

Trinitarian Congregational Church
TakeOut
Epiphany 2 B
January 17, 2021

Bells <https://youtu.be/-6qZ9A6GFik>

Announcements

Prelude "My Lord, What a Morning" Lynne Walker
Traditional spiritual arr. by Mark Hayes
<https://youtu.be/LYwaIR-phyA>

Call to Worship Patter Field

Leader: Come to this holy place, for we are welcomed.
God's love, in Christ, has made us his own.

People: God searches us and knows us.

God determines our path and discerns our way.

Leader: Come, let us respond to God's summons.

Come, rejoicing in God's care.

People: With longing hearts we seek God's love.

With joyful lips we sing God's praise.

Leader: Come, let us hear God's call to service.

Come to meet the Christ who claims you.

People: Speak O God, for your servant hears.

Show us the way, for we would follow.

Hymn Womb of Life and Source of Being Chris Harris
<https://youtu.be/QmlabQnsafl>

40 Womb of Life, and Source of Being

1 Womb of life, and source of be - ing, home of ev - 'ry
 2 Word in flesh, our bro - ther Je - sus, born to bring us
 3 Brood - ing Spir - it, move a - mong us; be our part - ner,
 4 Moth - er, Broth - er, ho - ly Part - ner; Fath - er, Spir - it,

rest - less heart, in your arms the worlds a - wak - ened; you have
 sec - ond birth, you have come to stand be - side us, know - ing
 be our friend. When our mem - 'ry fails, re - mind us whose we
 On - ly Son: we would praise your name for - ev - er, one - in -

loved us from the start. We, your chil - dren, gath - er
 weak - ness, know - ing earth. Priest who shares our hu - man
 are, what we in - tend. La - bor with us, aid the
 three, and three - in - one. We would share your life, your

'round you, at the ta - ble you pre - pare. Shar - ing sto - ries,
 strug - gles, Life of Life, and Death of Death, ris - en Christ, come
 birth - ing of the new world yet to be, free of ser - vant,
 pas - sion, share your word of world made new, ev - er sing - ing,

WORDS: Ruth Duck (b. 1947)
 MUSIC: Traditional Dutch melody; arr. Julius Roetgen (1855-1933)
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IN BABYLONE
 8.7.8.7.D.

tears, and laugh - ter, we are nur - tured by your care.
 stand a - mong us, send the Spir - it by your breath.
 lord, and mas - ter, free for love and u - ni - ty.
 ev - er prais - ing, one with all, and one with you.

Gathering Prayer

Patter Field

We have come together, Gracious God, because you have spoken your word of welcome and summons. We are drawn irresistibly to the promise of your presence and by the persistence of your call. In this hour open our ears to your words and our hearts to your claim. Fill us with the joy of knowing you and the power to glorify you through true worship and genuine service. Let the heavens be opened in our midst, that our lives may be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Amen.

Gloria Patri

<https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, 23-24

Patter Field

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
³ You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.
⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
- ¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ 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.
¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸ I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you.
- ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

John 1:43-51

Rosemary Dawson

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ 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." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told

you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.”⁵¹ 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.”

Musical Reflection

The Summons

Lynne Walker

John L. Bell, arr. by Christine Sullivan Robbins

<https://youtu.be/bJfoxKeZhCQ>

Sermon

Your Heart's Desire

What do you want? That is a question I often get asked by my spiritual director. It seems an easy thing to answer. I want what most people want – a nice home, a meaningful job, loving relationships, a comfortable life. I want peace for our nation, justice and healing. Those are all good things; but that is not what she is asking me. It never is. What do you want? She does not mean the stuff of life. She means something much more profound, deeper and truer than ‘the things of this world.’ So let me ask you - what do you want, really want? What do you desire, what do you long for, what are you pursuing?

