

# Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet, 17<sup>th</sup> January

**This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Mr John Harbron.**

**“For God so loved the world that  
he gave his one and only Son  
not to condemn the world,  
but to save the world through him.”**

It seems a long time ago, but it was only three weeks ago we were celebrating the birth of Jesus. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is starting his ministry by selecting his first disciples.

**Our opening song links the baby born at Christmas to that of who he became and of what he did.**

**It was the same for his fledgling group of disciples; they had no idea what they were going to experience over the following three years and then beyond.**

## **Hymn: Mary, did you know**

To listen to or view the video of the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#).  
Close the tab after the hymn.

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
would one day walk on water?**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
would save our sons and daughters?**

**Did you know that your baby boy  
has come to make you new?**

**This child that you've delivered  
will soon deliver you.**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
would give sight to a blind man?**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
would calm the storm with his hand?**

**Did you know that your baby boy  
has walked where angels trod?  
When you kiss your little baby  
you kiss the face of god.**

**Oh, Mary, did you know?**

**The blind will see,  
the deaf will hear,  
the dead will live again.**

**The lame will leap,  
the dumb will speak  
the praises of the lamb.**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
is lord of all creation?**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
would one day rule the nations?**

**Did you know that your baby boy  
is heavens perfect lamb?**

**The sleeping child you're holding  
is the great I AM.**

**Greene Lee Rufus, Lowry Mark Alan**

**If God had appointed a public relations firm to mastermind the planned introduction of God's Son to earth, I wonder, who would they have chosen?**

**Certainly not the group Luke introduces us to!**

- **No high prestige person in sight.**
- **An elderly obscure priest and his wife who was past child bearing age.**
- **A carpenter, whose only claim to rank, was being a distant relative of King David, and a long lost and forgotten one.**
- **A first century Danny Dyer but without the fame!**

**And there was Joseph's young fiancée - on the face of it just another girl.**

Then to cap it all,

- a bunch of shepherds come along to welcome the baby.

Shepherds – very near the bottom of the social scale.

Their place was up on the hills looking after the sheep.

- gifts of valuable possessions from the well to do.

Luke's account concludes with two very elderly workers at the Temple welcoming God's Son on his earthly ministry.

Though not mentioned by name or title, there must have been an innkeeper to let them have somewhere to use as the inn was full.

An odd group of people chosen by God but perfection personified!

And, what about the people Jesus selected to be his disciples?

– a very odd collection of characters!

Both groups of people, also-rans in the society of their day.

In 2020 and now into this new year, it has been the also-rans, the unimportant who have cared for the sick, the vulnerable, the dying, victims of a rampant pandemic either physically, emotionally or financially. And it continues unabated.

Health workers, care workers, teachers, volunteers, bus drivers, train drivers and rail staff, lorry drivers, shop workers, the list goes on and on.

So much in common with the cast list of God introducing his Son to us.

Nobodies in many people's eyes.

But now people's eyes have been truly opened.

### **Prayers of Praise, Thanksgiving and Confession.**

Lord, we thank you that you have made yourself known to us, and you have done so in a way which is surprising for someone who is so important - your one and only Son.

In the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, you brought to an end the empty speculation as to who you are and whether or not you love us. Not only have you revealed yourself to us, but also in the simplicity of Christ's coming you have swept away any reliance on ourselves – our intellectual searchings, or the assumption of our personal worth.

**We thank you for him being born of earthly parents and his entering into the world in the poverty of a stable, it speaks to us of the depths to which you are prepared to reach down in order to lift us to the height of your throne of grace. His coming teaches us to be open to you, to find us when we least expect it and in ways we could never have dreamt possible.**

**We thank you that Jesus was born as a human being and shared all our limitations of time and place; that though he was King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he was not born into a life of privilege but grew in the knowledge of you and your purposes for him.**

**We thank you for all who, like Mary, have been prepared to say “yes” to you and to your will for their lives;**

**For those, like the shepherds, are so open to you that they respond with a sense of urgency to do your will.**

**For all those like Joseph, are prepared to serve you in the background, to remain almost unnoticed yet remain faithful to you at great cost to themselves.**

