

“Our Calling: Learning & Caring”

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to this Local Arrangement service resource. It is the second of a set of four such services focussing on the four themes of the Methodist 'Our Calling' priorities, reaffirmed at the 2018 Methodist Conference. The theme for this service is “Our Calling: Learning and Caring”.

Please feel free to 'customize' your service to your own congregation... e.g. ... The hymns are only suggestions - if your congregation knows others that fit in with the theme, especially any newer ones, feel free to use those. You will also need to prepare for the prayers of intercession, to reflect current concerns. This is *your congregation's* service of worship to God, so make it as individual as you think appropriate!

I have suggested that you use 2 leaders and 4 readers, but you can adjust this too.

More information about Our Calling can be found on the Methodist Church website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/our-calling/>

and

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/our-calling/responding-to-our-calling-questions-for-churches/>

Chris Odell (Sheasby)

Trinity Circuit Own Arrangement Service for December 2018 – February 2019

“Our Calling: Learning & Caring”

Introduction to the theme of the service: Leader 1

Welcome to worship *this morning*. A few years ago the Methodist Church produced the statement 'Our Calling' in which they listed the four main callings of the Christian. They are: Worship; Learning and Caring; Service; and Evangelism. We have been asked to look again at how, as a Church, we might best respond to 'Our Calling' today. In our Own Arrangement services this year we will look at each calling in turn. Today we focus on our calling to be a learning and caring people.

Call to Worship: Leader 1

It is God who has called each one of us to this place;
To offer this time of worship and praise to him.
It is God who calls to us to open up our hearts and minds to him,
So that we can know his presence in this place and in the world.

HYMN: Jesus calls us here to meet him.....*StF 28 (Can be sung to many familiar 87 87 D tunes)*

OR Lord God, your love has called us here..... *StF 499;H&P 500;*

Prayer: Leader 2 (*Congregation is seated to sing the response – the chorus from MP 1086*)

Lord, we have heard you call us, heard you ask to enter our lives.
Lord, you are our God and Saviour: we come before you in worship and praise.
And so we sing:

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,

Here I am to say that you're my God.

You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me.

Lord, we have heard you call us to be your disciples, learning from you.
Lord, you are our leader and teacher: we come to listen to your living Word.
And so we sing:

Here I am to worship,

Lord, we have heard you call us to serve you lovingly in the world.
Lord, you are the Spirit of Life and Love: we come to open our lives to you.

And so we sing:

Here I am to worship,

Amen.

Reading: Reader 1 – Mark 1:14 – 20

Reflection: Reader 2 Shalom! My name is Andrew, which means 'manly'! – a good name for someone with a job as hard and risky as fishing. I worked alongside my brother, Simon. You'll know him better as 'Peter' – the name Jesus gave him, 'The Rock'. You'll know him better than you know me, anyway...he has a lot more coverage in the New Testament!
What I want to share with you today is about what being a disciple means to me.
You've just heard Mark's story of our calling and you'll have realised from that how very special Jesus was to us, right from the beginning. Because it was such an extraordinary thing for us to have done – to drop everything and follow this man into an unknown future. It turned out to be the best decision we ever made – but I've often thought about why we did!
There were twelve of us disciples eventually, from different walks of life, with different personalities....and different priorities. One of us left in the end – which, I'm afraid, was inevitable - but generally we held together as a group, a fellowship. Like a family of Jesus's brothers – a family with the usual odd petty jealousies!

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Jesus, our Teacher, had so much to teach us about God and his Kingdom. We learnt it all sitting at his feet. And because there were so many of us, if we didn't understand something he had said there was always someone – usually Peter – to ask a question. We would discuss what we'd learnt afterwards – both what it meant and what it meant for *our* lives.

And so we drew closer, with a deep friendship based on our shared experience of learning from Jesus. We each knew where the other was coming from and we shared a common understanding of life. We learnt from our relationship with Jesus and with one another how to love and care for each other, and support each other through the difficult times. Later, someone was to say of the Church we helped found, 'Look how these Christians love one another!'. Discipleship for me meant discovery: discovering the Truth, discovering myself and others, discovering what life is all about.

