



KENILWORTH UNION
CHURCH

Kenilworth Union Church

The Second Week After Epiphany

January 19, 2021 at 12:15 p.m.

[Connect to Mid-Day Prayer](#)

*I have come to know a God who recruits people
like the adulterer David, the whiner Jeremiah, the traitor Peter, and the human-rights
abuser Saul of Tarsus. I have come to know a God whose Son made prodigals
the heroes of his stories and the trophies of his ministry.*

—Philip Yancey

Opening Response

Iona Community

Leader: Loving God,

All: you have led us to this place,

Leader: not to shield us from heartache and the pain of human life,

All: but to heal us and inspire us,

Leader: to gently redirect us,

**All: till we see the world as you do
and love it with your love. Amen.**

Psalm Reading

Psalm 139: 1–6, 13–18, responsively

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

**You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

**I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

**Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.**

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

**Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.**

Scripture Reading

John 1:43–51, translated by Andy Gaus

The next day he decided to go out to Galilee. And he comes across Philip, and Jesus says to him, “Follow me.”

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town and Andrew and Peter. Philip finds Nathaniel and says to him, “We have found the one written about by Moses in the Law and the Prophets: Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”

Said Nathaniel, “Can anything from Nazareth be any good?”

Says Philip, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him and said about him, “Here is truly an Israelite without guile.” Nathaniel says to him, “Where do you know me from?”

Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.”

Nathaniel answered him, “Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel.”

Jesus answered him, “Because I said I saw you underneath the fig tree, now you believe? You’ll see more than that.” And he says to him: “Truly, truly I tell you, you will see an opening in the sky and the messengers of God ascending from and alighting upon the son of humanity.”

A Connected Church

edited from Michael Rogness

This is how it works: The Christian faith is passed from person to person. When Nathanael expressed skepticism about anything good coming out of Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth, Philip simply says, “Come and see for yourself.” When Jesus tells Nathanael that he saw him already, Nathanael is so impressed that he impetuously calls him the “Son of God” and the “King of Israel.”

Without doubt there was something about Jesus that drew people to him. When British biblical scholar J.B. Phillips translated the Gospels, he was struck by the personality of Jesus and how he drew others to himself. He described his own reaction in his 1967 book *Ring of Truth*, that there must have been something magnetic about Jesus’ personality to have such an immediate effect on people.

Read the Gospels and note the profound effect Jesus has when he meets people: the Canaanite woman, the blind man at Bethsaida, the Roman centurion, the woman at the Pharisee’s home, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, the thief crucified next to Jesus, and the centurion at the foot of the cross, -- to name only a few.

People meet Jesus, and they are changed. Whatever their deepest need was, Jesus meets it. Then they tell others what happened. And that’s how it has worked ever since. One person says to another, “I follow Jesus and invite you to do so too.” It’s always person to person. Our task as Christians is not to “prove” the truth of the Christian faith. Our task is not to persuade others to become Christian. Our task is to follow Philip’s example and say, “Come and see.” Come and see what Jesus has done and is doing!

Prayers of the People

Oh God of the heavens and of every small detail, Creator of ocean and mountain and also of the smallest of creatures, we gather to thank you for another day of life and breath. We are awed by the magnitude of Your gifts in our world and in our individual lives.

Thank you for the magnetic power of Jesus of Nazareth—for the words that still draw us today. Thank you for Jesus' teachings and examples to turn away from anger, resentment and bitterness. Thank you God, that You, in Your mysterious and unknowable ways, give us second chances, call to us, never give up on us, offer hope when there seems none, and that it is never too late.

Help us God, to be the kind of people who say “come and see.” Please move in us God, so that when people see us, they can see You. In all the uncertainty of our country's present situation, let us be the kind of people, your people, that continue to reflect the light and acceptance that are Your gifts to those who seek You. Help us to look for you in all things, to be responsive to your whispering spirit. Oh God, prompt us to be living invitations to others to “come and see” how trust in You transforms lives. Help us to demonstrate our faith without words by the way we live our lives. We offer our innermost thoughts to you in this time of silence: _____ (90 seconds of silence).

We pray, Holy One, for our country. We pray in thanksgiving that the pillars of our democracy have held, despite violent differences amongst our citizens. We pray for our leaders, and we pray in gratitude for our founders who built a muscular constitution that has withstood the storms of human interaction. We pray for a peaceful and lawful transition of power in our government.

How grateful we are for Kenilworth Union Church and for the time to pray together. Thank you for the opportunities that we have in this church to share your love and kindness with others and help us above all, to honor You in this community. We pray that the work of the church will be done even as we are short-handed in ministers and administrators. We thank you for the diligent efforts of our ministers and church staff. Today we hold these names of members in our community up to you, praying for their health, protection and faith: Judith Wentz, Kipley & Karin Wentz, Tiffany Wentz, Greg & Margy Werd, Tommy & Lucy Werner, Jeff & Beth Wessel, John & Denise Wettersten, Arnim & Jeanne Whisler, Corey & Kris Whisner, Randy & Jane Whitchurch, Chuck Whitchurch, Bob & Susan Whitcomb, Jane White, Randy & Katie White, Randy & Lisa White, Anne Whittlesey, John Whittlesey, Liz Wiczorek, Brad & Susan Wigdale, and Brian & Barbara Williams.

We pray for the peacekeepers in our community. For firefighters, EMT's, and police departments who work to keep us safe. And we pray for their safety as they do their jobs.

We pray in thanksgiving for Covid-19 vaccines. We thank you God for all the people working to administer the vaccines, develop and test them, organize their shipment, and for our patience as we wait for availability. We pray for those who have been so tragically affected by the virus. For the grieving, the desperately ill, the overrun hospitals, and fatigued staff. And we pray for those who mourn, Oh God. We pray for the unnamed among us who are broken hearted or broken in spirit. We pray for those who are afraid.

And now we name before you, the people known to us, who need your care, protection, and encouragement this day; that those who are going through difficult times may experience your peace and your presence in their lives. _____ (Names from the prayer list).

We offer these prayers to you God. Please be with all who have a difficult week ahead. We close in hope eternal, with the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray: **Our Father...**

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 and the power and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

Prayer for the Day

Christ, you are before us.
This is what gives us the courage to go on.
It is you who directs.
It is you who beckons.
So we dedicate ourselves.
And we bless you now.

Iona Community (George MacLead)

Blessing

Set your troubled hearts at rest, believe in him who has
Conquered death.
Trust in God who give life eternal.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

John Adam