



Kaurihohore Historic Church

Email: kaurichurch@gmail.com Phone: 946 0813



Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 9 February – Epiphany 5

The service this morning is led by Jane Garrick, one of our Lay Preachers

Welcome to our service this morning.

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice, Sustainability.

Inclusiveness: we recognise the full equality of the entire human family to share in ministry, leadership, and worship, regardless of race, age, physical ability, neurodiversity, marital or economic status, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

We invite you to:

*Join in the congregational responses printed in **Bold**.
Stand if you are able, for the hymns and the offering prayer*

Welcome

A warm welcome to you all today. Today is the fifth Sunday in the season of Epiphany and our theme this morning is “The Call of God.” The Bible has many examples of people being called by God and we will be exploring some of these. You will see on the front of the service sheet the painting by Peter Koenig showing the calling of the disciple Peter. When God calls us, He also equips and provides for us, as seen in Peter’s overflowing fishing nets.

You will also find towards the back of the service sheet an example of another way to pray – The Body Prayer – by Julian of Norwich. This is a prayer without words that was taught by her some 700 years ago. She used this prayer to slow down and be with God. See what you think.

Call to Worship

Hear the words of Jesus and trust.

We will trust in the God to whom we bring praise and prayer.

Hear the words of Jesus and trust.

We will trust that His way will lead and inspire us.

Hear the words of Jesus and trust.

We will trust that there is faithful work to do with our names on it.

Hear the words of Jesus and trust.

We will trust that in the good times and the tough times, God goes with us.

As part of our Call to Worship let us also join together in sharing Psalm 100. This is a psalm of thanksgiving inviting all the earth to worship the LORD with gladness and praise.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

**It is He who made us, and we are His;
we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

**For the Lord is good and His love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues through all generations.**

Opening Prayer

Lord, we are aware of Your call to each of us, the call to connect with You, not just in our minds but also in the deep places of our hearts and feelings.

Thank You that when You call us You also draw us by Your Holy Spirit, enabling us to come to You even in our childlike faith.

Today, dear Lord, give us the ears to hear Your voice and the heart to receive Your call. Help us to respond back to You, growing and loving You more every day. **Amen**

Poem - God Calling

by Sr. Joan Polak

In the chirping of the birds,
I hear the Word of God.
In the whispering of the leaves on the tree God speaks to me.
In the silence around me
Comes God whispering to me.
In the pain and difficult moments
What is God saying to me?
In the caw of the crow or the song of a bird God is calling me to prayer.
On the face, the smile of another
Do I see God's love for me and all mankind— What is God saying to me?
Soft is the Word, gentle the message
Am I listening?

Am I hearing?
Am I responding? Am I paying attention?

Listen, listen to the God of love
And answer His call to prayer
For from the Gospel we hear,
“Blessed are those who hear
the Word of God and keep it.”

Hymn MP 50: [Be Still, for the presence of the Lord \(David Evans\)](#)

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here;
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear:
In him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.
2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight - our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.
3. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace -
No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

Prayer - Adapted from www.faithandworship.com

God of all ages, who from generation to generation
has heard the cries of Your children humbly seeking forgiveness,
and has welcomed sinners back into Your embrace,
hear the thoughts of our hearts,
examine our motives,
and forgive us our faults.

**Forgive me for the things I have done
and not done.**

**Forgive me for the things I have said
and not said.**

**Forgive me for the life I have lived
and not lived.**

May I reflect the image

**of the One I profess to follow,
in thought, word and deed,
and in discovering my true self
draw others into that light.**

We ask this through Your Son who died and rose again to give us fullness of life. **Amen**

Words of Grace

Friends, hear the words of Jesus, "Do not be afraid!" There is nothing in our past that matters more than what God can do, beginning now. We are forgiven by the one who has endured the depths of death and has risen to ever-new life. Not only are we forgiven, but we are also sent to fish for others, whom God also yearns to gather with the net of holy love. This is the Good News! You can trust it with your life. Thanks be to God! **Amen**

Hymn HFTC 104: [Jesus calls us o'er the Tumult \(Cecil Frances Alexander\)](#)

Tune: St Andrew

1. Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea;
Day by day his sweet voice sounding,
Saying, "Christian, follow me."
2. Brothers Simon, Andrew heard it
By the Galilean lake,
Turned from home, and toil, and kindred,
Leaving all for His dear sake.
3. Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, "Christian, love me more."
4. In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these."

5. Jesus calls us—By your mercies,
Savior, may we hear your call,
Give our hearts to your obedience,
Serve and love you best of all.

Readings

Isaiah 6:1-8

Luke 5:1-11

Reflection

God is speaking to us all the time – just look around you – think about sunsets and sunrises, a beautiful flower, the face of someone you love, their laughter lines, the sparkle in their eyes. Yes, He speaks to us in many ways - nature, people, words spoken, or a quiet thought that comes to mind. He also speaks to us in the Bible, His Word to us.

In Jeremiah 29:11, for example, He says to you “For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

He loves connection with us. Jeremiah 33:3 tells us “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” There is so much in this one little verse. Firstly, there is the gracious invitation – call to me – secondly, the promise – I will answer you and thirdly, the promise of revelation – show you great and unsearchable things!

