

# The Smestow Vale Team Ministry

St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede

Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 17th January

Epiphany 2



Eternal Lord

Our beginning and our end:

Bring us with the whole creation

To your glory, hidden through past ages

And made known

In Jesus Christ our Lord.

## God calls the boy Samuel

The boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 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. Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' 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. 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.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 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. 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. Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

*Samuel 3:1-10*

## Philip and Nathanael's call to discipleship.

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' 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.'

John 1:43-51

## A Reflection on our Gospel Reading by Revd Richard Fisher

Jacob is a schemer. He deviously cheats his brother Esau out of his father's inheritance. Eventually, the tables turn, and Esau tries to kill him. It is time for Jacob to get away fast. You can read the story from millennia ago, in Genesis 25 – 28.

When Jacob was running away, Jacob has a dream: he sees a ladder with its feet on the earth and its top reaching into heaven. God's angels were going up and down on it. It is this passage that Jesus refers to when he says to Nathaniel: "you will see heaven opened, with the angels of God going up and down upon the Son of Man" - John 1.51 (Jesus is referring to himself when he says "son of man" here).

Note that this saying is important within the gospel of John for whenever Jesus says "Amen, Amen, I say to

you” (translated here “Very truly I tell you”) he uses this phrase to emphasize something of special importance. So, we’d better look at it a bit more closely!

Jacob was the founding father of the people of Israel. The point about Jacob’s ladder was that it showed that God was there with him in that place. Jacob calls the place Bethel, meaning “God’s house”. After he returned to the land, and much later when his descendants possessed the land again, Bethel became one of the great sanctuaries where Israel’s worship was carried on. Jacob’s ladder reminded Jews of the importance of worshipping God in a place: a building.

This is the clue we are looking for! In John’s Gospel there is much about how Jesus fulfils the promises concerning the Temple – and goes way beyond them, pioneering a new way in which the living God will be present in his people as “temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6.19). Whilst it may be helpful to pray in a dedicated building, our prayer is no less valid when we pray at home or outside - because Jesus has given us access to our Father by his Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10.19-25).

*Richard*

## **Prayers for Epiphany 2**

### **Sunday**

Pray it will soon be possible again to invite people to “Come and see.” (John 1: 46)

### **Monday**

Pray for God’s blessing on the roll-out of the vaccines.

### **Tuesday**

Pray for the elderly and vulnerable.

### **Wednesday**

Pray for President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris, being inaugurated today.

### **Thursday**

Pray for the United States under its new presidency.

### **Friday**

Pray for the for nations which make up the United Kingdom.

### **Saturday**

Pray for determination to stick to the lockdown rules.

## **Prayer for those working in NHS and Care Homes**

During the Pandemic if you would like NHS and Care Home Staff remembered in Prayer at our daily morning prayer, please send their first names to the Parish Office.

## **Please remember those who have asked for our prayers**

Lisa, Morgan, Margaret Ward, Joy Waistell, Jane, Sarah Aldridge, Delma Scriven, George Moorhouse, Joan Edwards and Carl Baker.

## **Those who have died**

Keith Wilson, Patricia Mogford, James Rivett, Melvin Owen and Elizabeth Ryman.

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

## **Lockdown and our Church**

It was with great reluctance due to the rising infection rate in all the parishes of our Team Ministry we have decided to suspend public worship on Sundays. There will be a service for the second Sunday of Epiphany on Facebook and YouTube. In our Gospel Reading Philip encourages Nathanael to come and see, we can encourage others by putting a like when we have seen the service on Facebook and YouTube.

St Benedict’s will remain open for private prayer.

## **Stewardship Envelopes**

Nigel Welch is preparing the new envelopes for 2021, which will be available in February. We are very grateful for your continuing support of our mission in Wombourne. During these difficult times many donors have converted to Standing Order, which has been very much appreciated. If anyone would like to change to or start a Standing Order, or to join the envelope scheme, or has changed any personal details, would they let Nigel Welch know ASAP please.

Contact: 01902 324111, womwelch@hotmail.com

