

**October 10th, 2021**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use while you are unable to attend worship in a church building.

### **Call to worship**

The invitation is given to every person by Jesus Christ:

"Come to me! Follow me! Be my disciples!"

We come to this place, to this time,  
at the invitation of Jesus Christ.

### **Prayers**

Creator God, you who love us more than we can know,

Who chose us from the very beginning to be family,  
We praise your holy name.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word become flesh;  
who dwelt among us and was sacrificed for us,  
We praise your holy name.

Holy Spirit, present and power in our lives,  
from the moment that we first believed;  
We praise your holy name. **Amen**

Now let us take a moment of silence as we make our confession before God.

### **Silence**

Heavenly father, we thank you that through the self-giving love of your son Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, redeemed and restored and our union with you assured. **Amen**

### **Mark 10:17-31**

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"  
18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall

not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" 20 He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money[a] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is[b] to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They were greatly astounded and said to one another,[c] "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news,[d] 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

### **Hymn StF 673 Will you come and Follow me**

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown?  
Will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in  
me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your  
name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the  
same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life  
attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in  
me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your  
name?  
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the  
same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this  
unseen,  
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your  
name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the  
same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the  
world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and  
you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but  
call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the  
same.  
In Your company I'll go where Your love and  
footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in  
me.

*John Bell Graham Maule*

### **Message**

I want to begin by sharing with you something  
about my attempts to learn to play the oboe a  
few years ago after a friend gifted me her old  
oboe, having upgraded to a beautiful new one.

I booked some lessons and began the journey of  
becoming an oboe player with whole hearted  
enthusiasm. Sadly it didn't last long, once I  
realised how difficult an instrument it is to play I  
was dismayed and disheartened and quickly  
found excuses not to practice. Very soon I became  
half hearted, I lost the commitment, lacked any  
intention to see it through and became easily  
distracted by other things. When I did finally  
decide to give it up I was hugely relieved.

Maybe you too have had things in your life that  
didn't get the commitment or attention needed  
to make a real difference!

In our reading from the Mark's gospel it is this  
kind of half hearted commitment that Jesus is  
warning against for those who want to become  
followers. He is asking for a full hearted  
commitment if we are really searching for that life  
changing transformation.

People often express concern about this passage;  
it appears to be calling followers to give up family  
and livelihoods and everything they value to  
follow the call of Christ...surely this cannot be  
right, can it? But this is not really a call to ditch  
everything we hold dear...we must not see this as  
a literal requirement. What Jesus is really calling  
us to is to be clear and intentional about what  
comes first.

If we are really seeking the transformational, life  
changing path that Christ offers then he needs to  
occupy much more than a mere small corner of  
our lives when we have a moment or too to fit  
him in. In fact Christ consciousness is something  
that must underpin and over arch our entire lives  
precisely so that *we are* better in our livelihoods  
and in our family relationships. Indeed quite the  
contrary to being called away from those things,  
this new life calls us to be our best selves in the  
very context of our daily lives amongst our family  
members, our friends and our colleagues.

It is in whole hearted followership that we grow  
in grace, in clarity and in a potential to instill  
hope, to walk humbly and wisely and so herald

the Good News simply through who we are in Christ, inhabiting our daily life.

For sure some do feel a vocational call to monastic life that they can give their whole life to this followership. But in truth all of our relationships, whether in marriage or with our kids or friends, or colleagues - in other words, wherever we are in life - that is our monastery, the place where our followership is honed.

What it really boils down to is the quality of our intention and our attention.

Going back to my metaphor of oboe playing, whilst I had a desire to learn to play, it was not on the top of my list of things to do and so for that reason my *Intention* was pretty low...it was more a pipe dream than a conviction (no pun intended). Intention is a powerful energy that moves things up our list of priorities; it enables us to invest in the matter at hand, even when the going gets tough, or we get bored or our energy is low.

**Attention** is the focus that we give to something. When we pay attention we are listening, watching, waiting, and noticing and being open to the subtle changes as a result of our faithfulness to the practice. Sadly I was so distracted by thoughts about how this instrument wasn't for me, about things I could be doing rather than spending hours trying to perfect playing a double reed and just general disappointment with myself that the attention required to learn was just not there.

Reflecting on our own levels of intention and attention as disciples of Christ enables us to be much more aware of how these are influencing our christian journey.

There are days when we will be so full of conviction and joy that our attention is really honed and so we find ourselves catching glimpses of God everywhere. Then there are the days when we feel abandoned, it feels as if God is nowhere around us, we are distracted by every

passing thought and remaining on the path can be very challenging. It's as if our heart is just not in it. All of this is to be expected and a natural part of the labyrinthine journey. The contemplatives would tell us that the highs and the lows are not important at all but rather it is remaining faithful to the call *regardless* that really enables our spiritual development, and this is where intention and attention are most usefully applied.

For the rich young man we might wonder whether, though seemingly intentional about keeping the religious commandments, giving his whole heart was too great a challenge. Perhaps too the distractions that can come with establishing and maintaining significant wealth redirected his attention away from the path of true discipleship so that in the end he had to make a choice about which path he preferred to remain faithful to.

To close with, here is a quote from American Pastor Charles Swindol who says this;

'More than once Jesus deliberately addressed certain issues that quickly diminished the number of onlookers. It was commitment that thinned the ranks'.

### Hymn Stf 728

O', God, you search me, and you know me  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze  
When I walk or lie down, you are before me,  
'Ever the maker and keeper of my days

You know my resting and my rising  
You discern my purpose from afar  
And with love everlasting, you besiege me,  
In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord  
You have known its meaning through and through;  
You are with me beyond my understanding,  
God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me  
Still I search for shelter from your light  
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you;  
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,  
Gave me life within my mother's womb;  
For the wonder of who I am I praise you,  
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

*Bernadette Farrell*

### **Prayers**

God of our church community, help us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling You have given us. Help us in all our interactions with one another to have humble and gentle hearts. Grant us patience for one another, bearing with one another in love. May we walk humbly with You, God, allowing You to show us our wrongs.

Lord you your Mercy

**Hear our Prayer**

God of creation and Lord of life, you entrusted us to care for our environment, but in many parts of the world we have failed. Help us to realise how fragile and unstable our surroundings are, because we are not looking after creation. We need to be true stewards and to understand how the most insignificant little flowers, and the tiniest insects, each creature and individual people are all part of a wondrous whole.

Lord in your Mercy

**Hear our Prayer**

God of this World, we bring before you in silence all those who need our prayers at this time from the stories we have heard on the news to those close to us who need our Prayer.

*A time of quiet prayer*

We bring these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us when we pray to say.

### **Lords Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on

earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### **Hymn StF 545 Be thou my vision**

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;  
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,  
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,  
be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;  
be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;  
Thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true  
might;  
be thou my souls shelter, be thou my strong  
tower:  
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my  
power.

Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:  
be thou mine inheritance now and always;  
be thou and thou only the first in my heart:  
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,  
O grant me its joy after victory is won;  
Great heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

### **Blessing**

May the love of the Father,  
the tenderness of the Son,  
and the presence of the Spirit,  
gladden your heart  
and bring peace to your soul,  
this day and all days, Amen.

Worship prepared by Reverend Jayne Webb.