

Sunday, January 17, 2021

Greeting: God is good **all the time**. All the time **God is good**.

Question of the Day: This is the Week of Prayer for:

a) World Peace b) Social Justice c) Human Trafficking Awareness d) Christian Unity

Call to Worship

God has searched us and knows us.

God discerns our thought from far away.

God knows when we sit and when we stand.

God knows when we lie down and where we go.

Our words and our deeds are known to God.

We were known to God before we were born.

God's knowledge of us is more than we can understand.

Let us draw closer to learn more about God.

Prayer of Invocation

O God, your all-seeing eye has sought us out. Your voice has called us together, to confront us with relevant truth. Speak to us, engage, and equip us through your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn "Wade in the Water"

John 1:29-51 *The Message*

The very next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and yelled out, "Here he is, God's Passover Lamb! He forgives the sins of the world! This is the man I've been talking about, 'the One who comes after me but is really ahead of me.' I knew nothing about who he was – only this: that my task has been to get Israel ready to recognize him as the God-Revealer. That is why I came here baptizing with water, giving you a good bath and scrubbing sins from your life so you can get a fresh start with God."

John clinched his witness with this: "I watched the Spirit, like a dove flying down out of the sky, making himself at home in him. I repeat, I know nothing about him except this: The One who authorized me to baptize with water told me, 'The One on whom you see the Spirit come down and stay, this One will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' That's exactly what I saw happen, and I'm telling you, there's no question about it: *This* is the Son of God."

The next day John was back at his post with two disciples, who were watching. He looked up, saw Jesus walking nearby, and said, "Here he is, God's Passover Lamb."

The two disciples heard him and went after Jesus. Jesus looked over his shoulder and said to them, "What are you after?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

He replied, "Come along and see for yourself."

They came, saw where he was living, and ended up staying with him for the day. It was late afternoon when this happened.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John's witness and followed Jesus. The first thing he did after finding where Jesus lived was find his own brother, Simon, telling him, "We've found the Messiah" (that is, "Christ"). He immediately led him to Jesus.

Jesus took one look up and said, "You're John's son, Simon? From now on your name is Cephas" (or Peter, which means "Rock").

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. When he got there, he ran across Philip and said, "Come, follow me." (Philip's hometown was Bethsaida, the same as Andrew and Peter.)

Philip went and found Nathanael and told him, "We've found the One Moses wrote of in the Law, the One preached by the prophets. It's *Jesus*, Joseph's son, the one from Nazareth!" Nathanael said, "Nazareth? You've got to be kidding."

But Philip said, "Come, see for yourself."

When Jesus saw him coming he said, "There's a real Israelite, not a false bone in his body."

Nathanael said, "Where did you get that idea? You don't know me."

Jesus answered, "One day, long before Philip called you here, I saw you under the fig tree."

Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi! You are the Son of God, the King of Israel!"

Jesus said, "You've become a believer simply because I say I saw you one day sitting under the fig tree? You haven't seen anything yet! Before this is over you're going to see heaven open and God's angels descending to the Son of Man and ascending again."

Psalm 139:1-18 *The Message*

GOD, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand.

I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.

You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight.

You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence.

I look behind me and you're there,

then up ahead and you're there, too –

your reassuring presence, coming and going.

This is too much, too wonderful – I can't take it all in!

Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? to be out of your sight?

If I climb to the sky, you're there!

If I go underground, you're there!

If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon,

you'd find me in a minute – you're already there waiting!

Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark!"

At night I'm immersed in the light!"

It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you;

night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you.

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out,

you formed me in my mother's womb.

I thank you, High God – you're breathtaking!

Body and soul, I am marvelously made!

I worship in adoration – what a creation!

You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body;

you know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,

how I was sculpted from nothing into something.

Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth;

all the stages of my life were spread out before you,

the days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.

Your thoughts – how rare, how beautiful!

God, I'll never comprehend them!

I couldn't even begin to count them –

any more than I could count the sand of the sea.

Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you!

Response: *The Word of God, for the people of God! Thanks be to God!*

Time of Prayer

How Is It With Your Soul?

Call to Confession

We can hide nothing from God, who knows our every thought. God is aware of sins we have not recognized. Whenever we have broken a solemn trust, whenever we have acted on selfish impulse, whenever we have trampled the feelings of others or ignored their need, God has noticed. We cannot be right with God unless we examine ourselves and repent.

Prayer of Confession

O God, our lives are an open book to you. Help us to recognize in ourselves what you have seen there. Remove the distortions that keep us from acknowledging our sin. Awaken in us a sorrow over the wrong we have done and the good we have neglected. Create in us an earnest desire to change. O God, we are in touch with the pain we have caused and the pain within us. Because of your love and care, we can face and overcome the sins we confess.

(Time of Silent Prayer)

Assurance

God has heard your cries and felt your pain. Your struggles to know yourself are prompted by God's love. By God's grace, we are turning from self-serving ways to selfless ministries. With Jesus we pray:

The Lord's Prayer

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Answer to the Question of the Day

Time of Offering *Thank you to everyone for your faithful generosity.*

Offering Prayer

Bless in every way, O Lord, the gifts that we give. Enrich our ministries and make us grateful for all that you have provided and continue to provide. Amen.

Sermon "Know to Testify" Rev. Joyce Rich

Commission and Blessing

Jesus said, "Follow me," so Philip followed.

Jesus says to us, "Follow me!" Will we follow?

We do not always know where Jesus will lead.

But we hear the call, and we intend to follow.

Philip found Nathanael and led him to Jesus.

There are many we know whom Jesus is seeking.

It is often difficult to share our faith with friends.

But we hear the call, and we intend to invite them to follow Jesus.

Amen. **And Amen.**

Hymn "Search Me, O God"

Announcements; Readings For Next Week: Mark 1:14-20; Psalm 62:5-12

*Liturgical resources drawn from: **Led by Love: Worship Resources for Year B**, Lavon Bayler © 1996 United Church Press; and **Feasting on the Word: Liturgies for Year B, Volume I**, Kimberly Bracken Long, editor © 2014 Westminster John Knox Press.*