

starters for Sunday

Vocations Sunday

7 December 2014

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Jonathan Fleming and Rev Joan Hood for their thoughts on Vocations Sunday.

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Quick Guide...

Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

The Call to Service is knowing the part each and every child of God has to play in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God...

God is...

knowing us...

[Psalm 139](#)

This Psalm is a sermon in itself. Space is needed to reflect upon what it means to each individual listener. It is intensely personal and rightly so. This Psalm highlights the persistence of God's call and will, for some, draw out an acknowledgement of their attempts to avoid it.

For some it may be overwhelming owing to God's understanding of each and every one of us. With this in mind, preaching on such a Psalm (if you choose to do so) requires affirmation to our congregations that, in spite of our inevitable flaws, God continues to call us and inspire us to see the potential in others.

It is important to emphasise that for some the call is to see and affirm the call of another. Sometimes, an individual who senses a call only realises it when their qualities are revealed to them by others...

believing in us...

[Exodus 3: 1-12, 4: 10-12](#)

This passage may speak to our congregations more than any of the texts chosen for today owing to the awareness that even Moses had doubts in himself. It may be worth mentioning that some people doubt their ability to fulfil their call because they are not acknowledging that their call does not depend on them being the finished article, but rather requires them to embark upon



the journey towards answering that call. Moses knew that he was being taken out of his comfort zone, as may be the case for many who have since answered that call.

It may be worth mentioning that the Church offers support, both locally and nationally, to assist those who seek to serve in the way they perceive God calls them to.

affirming us...

[1 Corinthians 12: 4-27](#)

In its Vocations material, the Church of Scotland writes,

All Christians are called to be ministers to those around them. Within this context, the Church recognises distinctive kinds of calling to particular roles and functions...

In his writings to the people of Corinth, we see Paul's emphasis on the importance of all parts of the body. Like the body, all Christians have a role to play in the life and future of the Church.

Verses 5 and 6 tell us of the varieties of gifts and services which God inspires in all. This variety is also seen in The Church of Scotland with some answering a Call to Parish Ministry, Diaconal Ministry, Ordained Local Ministry, Readership or Eldership. Without each and every one of these parts, we could not accomplish all that we do in the Church nationally and globally. However, without the constant willingness of all members to serve their local congregations according to their particular calls, the body would cease to function. Paul makes this abundantly clear in speaking of individual parts and the equally weighted role they have within the body.

Preaching on this text requires sensitivity towards those who are already working to their capacity within their local church as well as others who may feel, due to their personal circumstances, are unable to offer the kind of the service they may hear us calling for.

It is important to emphasise that the holding of a hand, the cup of tea, the offering of a prayer are all valuable ministries which **must** be nurtured and affirmed.



calling us...

[Matthew 4: 18-22](#)

The call to service can come for some with personal sacrifice. This is exemplified by the fishermen in Matthew's account leaving both their livelihood and their families behind. This monumental event in answering the call reminds us and in turn should, through our preaching, challenge others to reflect on the fact that some aspects of life as we know it may have to change in response to God's call.

What is striking in Matthew's passage is that the word 'immediately' is used twice in the fishermen's answer to Jesus' call. However, as preachers in 2014 with very different economic and sociological circumstances, we must emphasise the validity of God's call irrespective of the timeframe in which we choose to answer it.

Prayers

Prayer of Adoration & Confession

God who speaks through creation and provision;
 God who speaks through sacrifice and suffering;
 God who speaks through burning bush or still small voice;
 We praise you for your word.

For the word you offer
 even when we are least inclined to listen, For the word you offer
 even when we have gone to great lengths to move out of earshot,

We praise you and your persistence and patience with us...

For the times when we refuse
 to act upon what we suspect you are saying to us,
 for the times when we turn up the volume of daily living
 specifically to drown you out,
 for the times when we hear you
 and act upon what we hear
 but do so half-heartedly,



by choosing the safe or soft option
forgive us...

You call us to love you.

You call us to love others.

You call us to follow.

You call us to lead.

You call us to serve.

You call us to equip.

You call us...

Through Your word in our lives you are
continually,
creatively,
consistently,
calling us to that which you can
and will enable us to do.

Allow us to put our trust,
not in ourselves, but in you;
for in doing so we find ourselves
able to accomplish so much more.

Allow us to respond to your word,
to the call that is for our ears and no one else's.

Allow us to be all you would have us be
as we seek to serve your purposes
and Christ's ministry in and for the world.

For we ask all these things in Jesus' name
Amen.



Prayers of Intercession

You are a God of love,
You are a God of inspiration,
You are a God who calls.

But to what?

(Pause)

You call people who doubt themselves...
People who do not think they are smart enough...
People who do not think they can cope...

In the quiet of this place, speak to us, Lord.
Guide us to answer your call...

(Pause)

You call people who think they are too old...
People who think they don't have life experience...
People who think that they are not 'religious enough'...

In the quiet of this place, speak to us, Lord.
Guide us to answer your call...

(Pause)

You call some to see the call in others.
To affirm.
To support.
To encourage.

You call us all to love.
You call us all to serve.
You call us all to follow.



May we be willing...

May our questions inspire us rather than block us...

May our anxiety turn into our enthusiasm...

May our concerns be turned to simple trust.

In the quiet of this place, speak to us, Lord.

Guide us to answer your call...

(Pause)

So be it.

Amen.

Musical Suggestions

Have a look at the [Different Voices blog](#) for musical ideas to use during the whole Advent season. This includes ideas for congregations, choirs, bands and children compiled by members the Church of Scotland Music Group.

CH4 96	You are before me Lord, you are behind
CH4 196	Come, now is the time to worship
CH4 250	Sent by the Lord am I
CH4 251	I, the Lord of sea and sky
CH4 501	Take this moment
CH4 502	Take my life and let it be
CH4 532	Lord, you have come to the seashore
CH4 533	Will you come and follow me
CH4 673	Let us talents and tongues employ
CH4 680	You are called to tell the story



Additional Resources

Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Revealing Love](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#).



Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music pages [Different Voices](#).

Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Wurship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Revs Jonathan Fleming and Joan Hood for providing us with this Sunday's material.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

