

# starters for Sunday

## ***Second Sunday of Advent***

***8<sup>th</sup> December 2013***

### ***Vocations Sunday***

This additional material has been provided by the Ministries Council.

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## Vocations Sunday - Non-lectionary Worship Materials for reflecting on our call to serve.

As a variety of worship resources were prepared last year for Vocations Sunday these are offered again this year for use on the Second Sunday of Advent or to be used at a time of year that seems most appropriate for your congregation. The first lectionary resource applies to last year's passages but includes reflection on John the Baptist which ties in with this year's texts. In addition there is a reflection on reading the lectionary passages for Advent 2A that can be read in conjunction with the main Advent 2A resources. Though there may be a focus on the call to serve in one of the formal ministries of the Church, this is also a time to consider the call we have all received in baptism to serve and follow Jesus in our daily lives and in our local Christian community. This material has been prepared by Rev Liz Crumlish, Rev David Scott, Rev Mary Stobo and Rev Marjory McPherson.

### Advent Themed Material

#### Focusing on the Gospel for Advent: [Luke 1:39-45](#)

A thread runs through the gospel proclamation by John the Baptist of Jesus as Messiah.

Here, in the earliest stages of their relationship "as they were being intricately woven in the depths" ([Psalm 139](#)) the baby John responded to the presence of God's son.

Perhaps a portent of that recognition that led John to proclaim: Prepare the Way, and to point to the greater one who was to come.

That same recognition that saw John baptise Jesus in the Jordan.

The same slow burning glimmer of hope that prompted John to send his disciples to enquire of Jesus: Are you the one who is to come? ([Luke 7:20](#))



The gospels make it clear that the calling of John was an important and a vital role in Kingdom work.

To herald the Messiah was crucial to the Advent of God's reign.

It is hard to equate the wild, locust eating man who called the people a brood of vipers, with this sensitive soul who leapt within his mother's womb at the sound of the voice of the mother of God.

But John's calling from before his birth was a calling to play second fiddle, to do his part and then move aside.

That response in the womb was just the beginning, for John, of a lifetime of responding to God's Spirit and call on his life.

More than that –it is a response that grounds the incarnation in the stuff of life. Often the virginity of Mary and the mystery surrounding John's birth, including the silencing of Zechariah are elements with which we either struggle to engage or get so caught up in trying to fathom and explain.

This leaping in the womb, however, in many ways brings in the ordinary and common place as we recognize the antics of every healthy child in the womb.

We might also consider the marginalization and isolation of Mary, carrying a child in the culture and society in which she lived: to have God's calling and blessing confirmed must have been momentous. Her calling was too soon for her society and she suffered the consequences of that yet still she continued to offer herself and considered herself blessed among women.

Vocation rarely makes itself evident at a time of our choosing and it often wreaks havoc. It takes supreme effort sometimes to consider ourselves blessed when being obedient to God's call.

On this Sunday when we consider the vocations given to all God's people we consider the very nature of Incarnation: Our call to bring God to life.

Incarnation comes from the inside – it is for us to harness the incarnational spirit that dwells, even leaps within us and bring God to life in our daily work.



## **Litany for Vocation Sunday**

This prayer calls to mind the response of the baby in the womb of Elizabeth to the presence of God's son.

The voice of God echoes through our day

**And our spirits leap within us**

Its tendrils capture the pattern of our lives

**And our spirits leap within us**

Its beat becomes for us the very rhythm of life

**And our spirits leap within us**

It seeps into our marrow

**And our spirits leap within us**

It pursues us even as we flee

**And our spirits leap within us**

Gentle, yet persistent the voice is never silent

**And our spirits leap within us**

Until we recognize that there is no escape

**And our spirits leap within us**

And we surrender to the voice of God

**And our spirits leap within us**

**Thanks be to God for blazing the trail**

**which we can only follow**

**moved to respond to the Spirit of God**

**Magnificat – the alternative version**



*Blessed?*

*They call me blessed?*

*Well, I'd like to know what part of blessed*

*I'm failing to understand.*

*Is it blessed to have pregnancy sickness 25 hours a day?*

*Is it blessed to have fingers so swollen*

*I couldn't wear my ring – even if I had one?*

*Is it blessed to be gossiped about on street corners*

*and have folk turn their backs on me*

*when I walk down the street?*

*Is it blessed to be so bone wearying tired?*

*Is it blessed to have no one believe me*

*when I tell them about the angel?*

*Is it blessed to want so much to do God's will*

*when it causes so much grief?*

*Blessed – so this is what it feels like!*



## Prayers

### Adoration, Confession

God who can turn the disgrace of an unmarried, pregnant teenager into salvation for the world, we are blown away by your audacity.

