

# MORRIS-ROSENFELD ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY

## ORDER OF SERVICE FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024

### 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Due to copyright limitations, we are unable to print the words to many of the songs. However, our musicians have chosen music to fit the scriptures. We invite you to look up the words in your worship book and ponder them. If you do not have a worship book, ponder the words of one of your favourite hymns and listen for God's voice. Those who have the internet may find the songs on YouTube.

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The trouble with deep belief is that it costs something and there is something inside me, some selfish beast of a subtle thing that doesn't like the truth at all because it carries responsibility, and if I actually believe these things, I have to do something about them. It is so, so cumbersome to believe anything. And it isn't cool."

— Donald Miller, [Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality](#)

#### BEFORE WE WORSHIP, WE REFLECT...

Finish this sentence: "Can anything good come out of \_\_\_\_\_?" The way we fill in the blank reveals the implicit biases we carry toward certain places and the people who come from them. In honest reflection, what part of town, part of the country, or part of the world flashes to mind with that question? For the disciple Nathanael, the answer is the small backwater village of Nazareth. Yet Nathanael is amazed as he encounters God in Jesus the Nazarene. Throughout scripture, God is revealed in unlikely people and places, challenging biases and crumbling prejudices. What bias of the assembly needs challenging today?

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge we gather and worship on Treaty 1 Territory, the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

God of all creation, as we journey together, we pray for healing, forgiveness and unity, creating a path of good will, with justice and compassion.

Jesus, through the power of your love, you have given us the courage, wisdom and strength to share our gifts and talents in humility. In peace and understanding we reconcile with each other.

Creator Spirit, we come together in prayer and thanksgiving for the many blessings we have received. Allow your Spirit to wash over us and give us strength to walk together as one. Amen.

*This Reconciliation Church prayer was written by a small group of Aboriginal Elder women and Reconciliation Church staff members in 2014.*

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Arise! Shine!

**God's light has come to reveal The Way in this New Year.**

Arise! Shine!

**The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.**

Arise! Shine!

**God's light penetrates the darkness that covers the world.**

Arise! Shine!

**Nations shall come to God's light and kings to the brightness of God's dawn. Arise! Shine! For the Glory of the Lord has risen upon us.**

**CHILDREN'S SONG:** VU 567 Will You Come And Follow Me

#### CENTERING PRAYER

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **CANADIAN LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF: CANADIAN LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF** **Sudan | Emergency assistance to refugees**

Canadian Lutheran World Relief is responding to the violence in Sudan by supporting families who have crossed the border into Chad.

In mid-April, 2023, fighting began between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Thousands of people were trapped in their homes and hundreds killed. At least 30,000 people have crossed the border into Chad seeking refuge in the first month, with more arriving every day. Initial assessments found Sudanese refugees in Chad have no access or limited access to food, basic household supplies and shelter. There are also growing shortages of sanitation, water, and hygiene facilities. Safeguarding risks have also been identified.

With funding from Global Affairs Canada, Humanitarian Coalition and Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC), CLWR is responding by providing emergency assistance to almost 3000 people, plus constructing emergency latrines, handwashing facilities and showers, and rehabilitating damaged community water sources, benefitting over 11,000 people. Water treatment products are also being distributed to ensure access to potable water.

CLWR's local partners, LWF Chad, are prioritizing the most vulnerable, including children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and single mothers. 588 families are receiving cash support to allow purchase of shelter and critical household supplies.

Join us in prayer for our partners in LWF Chad as they respond, and in particular for all those who have been affected by this crisis.

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Wondrous Spirit, gather our minds that they may be one with you. Open our ears that they may hear your Word. Soften our hearts that they may receive your wisdom. Speak to us for we, your servants, are listening. Amen.

### **READINGS AND PSALM**

#### **First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-20**

*At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.*

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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." <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." [<sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. <sup>12</sup>On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have

spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup>For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup>Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

<sup>15</sup>Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>16</sup>But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." <sup>17</sup>Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." <sup>18</sup>So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

<sup>19</sup>As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.]

### **Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

<sup>1</sup>LORD, you have searched me out; O LORD, you have known me.

<sup>2</sup>**You know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.**

<sup>3</sup>You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>**Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

<sup>5</sup>You encompass me, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

<sup>13</sup>For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>**I will thank you because I am marvellously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

<sup>15</sup>My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book; my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

<sup>17</sup>How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>**If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.**

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

*Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.*

<sup>12</sup>"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup>"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." <sup>17</sup>But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

### **Gospel: John 1:43-51**

*In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."*

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>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.”<sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”<sup>47</sup>When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”<sup>48</sup>Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.”<sup>49</sup>Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”<sup>50</sup>Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.”<sup>51</sup>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.”

**HYMN:** VU 509 I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky

## **SERMON**

So, you have received the invitation--"Follow me", "Come and see". What are you going to do with it? Philip already had a vocation as a fisherman. Near as we can tell, he just walked away from it all and followed Jesus. Certainly, there were times afterward when he went back out on the water with the nets, but that life, for Philip, was now in the past. Philip was offered the invitation and he took it. He became a disciple of Jesus. His first response as a disciple was to invite another to follow - Nathaniel. Philip was a very fast learner.

But is that all? We just accept the invitation and that's it, job done, work finished, higher someone else to do our leg work? When God sends out an invitation, what IS the proper response?