**Lord, in the birth of your Son, we have celebrated not only your coming, but also your living, dying and your rising again.**

**Celebrating the victory of your love, a victory into which, by your Spirit, we can enter today and every day of our lives.**

**Lord, we thank you and praise you for all the love you give to us.**

**But we come before you, realising we can so easily forget to place you at the centre of all we say and do and fail to praise you and thank you for loving us enough to be born into this world to make us your people.**

**Help us Lord to remember that you came to change our selfish ways and to be the centre of our lives.**

**We are sorry that we can think more about what we want, instead of what you are wanting us to give to you.**

**We are sorry that we can get wrapped up thinking about ourselves and our family and not enough about you, and those who don't know you but need to know more about the love you show us.**

**Forgive us, and by your love, change our hearts and change our minds.  
We ask this through your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

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

The verses immediately before this passage are where Andrew, a follower of John the Baptist, introduces his brother Peter to Jesus. They are not invited at this stage to be his disciples.

The Gospel reading is about two others, not as well-known as the fishermen.

To listen to the reading by David Suchett, from BibleGateway, in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

**The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'**

**Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'**

**'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked.**

**'Come and see,' said Philip.**

**When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, 'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.'**

**'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked.**

**Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.'**

**Then Nathanael declared, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.'**

**Jesus said, 'You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.' He then added, 'Very truly I tell you, you will see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on" the Son of Man.'**

## **Reflection on the reading:**

**I'm sure there was a lot more going on before Jesus invited any of the unsuspecting candidates to join him as his disciples.**

**Just as I'm sure God had vetted those who were going to be at the centre of the birth of Jesus.**

**I think God and Jesus were looking for a spark and ultimately a flame in each of them which would be vital if they were going to fill the part that was being mapped out for them. But each person was unaware they had this potential.**

**How can you instill this fact in someone who is oblivious to it?**

\* \* \* \* \*

**A few years ago I was exercising at the gym when I heard a song being played which grabbed my attention. I stopped and listened.**

**For me the words were inspirational and the tune reflected the positivity of the words. It was a song by Katy Perry called "Firework".**

**If you can, have a listen to it and imagine what fireworks God and Jesus could see in each of the characters. They are not all rockets brightening up the sky. A firework display needs variety to give impact, just as a group of people need different attributes to make it work as a whole.**

**(By clicking [here](#) whilst pressing Ctrl and Shift you can listen to Katy Perry singing "Firework")**

**We don't know the mind set of each of the people chosen, but I like this verse and in particular the second line.**

**"You don't have to feel like a wasted space.**

**You're original, cannot be replaced.**

**If you only knew what the future holds,**

**After a hurricane comes a rainbow."**

**Each of us offers something special but it takes someone else to see it.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Do you recall the "Ugly Duckling", the fairy tale written by Hans Christian Anderson and sung in the film by Danny Kaye?**

The transformation when the ugly duckling learns he is actually a swan. He now knows his place in the lake's community and will grow into it. The gospels include Jesus inviting seven of the disciples. Andrew, Peter, James & John, Philip, Nathaniel (Bartholomew in the other gospels) and Levi (Matthew). In Mark's gospel (3: 13 – 19) there is the formal appointing of the twelve. The number twelve is symbolic, mirroring the twelve tribes of Israel. Also, twelve allows the group to be divided into twos, threes, fours and sixes. No one is left on his own. The use of the descriptive title for the twelve seems to vary between disciple and apostle.

I think the use of "disciple" is the most accurate for first three years. Defined as "a student learning from a teacher." Ordinary folk with so much to learn about this new theology, putting it into practice and relating to people. It was an apprenticeship preparing them for what lay ahead, whatever that was!

After the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection they were in limbo. With the impetus of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they suddenly found themselves "Apostles". Someone who "delivers teachings to others."

After all their training, these ordinary people found themselves at the centre of taking forward the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ.

All the potential that Jesus saw in them, is now there for all to see.

From the drab brown feathers they had grown into the grace and majesty of a swan. Out of a cardboard tube erupting as a firework.

From a gnarled seed bursting into a grand and fragrant flower.