Charles Spurgeon, the famous preacher, spoke about God thinking of us ... how He finds the time and opportunity to do this. He numbers the hairs of our head; He knows every inch of our path; our sorrows and our joys are all calculated and catalogued by Him. He knows our getting up and our sitting down, our going out and our coming in. What is there of which He has not perfect knowledge? What is there in which He is not interested? Oh, wonder of wonders, that this busy God of ours knows us, loves us, cares for us, enters into the petty details of our fleeting life, and counts no grief too slight to come to His attention!

Yes, God is speaking to us all the time but our focus this morning is His Call to us. How is His Call different to Him speaking?

A call is to utter words or sounds loudly so as to attract attention. It stands out from the ordinary.

So how does God call us?

A call from God can be a startling event, a moment of epiphany, in which we are changed forever.

Last Sunday we read about the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet and this week a similar scene shows us the call of Isaiah. God's audible voice was heard. There are other examples in the Bible such as the boy Samuel who was woken from sleep, hearing the voice of God calling him. Saul, later to become the Apostle Paul, was another Bible character who, on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, was arrested, as it were by the audible voice of God: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Sometimes there is no doubt that it is the voice of God calling. A Stanford University academic recalls meeting a woman in California, who had graduated from a good college. Unfortunately, the best job she could get was the morning shift at the local gas station grocery store, 6 am to 1 pm. She did not much like it: She said:

"Lots of hung-over people, lots of grumpy, inappropriate interactions that I had. I can't tell you how many times I had to deal with somebody trying to get money out of the ATM with their library card. People would come in and they would buy beer and they would buy cigarettes and cat food. And I just, I'll be honest with you, I was as judgmental as you can get. I was like, you have got to be kidding me. Why, why am I here?"

"One morning this woman came in and she looked like she'd been up all night. She just looked like she had a rough experience. And she threw her stuff on the counter, two six packs of beer and some cat food and a food product of some kind, donuts I think. And as she looked at me, she said, 'Hey, can you get me a carton of cigarettes?'"

“I’m thinking, ‘Excellent. This is what I want to be doing.’ So, I turned around, rolled my eyes, started thinking my judgmental thoughts and in that moment, I literally heard the voice of God say to me, ‘Do not judge this woman. I have created her in my image, and I love her. Don’t judge her.’ And I literally almost fell over. I mean ‘cause I was trying to give her change, and I’m like duhhh, the voice of God spoke to me!

“I have been changed ever since.”

The thought came to her as if it was not hers. She did not feel that she interpreted the thought as God’s voice; instead, she felt in her gut that God had spoken inside her mind — and it changed her life. She was called to unconditional love.

Some of you here may have had an epiphany like these ones. I haven’t had any such moment, although, after crying out to God many years ago, I did walk around for the next few days with the physical feeling of someone having their arms around me. I also had very vivid dreams in the days that followed, in which He showed me how much He loved me.

C.S. Lewis recalled the time when he and his brother set out on a visit to the zoo. “When we set out,” he said, “I did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but when we reached the zoo, I did. I had not exactly spent the journey in thought, nor in great emotion. It was more like when a man, after a long sleep, still lying motionless on the bed, becomes aware that he is now awake. From death to life. From darkness to light. The fog had lifted, and the Son was now shining bright.”

God can, as we have seen, call us any way He chooses.

Most often, however, I think a calling from God is a gradual process that happens over months and years. A desire to know Him and do His will grows steadily within. It’s that inner voice of knowing and the drawing of His Spirit.

We have read this morning of God’s call to Peter. This was a very practical situation. Fishing was the livelihood of Peter and his partners. They had been toiling all night. How often do we toil in our lives, striving

to accomplish a living or just in our daily comings and goings? There were times in my working life as a teacher when I became very stressed, feeling the weight and pressure of assessments and expectations. It was often in those moments that I realised I was working in my own strength, and as I surrendered it all to Jesus, His peace would come, along with a way through the workload. What a difference!

Here Peter's response is interesting. Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Peter has a reason not to heed the call of Jesus. "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" In other words, I'm not good enough to come to You.

Who of us is good enough? Only a few verses later in this chapter, Jesus says that He did not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.

How encouraging this is for us! We don't have to measure up or be perfect, or even spiritual in order to come to God or hear His calling. We need to be ourselves, coming to God with our weaknesses, failures and unworthiness. We are going to be singing that lovely old hymn "Just as I am" shortly. Let's sing it as a prayer, offering ourselves afresh to God.

So, to what does God call us?

There is no doubt that He calls us to be like Jesus, following in His footsteps of selfless service. In Matthew chapter 20 Jesus called his disciples to Him and said, "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Being His hands and His feet in this troubled world of ours is not necessarily the way of importance or glory, but rather, a path of humility and even brokenness. Nevertheless, as we follow Jesus, hearts and minds are transformed.

Jesus showed the disciples what it meant to serve, by washing their feet and then He showed humanity what it meant to serve, by dying on the cross for every person who has ever lived or will ever live.

