the Word  
 Readers: Matt J-Baptiste; Rosemary Ross  
 Interceder: Isabel Nisbet  
 Cantor: Ros Ford  
 AV editor: Adam Dickson  
 Hymns:  
 CAHON346 Jesus calls us here  
 AM669 I heard the voice  
 TP158 What do you want of me, Lord?  
 AM748 O Jesus, I have promised

**Collect: Almighty God, from our earliest days you have called us by name and made us the friends of Jesus. Grant that, filled with his Spirit, we may grow in faith and draw others to be his disciples; for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**



ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH, LINTON STREET, c. 1905

St. Philip's was built in 1855. The following year a church school was built behind the church (you can see the school bell on the roof in this photograph); it was taken over by the School Board of London from 1901 to 1911, and then became a church hall. The church was closed in 1953 and has been demolished, and the vicarage to the right of the church has been converted into flats.

**ST PHILIP** features in our readings today and this reminded me there was once a St Philip's Church in our neighbourhood - on the corner of Arlington Square and Linton Street. Built in 1855 it was destroyed by fire in 1953 and all that remains is the Vicarage (to the right of the picture and no longer just flats!) and St Philip's Way. The conversation we hear in today's Gospel could take us in a whole series of different directions not least because the focus soon turns away from Philip to a much deeper conversation between Philip's friend Nathaniel and Jesus himself. The news that Andrew had brought to Peter and which Philip passes on here, is rather quickly dismissed by the rather more intellectual Nathaniel who had been meditating under a fig tree. *Can any good come out of Nazareth?* he says rather sourly. But when Jesus is there, suddenly Nathaniel is all ears: Jesus praises him as being someone who is honest and true and yet they had never met before. Somehow, the penny drops for Nathaniel and he repeats what Philip had told him but as a statement of faith. Perhaps we shouldn't forget St Philip too quickly...

*St James' Islington: discovering how to live like Jesus in the 21st century*

**BACK ON LINE** Huge thanks to Sinead who was able to get the elements of last week's virtual service into place in time for release at 10am on Sunday. If you wanted to know why you couldn't see any light coming through the stained glass it was because we were recording at 7.30am and the sun hadn't yet risen! Two more weeks of this present pattern and then we will see whether it is better to use the new webcams for a live production or whether we continue to record your pre-recorded clips as at present. Again many thanks to those wrestling with unfamiliar technology!

**JOE AMMOUN** We are all aware of just how disruptive Coronavirus has been to our students - both those at school and those at College and University. The experience of learning with others is so fundamental that we tend to take it for granted, until that possibility is taken away. This is also the case for Joe Ammoun who is a student for the priesthood, studying at Oak Hill in Finchley and currently on a secondary placement here at St James'. Joe led the Crib Service/Christingle on Christmas Eve and was due to preach, live, for us here next Sunday. Sadly that is no longer possible and so he will record his sermon for inclusion into the Service of the Word for Christian Unity Week. I hope you will feel able to feed some ideas back to me to pass on to him afterwards and that we can invite him back when the Church is open again.

### THIS WEEK

Sun **EPIPHANY 2 Church services suspended until further notice.**  
 Mon 7.30pm PCC meeting by zoom.  
 Tues 8am-10pm Use of the Church for filming. Church closed.  
 Wed 8am-10pm Use of the Church for filming. Church closed. 11am Joe Ammoun seminar day. 6pm Grace Church, Alvin, Texas: zoom prayers.  
 Sun 24 **UNITY WEEK Church services suspended until further notice.**

**ISLINGTON GAZETTE** I am expecting a feature on how the Church copes in a pandemic in this week's edition. There should be some photographs of the Church in there too!

### Calendar and Daily Prayer themes

Sun 17 **EPIPHANY 2** Lisa and Sonny Follet; Wendy Fisher-Gordon; Maria Flavius  
 Mon 18 **DEL Epiphany 2** Ros, Chris, Beatrix and Sebastian Ford  
 Tues 19 **St Wulfstan** Clem, Pierre, Alex and Emma Friry  
 Wed 20 **Feria** Nick, Felicity and Eleanor Fryer; Mark and Shireen Gilbert  
 Thurs 21 **Feria** Luke, Kika, Parker Gillman; Mostyn, Nieve, Ilaria. Arlo Goodwin  
 Fri 22 **Feria** Karensa and Amariah Greenaway; Lucy Haire and Sam Lewis  
 Sat 23 **Feria** Mark and Norah Hodge; Rebecca, Rob, Evelyn and Alice Holthom  
 Sun 24 **UNITY WEEK** Alastair and Diane Hume; Kris Hyde