Not much is known about most of the disciples from that moment.

Maybe Philip who we heard of very briefly in the Gospel reading is an example of the sort of things they were doing.

In chapter 8 of Acts we discover him in Samaria and then in Gaza where he meets an important official of the queen of the Ethiopians, who he baptises.

Philip - did you know what would come out of that meeting with Jesus?

**Nathaniel - that meeting with Jesus was a tester for you all. You came with your built-in prejudices about people from Nazareth. They were an unruly lot, producing some die-hard revolutionaries. But Jesus won you over and to your credit, you were prepared to listen to him and in turn share your thoughts with him.**

**It's a lesson for us all in this world today when it seems too many entrenched ideas are not negotiable. It's often said that you just need to talk and engage with each other and the fears will evaporate.**

**The understanding Jesus shows should encourage us to be an apostle for conquering prejudice and enabling reconciliation.**

**Jesus is able to focus through our two-dimensional characters to see the potential we possess. May we have the same gift to realise the potential others possess and harness it to serve the Lord.**

**I'm sure there are many people around in the same state of mind as the Ethiopian who Philip met. Thirsting after something indefinable which we know as Jesus Christ.**

**Can we unleash the majestic swan, the impressive firework and the fragrant flower just like Jesus does and will do so forever?**

**Amen.**

### **Prayers for Others and Ourselves:**

**Almighty God, we bring before you those whom we miss at this time of lockdown and uncertainty.**

**Those who are now with you in your heavenly Kingdom.**

**We bring you those living away from us who we are unable to join.**

**Lord, we ask you to bless all the people who are no longer with us and that they may live forever in the warmth of your eternal light.**

**Lord, we remember and give thanks for the light they have brought into our lives.**

**Those who are in Care Homes or hospital, places we are unable to visit.**

**We thank you for the staff who care for them. Bringing them the**

**comfort we want for them to have and the quality of life they deserve.**

**Lord, we bring you all those who are missing loved ones at this time. Those who are isolating themselves to keep themselves and those close to them safe.**

**May they know and feel the comfort and peace which only you can bring.**

**We bring to you all who we know are not well at this time. Those anxiously awaiting tests or the results of tests, living with the uncertainty of how things may turn out.**

**We bring you all who are lonely, missing the company of friends and colleagues. The trauma of being on their own.**

**May they know the strength which you give to help at this time, and may they know your presence is always around them.**

**We bring you all who found 2020 a difficult year and now fear whether things can improve in this new year.**

**Bless them Lord with your grace and love - and may they know through you, your light shows the way.**

**It's not always obvious Lord, but may they know in the darkness of their lives, there is the certainty you are with them.**

**We thank you Lord for all those who are helping others who are in need, putting themselves in difficult situations so that those who are vulnerable, sometimes helpless, find their needs are met.**

**We thank you Lord that you have shown them the gifts and talents which they have and are now being used for the benefit of others.**

**Bless them Lord with your grace and love and may they know the strength and courage which only you can bring.**

**We pray that through the mystery of your presence we may be united with those we love and miss.**

**And your love may reign for ever.**

**We ask this in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

## The Lord's 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.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Hymn: Colours of day

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#), the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Colours of day dawn into the mind,  
the sun has come up, the night is behind.  
Go down in the city, into the street,  
and let's give the message to the people we meet.  
  
So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
open the door, let Jesus return.  
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.
- 2 Go through the park, on into the town;  
the sun still shines on; it never goes down.  
The light of the world is risen again;  
the people of darkness are needing a friend.

**So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
open the door, let Jesus return.  
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.**

**3 Open your eyes, look into the sky,  
the darkness has come, the sun came to die.  
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,  
but Jesus is living, his Spirit is near.**

**So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
open the door, let Jesus return.  
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.**

Sue McClellan (b. 1951), John Paculabo (b. 1946) and Keith Ryecroft (b. 1949)

**Maybe a reason why all the doors are closed,  
is so you can open one that leads you to the perfect road.  
Like a lightning bolt you'll find your heart will glow  
and when it strikes you'll know it's time to go!**

**Halleluiah! Amen.**