That you can turn seeming tragedy into blessing is beyond our wildest dreams.

Yet still you amaze us, transforming that which shocks us into life giving opportunity, taking the bleakest of situations and flooding it with the light of hope.

Continuing to have faith in your people even when time and time again we display our lack of compassion and hardness of heart.

God we confess our reluctance to listen far less respond to your call.

Your call to love and to serve, to become unpopular, to do your will, to abandon ourselves, trusting that you know best – those are the things we shy away from.

God, give us the courage of Mary, that innocence and that confidence that your will for us is good and that the best is yet to come.

Help us to listen and to respond with love, murmuring Yes to you crazy ideas time after time until we too know ourselves blessed.

### Responsive Prayer

In the rainbow and in the rain, God speaks

**We would do well to listen.**

In the miraculous and in the everyday, God speaks

**We would do well to listen.**

In the silence and in the shouting, God speaks

**We would do well to listen.**

In darkness and in light, God speaks

**We would do well to listen.**



Through the expected and the unexpected, God speaks

**We would do well to listen.**

Whether we like it or not, God speaks

**We would do well to listen**

**and to respond to the God who entrusts to us**

**the Kingdom of God.**

### **An Advent Prayer for Vocations Sunday**

In the beginning

Nothing

In the beginning

Silence

In the beginning

Darkness

In the beginning

Emptiness

In the beginning

Chaos

Until you called

Spoke into the void

And filled it

Spoke into the silence

And drowned it



Spoke into the darkness

And lit it

Spoke into the emptiness

And scattered it

Spoke into the chaos

And harnessed it

In the beginning

The empty womb of the world

Filled with the sound of God's voice

And birthed creation

One call, one voice

And nothing was the same

Light fell over the earth

Warmth touched its shores

Water rained upon its lands

Unable to resist

Unable to deny

The life-source surging within and around it

The void was filled

With the newness of life

In our beginning

In each new beginning



A life

A day

A year

A hope

A joy

A death

An end

In each new beginning

Whispers the voice

That births creation

Calling out fullness of life

Speaking into our darkness

Speaking into our stubbornness

Speaking into our emptiness

The spark of life

The greening of hearts

The desire to create and make new

In you all creation finds its purpose

In you all people find their calling

To fill the void with hope

To shatter the silence with praise

To dispel the darkness with justice

To unfold the emptiness into joy



To form the chaos into life in all its fullness

Through Christ who was born for us, loved us and called us

To be servants of God and one another

## Exegesis and Sermon Ideas on Jeremiah and 1 Timothy

### Introduction

For five hundred years, there were ten empty stone niches above the door of Westminster Abbey but not today. They have been filled with the statues of ten twentieth century martyrs. As well as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King and Archbishop Romero, there's a young, athletic African called Manche Masekela. She was born in South Africa in 1913 and murdered in 1928 for refusing to give up her Christian faith.

She belonged to an animist culture. When she was fourteen, she was befriended by a priest. She began participating in Christian worship and joined a Guide company. She became ill. Her family was furious that she had gone to the Mission doctor. Manche refused to give up her belief in the Christian God and was beaten to death by her own parents. Her body was wrapped in a blanket for burial. At fifteen, she became a martyr, baptised in her own blood!

She certainly wasn't too young to stand up and be counted. Through her youthful ministry and martyrdom, she has earned the right to fill one of the stone niches in the Abbey bearing witness to all those young people who have been called by God down through the centuries – Mary, the teenage mother of Jesus, Andrew and Peter, teenage brothers and fishermen, Samuel, the child in the temple ... God's call is not restricted to any particular age group. Young people have a pre-eminent place.