Comment: Leader 1 In our last own arrangement serviced based on 'Our Calling' we looked at how we are called to worship together. The second part of 'Our Calling' – 'Learning and Caring' would seem to be about two entirely different activities. But if we think a bit more about these two aspects of our calling, we can see that they go together, like Simon and Andrew, or James and John. For disciples of Jesus, like them and like us, they are two sides of the same coin of discipleship. Jesus called his disciples to be his pupils, to learn of his teaching, but he also called them to be his friends and friends to one another, so that, in the fullness of time, the message of God's love might be revealed to the world through their lives as well as their words.

HYMN: Will you come and follow me... *StF 673* **OR** Jesus calls us... *H&P 141; MP 359*

Reading: Reader 3 – Ephesians 4: 1-6

Comment: Leader 1 Learning and caring may go together in the life of a disciple, but Andrew, in his story, reminds us that even amongst those first disciples of Jesus there was rivalry and jealousy. James and John said to Jesus "When you sit on your throne in your glorious Kingdom, we want you to let us sit with you, one at your right and one at your left." That must have gone down well with the others! Later in the New Testament, we find many instances when the first Christians did not understand what their calling to learn and care together meant for their relationships with one another. That is why the writer of the letter to the Ephesians needed to share advice with them.

Prayer of Confession: Leader 2

This prayer is based on the reading from Ephesians and includes the response

Lord, mercifully hear us: **And forgive us.** Let us pray -

Lord, we are sorry, that like your people in the church in Ephesus

We so often forget that we are one in you.

Lord, we confess to you, the times when we have not been humble:

When we have thought we know all we need to know;

When we have compared others unfavourably to ourselves;

When we have thought we could manage without others and without you.

SILENCE ... Lord, mercifully hear us: **And forgive us.**

Lord, we confess to you the times when we have not been gentle:

When we have insisted that our understanding is the only true understanding;

When we have been hard on those who have made mistakes;

When we have gone ahead regardless of hurting the feelings of others.

SILENCE ... Lord, mercifully hear us: **And forgive us.**

Lord, we confess to you the times when we have not been patient:

When we have not taken time to understand others or to explain ourselves;

When we have shown our irritation with another's limitations;

When we have tired of waiting for you to answer our prayer.

SILENCE ... Lord, mercifully hear us: **And forgive us.**

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For all the times, Lord, when we forget that we have learnt from Jesus

That we are one in love with you and with one another:

SILENCE ... Lord, mercifully hear us: **And forgive us.**

Hear, then, the word of grace 'Our sins are forgiven'. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

HYMN: A new commandment I give unto you...*StF 242; MP1*

Reading: *Reader 4* – Ephesians 4:7,11,12

Comment: *Leader 1* A call to discipleship is a call to learn alongside one another and from one another. And it is a call to care for one another – a care that is true Christian care because it is shaped by what we have learnt of the love of God from Jesus. We know that, as disciples, each of us is unique and are better at some things than at others. One of us might be able to read the New Testament in Greek but not be able to boil an egg to feed a poorly neighbour. One of us might sing like an angel but not be able to express their love and concern for their friends. As the writer of the letter to the Ephesians reminds us, Christ has given us many gifts to prepare us for the work of Christian service. And we know that even if we've not all been equipped to be prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers, we've all been given ears to hear, minds to think, hearts to love and hands to serve. By being one in our learning about God's love and our caring for others we can, as his disciples, be the body of Christ in our world.