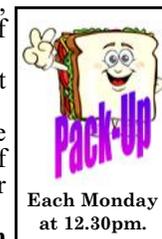
### PRAYER BOARD/NOTICES Requests for prayer welcome

- BIRTHDAYS** Many Happy Returns on Tuesday to Beatrix Ford who will be 8 and on Friday to Chris Wright.
- SICK** Christopher Browne, Mariolina and Peter Freeth, Emily Grainger, Alastair and Diane Hume, Kris Hyde, Hayley Jenkins, John, Kingsley Lewis, John Scott, Charlie Sharpe, Vera Taggart, Lyn Thompson, Geoff Turner and Melanie Toogood.
- ANNIVERSARIES** Today: Joan Williams (2011); 20th: David Lee, priest (1993); 22nd: Caroline Yeats (2020).
- INTERNATIONAL CHURCH LINKS** In the US: Suzanne Smith, Rector of Grace Church, Alvin, Texas. Suzanne's husband Travis is Rector of Holy Comforter, Angleton, 14 miles away. In Japan: Fr Sebastian and Yuki Naniwa serving in Ehime near Hiroshima.
- PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE** Our prayers continue for **Nazanin Zaghari Radcliffe** in the hope that some kind of formula can allow her to return to the UK as soon as possible.



Streamed services on Facebook

You do not need to have your own Facebook account to be able to access our streamed services on the St James' Islington Facebook page.



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# SERVICE OF THE WORD

for Epiphany 2  
Sunday January 17th 2021.

as streamed from  
St James' Church  
Islington N1

## SERVICE OF THE WORD FOR EPIPHANY 2

Entry Hymn: **AM450 Jesus calls us here** [t AM194 Lux Eoi]

*Jesus calls us here to meet him  
as through word and song and prayer,  
we affirm God's promised presence  
where his people live and care.  
Tell his holy human story;  
tell his tales that all may hear;  
tell the world that Christ in glory  
came to earth to meet us here.*

*Jesus calls us to confess him  
Word of life and Lord of all,  
sharer of our flesh and frailness  
saving all who fail or fall.  
Join the hand of friend and stranger;  
join the hands of age and youth;  
join the faithful and the doubter  
in their common search for truth.*

(Words: John Bell and Graham Maule)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Peace be with you.

Welcome to St James' Church, Islington, for this Service of the Word for the second Sunday of Epiphany.

One of the many losses brought about by this pandemic is not being able to meet up with people, where and when we want. This week the rule on social distancing have been tightened yet further - not just in the insistence about wearing masks in the supermarket but in much tougher rules about who you can meet and where - whether on a bicycle or just on foot.

Yet the Christian message is rooted, especially at this time of the year, in God's plans to find ways to meet with us in ways that will make a difference. If Christmas is about the incarnation, the child come down from heaven, then Epiphany asks us to think what happens when Jesus joins with the others at the River Jordan for baptism and when Jesus turns water into wine at Cana - and also when, in today's Gospel the apostles Andrew and Peter, and then Philip and Nathaniel, are at that tipping point, when they are on the brink of discovering that Jesus isn't just a great teacher and preacher but the one, true, Son of Man.

Which takes us into some interesting places and to this question: how did it happen to each of us that we discovered that Jesus was more than just 'a name' trotted out by Church people? When did he call us?

But before we begin, let us call to mind the presence of God - wherever we are - thanking him for all that he has given us this week; thanking him too for the fellowship of the Church which links us not just with other members of St James' but also with our fellow Christians around the world, starting with the Collect for the 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

### Collect

**Almighty God, from our earliest days you have called us by name and made us the friends of Jesus. Grant that, filled with his Spirit, we may grow in faith and draw others to be his disciples; for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

### The Word of God

*1st Reading:* (1 Samuel 3: 1-10) 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.'

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

*2nd Hymn:* **AM669 I heard the voice**

[t Kingsfold]

*I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.*

*I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life, I'll walk till travelling days are done.*

(Words: Horatius Bonar)

*2nd Reading:* (Romans 8: 28-32, 38-39) We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

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

*We know that everything works for good for those who are called according to his purpose. What does that mean, in ordinary English?!*

Surely what St Paul is saying is that God is calling his people - all the time! And Paul should know.