### Jeremiah 1:4-9

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the call of the prophet, Jeremiah. Like the call of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, the call of Jeremiah has its own distinctive features. The first is his youthfulness. When God appoints him to be a prophet, he recognises his own unworthiness in these words, *'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.'* This is an almost universal sentiment. When God calls, we feel unworthy to accept that he has chosen us.



'Do not say, *'I am only a boy.'*' Says the Lord. *'For you shall go to all to whom I send you and you shall speak whatever I command you.'* God dismisses Jeremiah's excuses. If he had been responsible for his ministry, he would have been justified in his fear but this is not his ministry but God's. It's only the work which God does through us which has any lasting value.

There are three important things about this calling. Firstly, God called Jeremiah not just before he was born but even before he was formed in his mother's womb. From this perspective, Jeremiah hasn't done anything to deserve this calling. It's the fruit of God's mysterious choice.

Secondly, having chosen Jeremiah, God equips him for ministry. He touches Jeremiah's mouth and says, *'Now I have put my words in your mouth.'* In assessing a person's call, we look to see whether or not they have the gifts and graces to fulfil their vocation. In the Jeremiah narrative this is signified in having the words to speak. We believe that if a call is genuine then God will equip the person for this vocation and we will see the evidence in their gifts.

Thirdly, God allays Jeremiah's fear. He not only blesses him with the gifts for ministry but also promises to be with him in the exercise of his ministry. *'Do not be afraid of them,'* he says, *'for I am with you to deliver you.'* This is consolation indeed. We do not minister alone. Our ministry is not our own. It is God's ministry albeit clothed in the distinctive characteristics of our personality, our time and place.

Whilst God calls older people to minister in his name, it is clear from Jeremiah's vocation that God calls young people too. In a way, their vocation is a more eloquent witness to the power of his Spirit working in our lives for they have done less to deserve his call and can obviously do much less on their own so that what is accomplished through their ministry is all the more readily credited to God.

### **[1 Timothy 4:6-16](#)**

Timothy was a third generation Christian. His grandmother, Lois and his mother, Eunice were both members of the church. And so his vocation is born out of their spiritual nurture. His vocation has something to do with *'public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching'*. It looks as if it is a ministry of Word and Sacrament which the church confirmed



2 'through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders'. And so our ordination service preserves this ancient ritual of the laying on of hands.

It is clear that Timothy is a young minister for the writer says, 'Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.' No one is too young to let their words become a reality in the way they live their lives. Sincerity and integrity are the hallmarks of the Christian minister.

People may say to a young minister, 'You're too young to know or to say or to be or to exercise authority or to make a contribution but they will not say that for long if their words are transformed into the more eloquent witness of one whose actions are characterised by love, faith and purity!

His vocation is described as a gift and he is charged not to neglect it. In his second letter, the writer describes it more specifically as 'a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace' ([2 Timothy 1:9](#)) The word which he uses for gift is 'charisma'. It has within it an attractiveness, a grace which has the power to draw people not to ourselves but to God. The writer reveals this charisma in two places.

Firstly, in writing about his vocation as a preacher, he says, 'If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant ...' The verb for 'putting before' doesn't mean issuing with orders but giving them a word which they are free to accept or reject. It has within it the grace of gentleness and the wisdom of detachment. This is God's Word not ours. We lay it before the people and once we have done that, we have done all. We let it go. For God will secure the purpose for which it has been sent.

Secondly. The grace of the minister's vocation is also seen when the writer says to Timothy, 'Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them so that all may see your progress.' Progress gives us the sense that the minister hasn't arrived. He hasn't reached his journey's end. He is young. He has much to learn and discover about God. He is still longing to plumb the depths of God's unsearchable riches.



Above all, he remains a learner too *'nourished on the words of faith'* as the writer says, *'paying close attention'* to himself and his teaching, persevering in his vocation despite the signs of indifference and rejection which map out his way. For success is not a theological term. It's a very worldly term which the church has foolishly adopted sometimes in its assessment of the work of God and his ministers.

