

**Hailsham Methodist Church**  
**Worship at Home**  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Opening Prayer**

Let your word be in our mouth, O Lord, your truth in our heart and your will in our mind. Let us at all times be alive to the promptings of your Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Hymn: Master Speak! Thy Servant Heareth** (StF 666)

**Prayers of Adoration, Confession & Assurance of Forgiveness**

Thank you, Lord, that you know us and can see our potential – for you know who we are created to be. We thank you for all the people you have placed in our lives – parents, teachers, guardians, friends, whoever they may be – people who have made a real difference. We thank you for the blessings of relationships, but most of all for our relationship with you.

Help us to bless others in your name. Thank you, Lord, that when we are hurt, confused or unsure about something or someone, we can come to you – thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance.

Lord, our hearts are lifted by your presence in our lives. All glory to you with thanks and praise. Amen.

Lord Jesus, we are sorry when we do and say things that turn others away from you instead of drawing them closer. Help us to be like Philip and help our friends to hear you.

*Lord, if you mark our transgressions,  
Who would stand?*

*Thanks to your grace we are cleansed  
By the blood of the Lamb.*

*Only by grace can we enter,  
Only by grace can we stand;*

*Not by our human endeavour,  
But by the blood of the Lamb.*

*Into your presence you call us,  
You call us to come.*

*Into your presence you draw us,  
And now by your grace we come.*

*Gerrit Gustafson (StF 565)*

**Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10**

**Hymn: I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky** (StF 663)

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

**Reflection:**

*He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' (John 1:43)*

"Follow me." Are these words of invitation or command? It is difficult to tell, but Philip heard the words and followed Jesus. The events in this account were not accidents: Jesus found Philip. Philip found Nathaniel. Philip began to speak with Nathaniel, saying they had found 'the one', the special one. This special one, expected by the Prophets was here – Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus found Philip. It wasn't the work of a street corner preacher having an unexpected impact on a random person. Jesus sought out Philip, found him and said "Follow me."

Philip and Jesus must have known each other, by reputation, if not closely. They must have had common interests, possibly including a wish for change and the fulfilment of ancient prophecy. Jesus wouldn't have known to look for Philip, to find him, unless they knew each other.

When Jesus found Philip and said, "Follow me" Philip followed. He wasn't taking a passing interest – like following someone on Twitter – it was much stronger – he was following in the sense of being a fanatic who was prepared to have his life changed. I follow a football team to the extent I watch when they play on TV and I follow their scores week by week. But I have friends who are dedicated fans of the team, which is different. They go to the matches home and away (pandemic permitting), they buy the replica strip and a season ticket. The restriction on watching live football has, in their words, diminished their lives.

Philip was asked to be a fan, not just an interested follower, and his life changed because he followed.

*To Ponder:*

*What are the personal qualities that you find inspiring?*

*What are the things you follow – take an interest in? And what are the things you are a fan of, care deeply and passionately about? What makes the difference?*

*What will inspire you to be a fan of something, and to make a life-changing commitment?*

**Hymn: Will You Come And Follow Me? (StF 673)**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Come and see, and join in praying for the people of the world waiting to hear good news.

Loving God, we pray for the states of America to be united in the days and weeks ahead.

We pray for an end to violence, for wisdom and protection for President-elect Joe Biden and all who will take office in a few days' time. We pray for those threatening to disrupt the inauguration, and for the police force and those entrusted with keeping the law and peace.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.*

We pray for those around the world at the mercy of extreme weather conditions.

We pray for the people of Japan, of Indonesia, especially those rescue workers who died trying to save others, for those bereaved in the plane crash, for those in our own country without power and heat. We pray for those tackling the climate change challenges of our time and for our own response in our day to day lives.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.*

We pray for all who are pushed to their limits at work and at home, for Intensive Care Staff, for all in the emergency services, for GP's, teachers and school staff, for parents and students, for all whose mental health is at breaking point. We pray for our Government and all whose decisions affect millions of lives. And we pray for one another as we respond to the restrictions locally and nationally.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.*

We pray for those whose businesses are closed, whose shops are locked up, whose rooms have no guests, for those whose money is running out, for those on the brink of despair.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.*

We pray for those we know and love, those who are sick and frightened, those who are far away and whom we miss, those who are on the edge and long to hear your voice.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.*

We pray for your church, entrusted with the good news of Jesus, and charged with serving all those in need. We pray for hospital chaplains, for those ministering to the bereaved, and for one another as we seek to share our faith and our hope in Jesus Christ.

*Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you. Amen.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

We pray as Jesus taught us: Our Father .....

**Hymn: Forth In Thy Name, O Lord, I Go (StF 550)**

### **Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, remain with us always. Amen.

Reflection by Rev Malcolm Peacock, taken from 'A Word In Time', Methodist Church website

Prayers compiled by Rev David Hinchliffe, Chair of the South East District. Also including some taken from The Methodist Worship Book and from "The Earth Is The Lord's" – the Methodist Prayer Handbook, 2020/2021