What is our response to the Call of God? Peter left everything behind and followed Jesus. Levi, the tax collector, when he heard the words “Follow Me” from Jesus, left his money tables immediately and followed Jesus. Imagine that! For both Peter and Levi, it meant forsaking their livelihood – remember, there was no social welfare back then.

We may not be called to sell up and leave everything behind, but we are called to surrender. *Surrender* is a battle term. It means giving up all rights to the conqueror. When an opposing army surrenders, they lay down their arms, and the winners take control from then on.

Surrendering to God works the same way. God has a plan for our lives, and surrendering to Him means we set aside our own plans and seek His. The good news is that God’s plan for us is always in our best interest, unlike sometimes, our own plans.

Mother Teresa said “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” I think that sums up the call of God upon our lives. We are called to Love in every sense of the word and its meaning. What that looks like for one person will be different to that of another but if it is done in love, it will be the best thing that ever happened for all the parties concerned.

God is calling me. God is calling you. We all have a choice as to whether we will listen to His voice. We can ignore it if we want, but if I do hear His voice, how will I respond? When He calls you, how will you respond? Like the boy Samuel in the Bible, I hope you will say, “Speak Lord, for Your servant is listening.” May it be a “yes” in your spirit.

God bless you as you walk with Him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all Your goodness to us. Every breath we take is a gift from You. Thank You that it is in Your kindness that You draw us to Yourself, to that place of surrender where we can come to You just as we are. Thank You that You want to change us so that we become more like Jesus every day. Help us, Lord. Help us to let You in to those deep places of our hearts and minds, to be truly

surrendered to You. We pray thanking You for all that Jesus has done on the cross for us, and through His name. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 440: [Just as I am \(Charlotte Elliot\)](#)

(Tune: Woodworth)

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that You died to set me free,
and at Your bidding come to Me,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2. Just as I am, without delay
Your call of mercy I obey,
Your blood can wash my sins away,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4. Just as I am, poor wretched blind,
Sight riches, healing of the mind
All that I need in You I find
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

5. Just as I am You will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because Your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6. Just as I am of that free love
The breadth, length, depth and height to prove
Here for a time, and then above,
O Lamb of God I come

Offering and Dedication

God of the bursting nets, we thank you for your abundant blessings rising up at every turn. Multiply these gifts and our faith that your good news of life-giving love may stretch wider still. Yes, form us deep in Your heart for this good and gracious work. Amen.

Prayer for Others

Dear Lord, Thank You that You hear the cries of our hearts and our concerns for those who are hurting and suffering.

We think of friends and loved ones who are going through difficult times ... those who are grieving ... those who are in pain ... those suffering loss

We think of the victims of war ... and the victims of inhumane acts in many places of our distressed world

In Your Grace bring forgiveness

Peace to the troubled

Healing to the hurting

Strength to the weak

Bless them, O God, with Your gentle touch; provide to them the strength, the courage, the faith and the peace necessary to hear Your voice, and to feel the comfort of Your love. Assure them that as they turn to You, somehow You will make everything right in their lives.

Help us to be faithful in prayer, trusting You to hear and answer.

Amen.

Hymn MP 857: [Lord of Sea and Sky \(Here I am Lord\)](#)

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Chorus:

*Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have born my peoples pain.
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them,
Whom shall I send?

Chorus:

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them,
Whom shall I send?

Chorus:

Blessing

Within the busyness of life may you sense God's presence, an inner warmth and strength that can overcome adversity, a sense of peace, a whisper heard through the distractions of daily life, uplifting, calming, enabling, your assurance that, whatever this day might throw, you are well-equipped, ready and willing to follow the call to be God's hands and voice and make a difference today.

Sung Amen

We have been having a Prayer focus recently... for example Breath Prayers. Here is another way to pray:

The Body Prayer (a prayer without words)

This prayer was taught by Julian of Norwich, who lived 700 years ago. She lived alone so she could spend all her time with God. She used this prayer to slow down and be with God.

This prayer has actions instead of words. Sit or stand up to begin. Think about God as you do these actions slowly.

Wait for God.

Hold your hands open in front of you.

This action means you are waiting for God to come and be with you.

Let God come.

Reach up high with your hands open.

This action means you are letting God come and be with you. You might feel something in your heart. Or you might not feel anything. That is okay.

Welcome God.

Put your hands on your heart.

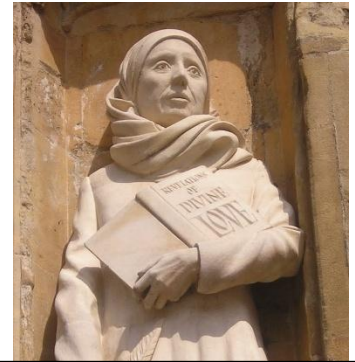
This action means you are saying yes to God and to whatever he wants to give you today. He is in charge.

Listen to God.

Stretch your open hands out in front of you.

This action means you are ready to do what God wants you to do today. You may feel him ask you to do something now. If not, that is okay.

If you want to keep praying, you can do these actions again. Or you can pray in a different way.



Statue of Julian of Norwich at Norwich