Whilst Timothy's vocation is a gift of God, he has a responsibility to nurture it. The writer makes this clear in the language he uses to describe the work of a minister – *'we toil and struggle'*, *'devote yourself'*, *'pay close attention to yourself and your teaching'*, *'continue in these things'* and, most importantly, *'train yourself in godliness'*. This, more than anything else, shapes and develops the vocation to the ministry. What is it?

Godliness defies easy definition. At the root of it is awe and the awesomeness of God. Train yourself in godliness. Train yourself in the awesomeness of God. Become awestruck in the presence of the living God. Nurture a sense of the otherness of God – his greatness, his power, his holiness and let that inform all our worship and discipleship. For the vocation to ministry begins and ends in God.

## Reading the lectionary passages in the light of Vocations Sunday

As a fulsome interpretation of the texts has already been given for this week these notes are offered to raise the question of what the Advent 2 passages may say on a day when we focus on Vocations in the Church.

It seems that it is that first verse in Isaiah 11 that gives a sense of direction. 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' Isaiah responds to four decades of violence and destruction experienced by his people to say that something quite new is on its way. His vision after all the years of being embattled, defeated and robbed of their young, their wealth and their land is of a tender shoot, a person who will bring peace and a new order. Such will be the influence of this peacemaker that even the animal kingdom will feel the effects of it and lay aside the natural order of things in order that even the wolf and lamb may live together without threat of harm. Isaiah heralds a new dawn of peace but though this is a



radical new departure it is also rooted in the old. The new leader will echo the days of King David when in his best moments he worked for justice, peace and fairness in the land. Out of a former time, a new way of ruling will develop and this leader will bring hope to the people.

After decades of decline in the Church; after many years of feeling embattled in an increasingly secular society there is a hope and longing for a new sense of purpose and direction. It is not that the Church is without possible solutions and many plans have been drawn, many ideas expressed. There have been calls for radical change; there have been fresh expressions of church developing around the country. There have been small changes, little revolutions and doubtless some feel the occasional re-arranging of deckchairs. Be all that as it may, there is something in this Isaiah text that values the past; that remembers better times of goodness and justice. There is a looking back to the glory days but also the promise that out of that rootedness in a solid and worthy past can grow something tender, vulnerable, a fresh shoot that knows the old, knows all about the past, understands it and can re-work it for the present challenges. Out of the stump of Jesse a tender shoot will grow and nothing will be the same again.

Isaiah tells of a coming messiah. John the Baptist goes out into the wilderness to point the way to someone who is coming after him. So we need beware as the Church already has a messiah and needn't seek another but it does need to listen to the voices that call for renewal, for reformation, for a chance to be refreshed and grow something good for our time out of the riches and wisdom of our past. It is never the wrong time to seek peace, equality, justice in our dealings in and out of the Church. It is never the wrong time to seek the inspiration of the Spirit looking to lead us in our age and generation. We cannot return to the days of King David just as we cannot return to the 1950s when the Kirks were full and there was standing room only at communion. However, we can be a people of faith in our time.

Isaiah's vision is of a community living in peace, living according to the justice and love of God. Matthew's Gospel depicts John calling people out into the wilderness to be reformed as a nation by turning to God again. The texts are clear that it is the whole people who are to be



transformed, to listen to the call of God, to accept the demands placed upon them and work together for a vision worth having. Our reformed tradition with its strong belief in the priesthood of all believers is challenged in our time to grapple with what it means for each of us to hear our calling, reflect upon our gifts and find ways to exercise those God-given talents in the service of the Kingdom. In what ways could new forms of ministry arise, what shape could ministry take in the future, how can we build on the best of our past traditions to forge a new style of leadership and belonging for today? The call to us is a corporate and shared one but also one spoken to individuals as each is called to different forms of service and some to forms of leadership. For all who answer the call it is not about self but always about pointing to the one who is coming to renew heaven and earth. As John the Baptist said, 'I baptise you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

## A Creative Liturgy for Vocation Sunday

### A Creative Liturgy for Vocation Sunday by Mary Stobo

*This Liturgy lends itself to having lots of people take part although it can be done with just two voices*

*Words in Bold type can be said by the congregation. If lighting candles you will need 1 large central candle and 6 smaller ones and a taper to light them.*