In today's gospel story we see two men who get what they want, what they really want, and more. Just prior to this reading, John the Baptist announces to his disciples that Jesus, God's anointed, has arrived, and two follow him in hot pursuit. Seeing them, Jesus asks that all important question- “What do you want?”. Now, in today's reading two more people are drawn into Jesus' circle. In fact, it seems, Jesus wanted to find Phillip, and in short order invites him to ‘follow me’. That is a very familiar phrase for anyone who is hangs around Jesus long enough. It is an invitation to discipleship. And it seems Phillip jumps at the chance without much thought or fanfare.

Why, you might wonder? Well, it seems he has some connections already in place. We are told he is from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. It is not a far leap to assume, that as part of small town living, they knew each other well. And those relationships gave him confidence to accept Jesus invitation.

But, I think there is something more. The very next day, Philip goes to Nathanael, and tells him ‘We found him! - the one promised by Moses and the prophets.’ Phillip was definitely hungry for the things of God. To connect “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” to God's Anointed Messiah, means he not only knew the Scripture, he knew what he wanted. He was waiting, eager and ready, hoping against hope for the coming of God.

You would think that his friend Nathaniel would be equally thrilled. But it seems he is less than impressed. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” You really have to wonder about that attitude. But to be fair to Nathanael, Nazareth did have a reputation, and not a good one at that. It is not that Nazareth was Hicksville, the Ozarks of Israel. It is that Nazareth has a history of making trouble. Several resistance movements had been born, and were killed, literally, by Roman soldiers, on that very soil. I'd be hesitant too if someone told me there was a new-fangled leader arising from that country. What would I expect? - A rebel, not a saint. And that is not what I would want from God. Would you?

So it took some courage for Phillip to push it further. And he was wise not to argue. Maybe, after one day with Jesus he did not know what to argue for. But what he could do was simply invite Nathanael to go meet him and then judge for himself. And to Nathanael's credit, he did.

And that is where it gets really interesting. If Nathanael seems less than receptive to Jesus, Jesus has a warm and welcoming openness to Nathanael. Before Jesus even shakes Nathanael's hand he says, "Ah, here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!" I bet that set Nathanael on edge. He was greeted, not by his name, and not by some title, but by his character. And it seems that it rings true, because he immediately asks 'how do you know me?'

And what Jesus points to, is not the social connections with Phillip, Andrew and Peter, and not the possibility that Nathanael had been a disciple of John the Baptist. Rather Jesus goes to a very personal space, literally. He tells Nathanael "I saw you under the fig tree, before Phillip called you." Now, this is more than noticing some guy sitting in his garden on a nice sunny summer day. Fig trees were important to Israel, and not just for good fruit that grew in arid conditions. Because of its large leaves and shade it was a good place, according to the rabbis, to study God's word. Fig trees were the ancient equivalent of a person's 'meditation room'. It was under a fig tree where those serious about living for God would read and contemplate, search and listen, pray and respond. And that is where Jesus knew Nathanael was, seeking and searching, wanting to know God's truth and God's will, so that he might live as a 'true Israelite'.

Nathanael now knew how Jesus knew him. And it was rather disturbing. Was it Jesus' eerie vision of his location? Or was it something more? Perhaps, just perhaps, Nathanael made a connection to the Psalmist, who declared, "O Lord God, you have searched me and known me!" (Psalm 139:1) Perhaps Nathanael had often offered himself to God, asking "Search me, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23,24) Apparently now, Nathanael knew God had, because he declares with joy and awe, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel."

Can't you just see Jesus smiling and laughing with joy at Nathanael's epiphany. It was his eureka moment. Now the real invitation could begin. "Now, you believe! You are impressed just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? Oh, just wait, Nathanael, you ain't seen nothing yet." Nathanael, my son, there is a whole lot more to discover. There is a whole lot more to know. Are you interested? Then Jesus tells him, "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

That is an awesome promise. To see the heavens opened wide, so there can be a free and full flow, from God to man, and man to God. It again answers the cries of God's people, from the time of Abraham, even until today. "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence" (Isaiah 64:1) - just like they did when Moses met you on Sinai, just like Elijah encountered you on Mt Horeb. It is the true desire of God's children that they might walk with God like Enoch, or be a friend of God, like David.