Reflection: *Reader 2* Here's something that we, as caring Christians, could all do with learning about. It's a new initiative launched by The Samaritans, called 'Small Talk saves Lives'. It's something we can all learn to do. You don't need to be clever or confident or fit, just be observant and have a tongue in your head! The message is that you can help save lives because a little small talk can be all it takes to interrupt someone's suicidal thoughts and encourage them to get the help and support they need. You might be at a railway station, crossing a bridge, in a high place or walking by the water – and you spot someone who may be at risk. Perhaps they look distant, withdrawn or upset, or are standing alone or in an isolated spot, or, at the station, staying on the platform for long periods of time/failing to catch trains that stop. Perhaps they just look out of place, or 'something isn't quite right'. If you feel this way, trust your instincts and start a conversation. Railway staff have been learning how to save lives in such circumstances. Conversation starters that have been used include: 'It's a warm evening isn't it?' 'What train are you going to get?' 'What's your name?' 'Do you need any help?' 'Are you okay?' If you don't feel it's safe to make an approach or you don't feel comfortable then speak to a passer-by, call 999 or if you're at a station tell a member of staff or a fellow passenger. You could help save a life.

Prayer of Discipleship: *Leader 2* Let us pray
Lord, we remember how Jesus, your son, called together for his disciples
A motley assortment of people, from different backgrounds,
Varying in character, wisdom and loyalty,
Needing to grow in faith and understanding.
May we, who meet in your name, together learn more of you,
And be equipped to live a life of discipleship at home and in the church,
Alongside the community and for the world. **Amen.**

Offering: followed by

Prayer/song: *Leader 2:* sing v.4 of Take my life and let it be...*StF 566; H&P 705;MP 624*

HYMN: Lord, you call us to your service...*StF 664* **OR** I want to walk with Jesus Christ...*MP 302*

Reading: *Reader 2* – Ephesians 4: 13 – 16

Reflection/Reading: *Reader 3*
Whoops! I let her show again, Lord,
That wretched inner child of mine I try to keep hidden away.
She's not an inner child of innocence and fun,

Creative and loving, trusting and curious,
The sort of child to set before your disciples as an example.
No! She is the inner child I don't want anyone to see:
Who thinks the world revolves around her;
Who wants her own way and will go home if the others won't do what she wants;
Who stamps her feet, raises her voice and sulks.
Lord, I'm not proud of my performance.
I bring my wretched inner child to you,
Asking you to take her in your loving arms, bless her, forgive her,
And make her yours.

Comment: *Leader 1* "And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature." This is what we are called to do – to learn together and care for one another, so that we might become the people that God created us to be – mature and loving Christians who resemble our Brother, Jesus. But this way of life comes with challenges – listen to some of them:

1. Will you continue to learn about your faith, through bible study and reading?
2. Will you share learning with your fellow disciples, when opportunities arise?
3. Will you care for one another, not only physically and emotionally, but spiritually, too?
4. Will you strive, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to become the mature followers of Jesus that God calls you to be?

Prayers of Intercession: *Leader 2* (Response - In your loving mercy: **hear our prayer.**)

God of our lives, your gospel of good news is for us and for everyone!

You show mercy and care to all humankind!

God of Love, help us, as your disciples, to learn more of you

And to share what we learn with one another.

Give us the help of your Holy Spirit, that we may discover

The right things to say and the right things to do

To reveal in our lives our knowledge and love of you.

We pray for those in our church who lead our learning, for...(*ministers, preachers, teachers, house groups*).... In your loving mercy: **hear our prayer.**

God of Love, may this church and your church throughout the world be one in you.

Give us the help of your Holy Spirit that we may learn to live together

In love, trust and understanding as an example to our self-centred world.

We pray for all the churches here in... and especially for ... In your loving mercy: **hear our prayer.**

God of Love, inspire us with a vision of your Kingdom

Of truth and justice, of peace and joy.

Give us the help of your Holy Spirit as together we work and pray

For its coming to us, here upon earth.

We remember before you those stories in the News today that have concerned us,

Praying especially for ... In your loving mercy: **hear our prayer.**

In the name of Jesus, our Teacher, Friend and Saviour, who taught his disciples to say...

The Lord's Prayer

HYMN: Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go...*StF 550; H&P 381;MP 159*

Dismissal: Let us go out into the world

As disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ

To speak of all that he has taught us

And to share his love with all. **Amen.**