*You will also need baskets of small pebbles enough for everyone in the congregation – the pebbles could brought back at a future service of commitment/dedication*



**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come

**Now is the time to give thanks to our God**

Come

**Now is the time to spend time in company with our Lord Jesus**

Come

**Now the light of Christ shines for ever for humankind** (*central candle is lit*)

Come

**Now is the time to worship**

Come praise the Lord

**We come just as we are into this special place seeking God's will**

**in the assurance that God's love cradles us in every place, every day.**

**SONG** *As we are gathered Jesus is here*

**CH4 197**

**PRAYER OF APPROACH** (*each stanza could be read by a different person - including the young folk*)

Loving God,

Raindrops and rainbows, birds and birdsong

Flowers and fruits, sunrise and sunset

Moonlight and mystery;

Gratefully we acknowledge that all these and more reveal your delight in creation

and your care for us and our world.

Christ, Saviour of the world



Prophets of old told of your coming to live among us  
Born of a young woman to bring light into this world  
You understand how tough life can be, how cruel we can be to each other  
Gratefully we acknowledge your presence here as we gather to listen for your word to us.

Holy Spirit

Promised to be our guide for all time and all times  
Breathe into our hearts and minds  
Open us to understanding and to respond to what God wants us to do.  
Gratefully we acknowledge the strength and comfort you bring as we submit to God's will.

Merciful God,

You know us so well, know all our faults, yet you still love us and desire the best for us  
We come knowing we often fail to do your will and asking forgiveness  
Direct all our thoughts and actions towards following the path you lay before us  
Gratefully we acknowledge that through your Son, our Lord Jesus,  
we can be forgiven for going our own way.  
Gratefully we acknowledge that this assurance brings new life,  
the real life promised to those who believe the Gospel message.

God of all time and all people (*could be said in chorus by all readers if more than one used*)

**Hear our prayer and let us hear your voice calling us to follow where Christ leads**

**SONG** *Be still for the presence of the Lord*

**CH4 189**



**REFLECTION 1** (*for the little ones or you might wish to read verses from the passage if none are present*)

**(Leader 1)**

Do you know the story of how a little shepherd boy armed with only a catapult and five pebbles killed the enormous soldier all dressed in armour and carrying a huge sword? (*A suitable picture will help as you get them to help you tell the story – little boy; no armour or sword against a big man in full armour - the main point to stress being that God used an unlikely person and an unlikely weapon*)

It seemed very unlikely that David would win against Goliath but he did. He knew that God loved him and had protected him in the past and would help him protect other people. That was his job. That's something we can all do no matter how young - or old - we are – we can really care about other people.

**(Leader 2) – light candle from central one - young person could perhaps do this each time)**

Sometimes we feel the job is too big, too difficult for us to do and that we are unlikely people to do the job that needs done

Often we think we are not strong enough or have the right equipment

You will soon be offered a pebble. As you hold it remember that God gave each one of us to do an important job and it's one that we all can do - God made us to care for each other and for our wonderful world.

*(during the singing of the hymn ( young) people take round baskets of pebbles for everyone in the congregation)*

**SONG** *God gave me eyes that I could see the wonders of the world* **CH4 164**

**REFLECTION 2**



**(Leader 1)**

<sup>7-8</sup> God said, “I’ve taken a good, long look at the affliction of my people in Egypt. I’ve heard their cries for deliverance from their slave masters; I know all about their pain. And now I have come down to help them, pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, get them out of that country and bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces, a land lush with milk and honey[ ]<sup>9-10</sup> “[ ]It’s time for you to go back: I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the People of Israel, out of Egypt.”

<sup>11</sup> Moses answered God, “But why me? What makes you think that I could ever go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

<sup>12</sup> “I’ll be with you,” God said, “And this will be the proof that I am the one who sent you: When you have brought my people out of Egypt, you will worship God right here at this very mountain.”

(From [Exodus 3:7-12](#) The Message)

**(Leader 2) – (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes we ask why me,

Often we often find it difficult to believe that we could possibly be the ones called to show others the way to freedom from their pain, from the things that imprison them, into the promised new life that comes to those who listen to the call to follow where Christ leads

As you hold your pebble remember that God is always with us and the light of Christ shines on our path whatever challenges life brings and however unsuitable we feel ourselves to be to be the one to bring the good news to others.