In the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh makes a covenant with Yahweh's people, binding them fast forever. The parties to the covenant are not equal. Yahweh is not dependent upon Israel as they are upon Yahweh. Yahweh remains free and sovereign. This solemn agreement involves a promise made by God, and this mystery of divine invitation requires a freely chosen acceptance on the part of the people.

It is possible to refuse the invitation. Yahweh would then cease to be a partner in their lives - but at what cost?

Yahweh made a covenant with Noah that involved the whole human race and made a covenant with Abraham that was renewed with Jacob--who became Israel. This covenant required but one obligation: circumcision.

Should we choose to accept our Lord's invitation we become a covenant partner, responsible to God, and therefore there are obligations, things we must do to uphold the agreement that we are representatives for God. Suddenly, personal responsibility enters into the picture.

The covenant made on Mount Sinai binds the whole nation. The whole nation receives a code of conduct which functions as instruction to live God's way as a deterrent against turning away from God which then cancels the promise and invites judgment.

Great, we accept the invitation and if we "don't follow the rules" we invite judgement! So why accept the invitation if all it will bring is a code of conduct and accountability if we don't follow the code?

Sinai stands as the symbol of the law and the place of primary revelation where God called Moses into God's service and where the two conversed. The exodus and the passage through the Red Sea were a preliminary promise as God brought Israel into God's embrace.

The earth belongs to God who can choose from it any nation to be God's people, and in God's free grace, Israel is chosen to be a special possession, peculiarly God's alone. The nation is to have the status and responsibility of priests, mediating between God and humankind and to represent the world to God and to show God to the nations. They are to share in the holiness of God which is at once a gift and a duty. They are witnesses to the interaction between God and God's people and are to participate in the communication. The law is a mediator between God and the world, for humankind cannot look directly at God and live.

Suddenly our role in this partnership becomes almost a burden -- to mediate between God and humankind. Living our faith is not enough, we must become active in the lives and covenants of others so that they, too, are in an active, faithful partnership with God. So then what does Jesus have to do with any of this. The invitation has already been sent out; the covenant relationship established?

Through our baptism we become grafted to the tree of Christ. We become part of Christ. The relationship and the covenant is deepened, becomes more intimate. We know God personally through Christ. To encounter Christ is to encounter the one who asks you to LEAVE THE FAMILIAR and join company with the Spirit on a new journey, an adventure with God! Christ not only asks that, but makes it possible. To encounter Christ is to be given a new way of looking at the world. Love is greater than hatred and life is stronger than death. That new way of seeing the world means that we are able to do new things, to journey in a new direction, to take risks that otherwise would be impossible. It also means that, like Philip, we are inspired and eager to call others.

"Philip found Nathaniel." Philip's words to Nathaniel meet with an initial negative response. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Not very complimentary to the reputation of Nazareth! Yet these words express the difficulty which we all have and which indeed all the disciples had. It is very difficult to believe that a particular human being from an insignificant little village should be the means of God's final revelation to the world. Nathaniel responds as any of us might do. Notice, however, he does "come and see."

Jesus' words begin the process of changing Nathaniel. Unlike Jacob, who as the younger child, and through deception, received his older brother's birthright and blessing, this Israelite will not receive his new status by trickery, but as his name, Nathaniel, indicates, as a gift of God. Before Philip called him, Jesus saw him "under the fig tree." Jesus' insight into who he was convinced Nathaniel, and he confessed Christ. What attracted Nathaniel is what attracts us all. In the words of Christ we find ourselves. He knows who and what we are. His teaching exposes the reality of human life in its brokenness and its need for healing and fulfillment.

Nathaniel's story reminds us that the good news of Christ overcomes our reluctance to know him. How then does the witness of the apostles, of Bartholomew and the others, break through that reluctance? You have received the invitation in your baptism. At your confirmation you affirmed your baptism and stated you accepted the responsibility to be a covenant partner with Christ. We are called by Christ to call others. How? By sharing the Gospel, telling our faith story, acknowledging our brokenness and need for God and celebrating what God has done for us in our lives! If those we invite are reluctant, try Philip's approach, "Come and see." Amen.

**HOM:** MV 33 Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

Encourage the ministry and mission of the church, God of truth. Let the leaders of your church be trustworthy and accountable stewards, that all its resources and outreach bring hope and healing to communities. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Delight in the goodness of your creation, God of fig trees and fertile soil. Heal areas of the world harmed by human greed. Restore those recovering from natural disaster. Protect our forests and waterways and all the creatures that live in them. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Call the leaders of every neighborhood and nation to serve faithfully, God of wisdom. Give them visions of justice and unity. Lead them to action that promotes equitable partnership and uplifts those on the margins of society. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Hold in your care any who suffer and struggle, God of compassion. You who know our inner hearts, be present with any who are oppressed, victims of racism or cultural bias, and all who long for respite or restoration. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Give this congregation the anticipation and excitement of Samuel, so inspired and empowered to do your work in the world, God of unity. Make us faithful as we build communities of inclusion and mutual care.

God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Trusting God who raised Jesus and will also raise us in spirit and truth, we remember all who have died and are at peace among the saints. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**SENDING SONG:** VU 500 Blessed Jesus, At Your Word

## **BENEDICTION**

God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, bless you and remain with you always. Amen.

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