Six times in the Book of Acts he tells the same story, of how he was going to Damascus to arrest yet more Christians when he is thrown off his horse onto the road, completely disorientated and unable to see anything. And what happens next? He hears the voice of Jesus - who he had never met by the way, so we don't quite know how he knew it was Jesus - and Jesus is asking him a straight question: *why are you persecuting me?*

Which must have been the last thing Paul was expecting to hear, a senior government official with a mandate to arrest as many Christians as he could find!

In our Gospel today we have something equally weird, the scholarly Nathaniel being spoken to by Jesus - as if they knew one another ...

### Gospel Acclamation

**Alleluia. Alleluia. Speak Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia.**

### Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

(St John 1: 43-end) 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 towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come 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.'

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

*Musical Interlude: Come, my way, my Truth, my life. R Vaughan Williams.*

*Come, my way, my Truth, my Life:  
such a way as gives me breath;  
such a truth as ends all strife;  
such a life that conquers death*

*Come, my light, my Feast, my strength:  
such a light as shows a feast;  
such a feast as mends in length:  
such a strength as makes a guest.*

*Come, my joy, my love, my heart:  
such a joy as none can move;  
such a love as none can part;  
such a heart as joys in love.*

(Words: George Herbert)

Being spoken to by God: wow! But isn't that a bit presumptuous? Isn't that just for the likes of Samuel and St Paul or one of the apostles? Surely that isn't something that happens to ordinary people like us; or even to saints if we are to believe Mother Teresa of Calcutta who wrote in her daily diary of how her heart ached throughout her life because she felt she never heard the voice of God?

In fact aren't these stories of ordinary mortals being spoken to by God in the Bible a bit dangerous? Mightn't they lead us to have expectations that we too should hear the voice of God at various times in our lives, especially when the going has got particularly difficult? Because, let's face it, it would be so much easier if we could rely on getting a special word from the Lord when life has got too much for us and we have completely run out of steam. How good it would be if we could guarantee that he was on our side. Didn't Jesus say to Nathaniel: *don't be too impressed that I knew you: you will see far greater sights than this - heaven will be opened for you and you will see me with the angels and saints!*

And more than a bit of us might well say, but what about me too? Can't I have an experience like that?

I remember being on holiday in France - something that feels now like an eternity ago. There we were sitting in an outdoor bar, having a drink and watching the world go by. And as I looked my attention was caught by a woman shouting (in French!) She started by being quite loud, but each time she called it was obvious that whoever it was she was trying to connect with was taking absolutely no notice (We didn't know who it was of course). Pretty quickly her voice got louder and louder and louder! And then she started to wave and when they didn't work she banged on the car that she was standing next to; fortunately there was no one in it!

She was clearly beginning to get mad and red in the face and then - perhaps there was a lull in the traffic or something - we could see a man turning towards her, presumably because he heard his name being called. And as he did so he gave her the broadest of smiles and walked to where she was standing. I hope she had had calmed down by then because it was clear that he didn't realise how much effort she had put in trying to get his attention!

We all know that there is nothing more frustrating than trying to get people to listen to us - whether it is because of distance as in this case, or just because they don't want to hear! I have to admit that I have been hooked into an Australian fly-on-the-wall programme called *Married at First Sight*. The premise is that total strangers are chosen by so called experts, and then go through a wedding ceremony having never met the person in front of them. They go on exotic honeymoons and have joint meals with other contestants before they take part in 'split or stay' sessions - and all in front of the cameras. I hate to admit it but I find it absolutely riveting!

But you can't sit through this kind of 'reality television' without seeing, in all its rawness, the ways that people just don't listen - or only listen to the things they want to hear; how they misinterpret and purposefully twist what has been said to them because they are too wrapped up in themselves.

The story of young Samuel always gets to me because it brings up my own experience of being sent away to boarding school and feeling very home-sick. The Temple for this very young boy must have seemed overwhelmingly strange, a young student under the control of the very old priest, Eli and, no doubt, at the mercy of Eli's three sons whom we know to have been nasty pieces of work. Of course Samuel's life skills were pretty limited so when he hears a voice in the middle of the night, how was he to know that it wasn't old Eli calling out for him because he wanted something?

Isn't it true that for any new Christian, if not indeed for many of us, we are simply not tuned in to hearing the voice of God? Like Samuel we just aren't expecting God to talk to us.

And so one of the first things we need to do in the Christian life is to find ways of being ready to hear what God has to say to us.

And that is no small task because we know from other people that God can and does talk to us in a million and one different ways. It might be direct words as it was for Samuel. It might as easily be through chance meetings or a strange coincidence as in the meeting of Jesus with Nathaniel. Hearing what God wants to share can come through something we read - not just the Bible but from almost anything that we come across. It might be something said to us by a friend, a family member or indeed a perfect stranger.