**SONG** *Isn’t it amazing (words at the end - this could be a solo perhaps) or*

*Sing for God’s glory that colours the dawn of creation*

**CH4 172**



**REFLECTION 3****(Leader 1)**

<sup>35-36</sup> The next day John [the Baptist] 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.”

<sup>37-38</sup> 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?”

<sup>39</sup> He replied, “Come along and see for yourself.”

They came, saw where he was living, and ended up staying with him for the day.

([John 1:35-39](#) The Message)

**(Leader 2) (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes the words of others make us curious to learn more

Often we find that it is through experiencing for ourselves the pleasure of spending time in the company of Christ we discover true happiness and blessing

As you hold your pebble remember that we are invited to spend time in Christ’s company and with each other in study and prayer and so get to know Jesus and each other better.

**(Leader 1)**

<sup>18-20</sup> Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, “Come with me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I’ll show you how to catch men and women instead of [cod] and [mackerel]. They didn’t ask questions but simply dropped their nets and followed.

A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers, James and John, Zebedee’s sons. These two were sitting in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their



fishing nets. Jesus made the same offer to them and they were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.

([Matthew 4:18 -22](#) The Message)

**(Leader 2) (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes we are comfortable doing the things we are accustomed to doing and don't anticipate being expected to leave it all behind

Often we find it hard to give up the known and listen to the voice that encourages us to face the unknown.

As you hold your pebble remember that God challenges us to follow Christ's invitation to leave our comfort zone and go where he leads.

**SONG** *One more step along the world I go*

**CH4 530**

**REFLECTION 4**

**(Leader 1)**

<sup>13</sup> “Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

<sup>14-16</sup> “Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

([Matthew 5:13-16](#) The Message)



**(Leader 2) (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes we lose our savour for life, don't find it easy to trust that if we taste we will see the Lord is good

Often we find it easier to hide from the light; afraid of what it might show, rather than carry the Christ light into our world to shine for others.

As you hold your stone remember that the flimsiest of wires acts as a channel for the power that lights our light-bulbs and that God's power can use even the smallest, frailest person to brighten the darkness for everyone around us.

**SONG** *Make me a channel of your peace*

**CH4 528**

*or Lord make us servants of your peace*

**CH4 527**

**PRAYER OF RESPONSE AND FOR OTHERS**

God who spangled the midnight sky with silvery stars,

Whose moonbeams grace the sleeping hills and valleys,

Enable us to remember that one candle can penetrate the gloom of the darkest room.

Give us the audacity to stand firm when the odds against us are frightening

Give us the courage to do things that seem too difficult

Give us the tenacity to stick with the things that would encourage us to slide away

Give us the understanding to know the words to speak to encourage others to seek you out

Give us the daring to be the beacons that stand on the hilltops and display proclaim your love for all.

Give us the wisdom to accept your challenge when we hear that still small voice

God of all time and all people



**Hear our prayer and let us hear your voice calling us to follow where Christ leads**

God who made us to live in community

we think of those whose lives are blighted by troubles:

When the clouds cover the sunlight and all seems dark,

When the taste for life is lost or the plate seems empty,

When sickness or infirmity constrain life's pleasures,

When conflict causes people to war against their neighbour,

When natural disaster makes existence precarious,

When hope is gone and all seems lost,

Dispel the gloom, lighten those burdens with the comfort of your Holy Spirit.

Especially we think now of those in this community,

known and unknown to us, who need your help today

*(Silence)*

Give us insight that by our words and actions we can be your messengers

encouraging others to come and stay in the company of Jesus and in the light of your love.

God of all time and all people

**Hear our prayer and let us hear your voice calling us to follow where Christ leads****REFLECTION 5**

**(Leader 1)**

<sup>26-28</sup> [ ] God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:



Good morning!

You're beautiful with God's beauty,

Beautiful inside and out!

God be with you.

<sup>29-33</sup> She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.'

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David;

He will rule Jacob's house forever—no end, ever, to his kingdom."

<sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,

the power of the Highest hover over you;

Therefore, the child you bring to birth

will be called Holy, Son of God.

<sup>36-38</sup> "And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said,

Yes, I see it all now:

I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.

Let it be with me

just as you say.

([Luke 1:26-38](#) The Message)



**(Leader 2) (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes we are startled when sensing that God is expecting something special of us, Often we need the reassurance that God can indeed do with us what we think to be improbable or even impossible.

As you hold your pebble remember that when we say we are ready to serve, stepping out bravely to follow the path laid in front of us, we can trust that God is always there, guiding each step, providing stepping stones through the muddy bits, even prepared to carry us over the blocks that would cause us to stumble.

**(Leader 1)**

<sup>16</sup> **“You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.**

([John 15:16](#) The Message)

**(Leader 2) (light candle from central one)**

Sometimes we simply long to stay in the safety of the place where we have found Jesus Often we shy away from accepting that we are really chosen, called to come and follow, reluctant to hear the command to go and gather others.

As you hold your pebble and take it into your daily life remember that God asks each of us to listen for the voice that calls us to service; remember that we can ask that same God to provide everything we need to face the challenges that will come to us when we answer that call.

**SONG** *Sent by the Lord am I*

**CH4 250**

**BLESSING**

Stay safe in the keeping of the Father God, Walk boldly in the light of Christ

Go out in the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s blessing on you this day and each day of your life.

**SONG** You shall go out with joy

**CH4 804**



## Musical Suggestions

For my sake & the gospels go	CH4 248
Ye that know the lord is gracious	CH4 642
Forth in the peace of Christ we go	CH4 646
Send out the gospel	CH4 681
Christ be our light	CH4 543
Shine Jesus shine or	CH4 448
God asks who will go for me	CH4 253 v 4

**Isn't it amazing** – words by *Susan Brown* who has kindly given permission to include them here

**Isn't it amazing**- tune is Wild Mountainside <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2T9545bdm4>

What the Lord can do

With anyone who is willing

To try his will to do

And though it's tough and sometimes hard

God gives us all we need

To follow in his footsteps

And live in his love.

Age or youth is nothing

God can use us all

All he asks is that we trust that

He'll catch us when we fall

And though we doubt and hesitate

God gives us all we need



To follow in his footsteps

And live in his love.

Trust he knows what's best

Listen to his voice

Take a step in faith

Listen to his call

Know that he still wants you

Chooses one and all.

He knows we're far from perfect yet

He longs that we might live

Following in his footsteps,

Living in his love

## **Prayer for the Calling of the Young**

Adam called to walk with God

Joseph called to dream

Esther called to free the faithful

Samuel called to serve

Ruth called to find new faith

Jeremiah called to prophesy

David called to slay giants

Mary called to birth God among us



In their youth

Their inexperience and their doubt

Uncertain, unsure

Of the future before them

They heard and followed

The call of God

Jesus

Called little ones to show the way to the kingdom

Called a teenager to feed the hungry

Called John into the desert ahead of him

Called fishermen to a new occupation

Called Nathanael to come and see a new way

Called a young man to rise from death

Called a 12 year old girl to get up and live

Called young women, despised, rejected to be in his company

In their youth

Their inexperience and their doubt

Uncertain, unsure

Of the future before them

They heard and followed

The call of Jesus



For Jesus saw and called out of them

Their optimism and imagination

Their courage and adaptability

Their hope and their idealism

Their courage and their sensitivity

Their wisdom and their faith

Now, even now, the Spirit calls the young

To stand up for their faith in the face of persecution

To take their talents and skills to places of danger

To raise their voices in songs of protest

To fan the fire of passionate ideals

To build communities of love and compassion

To teach the old to dream new dreams

To minister and serve for the sake of the Gospel

For in them are planted the seeds of new possibilities

The gifts for the years to come

The insights that will shape the future

The promises that all things will be made new



## 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. [Pray Now 2013](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#). [Revealing Love](#) will be available to purchase from November 2013.



### 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 magazine [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 Rev Liz Crumlish, Rev David Scott, Rev Mary Stobo and Rev Marjory McPherson 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.*