God knows his children, all his children. God knows their desires. God knows what they want, what they truly want. And it is God's joy to give them their hearts true desire. So what about you? What do you want today?

Amen.

225 Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee

1. Je - sus, the ver - y thought of Thee With sweet-ness
 2. No voice can sing, no heart can frame, Nor can the
 3. O Hope of ev - 'ry con - trite heart! O Joy of
 4. But what to those who find? ah! this, No tongue or

fills my breast; But sweet - er far Thy face to
 mem - 'ry find A sweet - er sound than Je - sus'
 all the meek! To those who fall, how kind Thou
 pen can show The love of Je - sus, what it

see, And in Thy pres - ence rest.
 name, O Sav - ior of man - kind!
 art! How good to those who seek!
 is None but His loved ones know.

This tune in a lower key, No. 116; in a higher key, No. 498.

Baptist Hymnal 1991 225
 WORDS: Latin Hymn, 12th Century; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1875
 MUSIC (ST. AGNES 8.6.8.6 (C.M.)): John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

Prayers of the People

Loving God, we are awed by the wonder of your goodness and glory. We thank you that you formed our very selves in joy and that you know us and love us so fully. You have made yourself fully known in Jesus Christ, and in him you invite us into a living relationship with you. And through your Spirit you transform us as your people, that we might share the blessings of your goodness with others. And so, with longing hearts we come to answer your call to us.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. May this place be a true dwelling of your Spirit and a home for your people. As we gather together may we find our hearts desire answered in your love and our ambitions fulfilled in your service. May our spirits continually be open to the invitation to follow you, and may our joy in knowing you draw others into your grace.

We pray as well for our world, our country and all our leaders. May they experience your presence and call, and seek to establish your peace and justice for all people. We pray also for all who seek your mercy today. May the ill know your healing, the sorrowful your comfort, and the needy your aid. We especially lift up... and we thank you for... And grant that as we know your goodness and faithfulness, we too might share your blessings with those whom our lives touch.

We praise you, Holy God, for the fullness of your grace to us in Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Choral Response

https://youtu.be/lAivVHv__mbc

Offering

God has formed us, named us, and welcomed us as his own. Now he invites us to follow Christ in proclaiming God's grace and ministering to all God's children. Such a gift and call demands all we are and all we possess. Let us dedicate our gifts in faith.

We have heard your truth and discovered your grace, loving God, where we least expected it. Now you beckon us to know you and follow you through our service to the world. We answer you in these gifts and offerings, that others may know your faithful goodness and loving kindness in their lives. Use them to your glory. Amen.

Doxology

<https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ>

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Hymn

Lord Speak to Me That I May Speak
<https://youtu.be/FuQoYBGmkCA>

Chris Harris

1. Lord, speak to me, that I may speak In
 2. O teach me, Lord, that I may teach The
 3. O fill me with Thy full - ness, Lord, Un -
 4. O use me, Lord, use e - ven me, Just

3

liv - ing ech - oes of Thy tone; As Thou hast sought, so
 precious things Thou dost im - part; And wing my words, that
 til my ver - y heart o'er - flow In kin - dling tho't and
 as Thou wilt, and when, and where; Un - til Thy bless - ed

6

let me seek Thy err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.
 they may reach The hid - den depths of man - y a heart.
 glow - ing word, Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.
 face I see, Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glo - ry share.

This tune in higher keys, Nos. 299, 509.

Baptist Hymnal 1991 568

WORDS: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

MUSIC (CANONBURY 8.8.8.8 (L.M.)): Robert Schumann, 1810-1856

Common Commission

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the fainthearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Benediction

Go now into the world

And may the amazing grace of our Lord – Jesus Christ,
the extravagant love of God,
and the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit
be with each and every one of you. 2 Cor 13:14

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude

“Give Me Jesus”
Traditional spiritual arr. by Mark Hayes.
<https://youtu.be/ecF5Ku2W9q0>

Lynne Walker