So how do we know that what we are hearing is from God and not what is just 'out there'? And one answer to that is 'Time'.

A few of you may still remember the winter of 1963. It was one of the coldest winters on record and my mother had broken her leg slipping on the ice. In those days that meant a huge, heavy plaster on her leg and very limited mobility. And in the middle of all that she needed to take me down from Cambridge to London, on the train, to have a voice trial for a Choir School.

And it was there that I had my Samuel experience: in that place, as I wandered around the Church on my own waiting for my turn to sing, I heard what I believe to be God calling me to be a priest. I had just turned nine - later to be a very home-sick nine year old!

But how did I know it was God speaking to me rather than just some random thoughts passing through my head? Time. I gave the messages time, either to drift away or to stick with me. And whatever I did, whatever happened to me, through a bit of success and rather more failure, that first 'call' never left me. Over the following twenty years even I could see how often all the doors in one direction opened up and all the doors in another directions stayed shut. Not only did I need to hear the original words but I also needed to test them - over and over again - to see how they fitted into a pattern that made sense.

I cannot tell you how necessary that experience has been over my lifetime. It was far and away my most tangible experience of God speaking to me, but by no means the only one. And it has been Time that has been my key to working out which ideas were mine and which ones were of God. Waiting, trying other options, listening for more reassurance, watching out for events to slot into place, seeing how other people have reacted when I have shared these thoughts with them.

Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah - Samuel and of course Jesus: we celebrate each of these people because they were open to hearing God's voice and were prepared to give Time to testing what they heard.

Being open to God showing us, telling us, what he has in mind, is probably the most important thing we can do with our lives. How sad it would be if, at the end, we realised that God had been shouting out to get our attention, and we realised we simply hadn't been bothered to give him the time to listen...

Hymn: **TPI 58 What do you want of me, Lord?**

*What do you want of me, Lord? Where do you want me to serve you?  
Where can I sing your praises? I am your song.  
Jesus, Jesus, you are the Lord. Jesus, Jesus, you are the way.*

*I hear you call my name, Lord, and I am moved within me.  
Your Spirit stirs my deepest self. Sing your songs in me.  
Jesus, Jesus, you are my Lord. Jesus, Jesus, you are the way.*

*You are the light in my darkness. You are my strength when I'm weary.  
You give me sight when I'm blinded. Come see for me.  
Jesus, Jesus, you are my light. Jesus, Jesus you are the way.*

(Words: Sr Donna Cargill)

### **Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that in the beginning was the Word,  
and that the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.**

**Through him all things were made;  
without him nothing was made that has been made.  
In him is life and that life is the light for us all.**

**The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us;  
we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son  
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

### **Confession**

**Lord our God,  
in our sins we have avoided your call.  
Our love for you in like the morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes away early.**

**Have mercy upon us;  
Deliver us from judgement;  
bind up our wounds and revive us;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free you from all our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

Lord, you create each one of us in love to be unique, full of gifts to share and to enjoy. Forgive us when we fail to listen to your voice because we are too busy, too distracted. Help us to set time aside so that we do not fail to discover your wisdom and the plan you have for our lives.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for all those people we have known who have been channels of your grace and messengers of your voice; for those who commit themselves to praying for others and who are generous and kind. May St James' continue to search for ways to live like Jesus in the 21st century.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our nation and for all those suffering from the social and economic consequences of this pandemic. We pray for those whose businesses have folded and for those who have lost their jobs; we remember all those relying on Food Banks and on charity to make ends meet. We pray for teachers and all committed to children's welfare at this time and for parents juggling with child care and those struggling with home learning.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

In a moment of quiet we bring before you today those who especially need our prayers;

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Finally we commend into your care the souls of all who have died, praying for the souls of Joan Williams, David Lee and Caroline Yeats whose anniversaries fall this week.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary the Mother of God, St James and all the saints, we commend ourselves and all those for whom we have prayed, to God's unfailing love.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, 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.**

Notices

Blessing

May the voice of Jesus speak in our hearts and minds so that we may know him as Lord and be willing to follow wherever he leads: and so may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Final Hymn: **AM748 O Jesus I have promised**

[t Wolvercote]

***O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
be thou for ever near me  
my Master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if thou wilt be my guide.***

***O let me hear thee speaking  
in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
thou guardian of my soul.***

(Words: Edward Plumptre)



May God bless every £1 we give so that St James' will be here, not just for today and for tomorrow, but for the future he wants to create.

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