

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## **PRINCIPAL SERVICE READINGS**

**Collect:** Holy and ever-loving God, who has given all authority in heaven and on earth to your Son, Jesus Christ, who led and loved His disciples though they faltered: Grant that those who seek to follow in His footsteps may be given wisdom, power and compassion. From amongst us reveal those whom You have called to serve Your church through the ordained ministry. Remove from us all our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh that we may be filled with Your Spirit and walk in Your ways. For the coming of our Your Kingdom, we pray. **Amen.**

### **Ezekiel 36.24-28**

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; you shall be my people and, and I will be your God.

### **Psalm 68 Response: Sing to God, sing praises to his name.**

Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God. But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy. **R**

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the Lord be exultant before him.

Father of orphans and protector of widows God gives the desolate a home to live in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious live in a parched land. **R**

O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel. Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it languished; your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy. **R**

### **Acts 1.6-14**

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

**John 17.1-11** After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people,\* to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and **yours** are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



**RESOURCES:** Throughout Wales today we continue to pray for the discipleship and vocation of the Church in Wales. On the Sunday following Ascension Day this is appropriate: We pray for the future leadership and growth of the church just when we have been reminded of how Jesus encouraged his followers to continue his ministry. By baptism every Christian has received a calling from God. There are many different ways in which we may be responding faithfully to God's call. This Sunday we are invited to spend time reflecting upon what this means for us and asking God to guide us. We are asked to pray for a deeper understanding of our vocation as parishes, communities and as individual members of the body of Christ. We also ask for God's help, that we might respond courageously to our calling.

The following notes, prayers and suggested resources are provided to help those who are planning the prayer for this Sunday.

The *collect* on the readings sheet was specially written for this occasion by the Rev'd Richard Wood who serves as a priest St David's Diocese and this prayer has grown out of his reflections upon responding to God's call.

## *Notes on the readings:*

### **Ezekiel 36.24-28**

The prophet Ezekiel is a figure of encouragement for all who are thinking about their vocation. The prophet's name means "God strengthens" or "may God strengthen". This passage is one that is charged with the hope of God, who has a message which promises bright things for the future of God's people, even though they have struggled to be faithful. The marks of the promise of God are familiar to us today: They involve a sprinkling of clean water which cleanses and the gifts of a "new heart" and of God's own Spirit. For Christians this passage might be a strong reminder the work God has already begun in us at baptism, when we believe we received the cleansing gift of God's forgiveness and the beginning of our vocational journey. The gifts Ezekiel refers to of God's heart and Spirit remind us that we are not alone on our journey – it is one that we share with God and with those amongst whom we live. Our calling is not an individual one. This is made very clear in the last verse of this reading which refers to previous generations from whom we have inherited our faith and also to others, with who we are called not simply to be God's individual disciples but to be God's people. Ezekiel stresses God's active commitment to us. Through this message God tells us not only that we shall be God's people but also that God will be our God.

- ❖ What does our name, or the name of our church or community mean?  
Do our names say anything about who God has called us to become?
- ❖ What are we hoping for in our church or community?
- ❖ In what ways do we encourage those who are baptised amongst us?

### **Psalm 68**

This psalm appears to be made up of a series of what may once have been short songs which speak of God's majesty and of his provision for his people. These songs may have been used in a festival or procession. They remind us of the longing of all people of faith for God to become known to others. The last part of this psalm alludes to some of the great stories of the Hebrew Scriptures with a final verse re-stating the belief that God is a generous provider for those in need.

- ❖ What stories of faith do we have to celebrate now? What has/is God doing in our midst?
- ❖ How do we share our Good News with those around us?

### **Acts 1.6-14**

Luke's story of the Ascension of Jesus in The Acts of the Apostles begins in this passage with a question asked to Jesus about how the Kingdom of God will be established. The disciples appear to be looking for a Kingdom that resembled the former history of Israel they appear to be looking back to what they know - a model of political and economic security. Jesus does not provide the answer that his disciples are looking for, he simply says it will be their task to

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



continue what he has begun, but he does promise help for them. His words read like a fulfillment of Ezekiel's promise of the gift of God's Spirit. With the Spirit's help the disciples will become witnesses to Jesus all over the world. Then Jesus is lifted up into heaven and hidden from their sight. The disciples stay looking at the place where they can no longer see Jesus until two men in white – or two angels - re-direct their sight. The eleven disciples, with some of the women who had accompanied Jesus, his mother and his brothers return to Jerusalem and devote themselves to prayer.

- ❖ What questions would we like to bring to Jesus?
- ❖ Where are we looking for signs of God's Kingdom? How are we guided in this?
- ❖ In what ways are we "devoted to prayer"?

## John 17.1-11

In this famous prayer of Jesus before his death we are presented with Jesus preparing his friends for the fulfillment of his calling as the Messiah. It is characteristic of the Christ that in his moment of crisis he prays more for others than for himself. And Jesus has great confidence in his disciples, speaking to God of their knowledge and belief and the way they have "kept [God's] word". When we compare these words with the betrayal, denial and lack of belief which characterize their actions during the following hours we might wonder at Jesus' words. But perhaps we have to remember that these words were collected and written in this way by John during years when the early Christian Church was really struggling to find its identity, to keep its unity and to be faithful to Christ.

At this time when the Church in Wales and the Anglican Communion continues to wrestle with similar questions we also need John's reminder that Jesus prays for his disciples with great confidence that God can bring glory even from our brokenness and fragility. This Gospel points us firmly back to the main work of the church: Our calling is to live and to tell the Good News of God's reconciling love.

- ❖ What do our public and private prayers tell about our priorities?
- ❖ How can we be bearers and tellers of God's Good News?

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## Prayers:

Let us pray to God who knows us better than we know ourselves and who calls all the baptised to lives of love and service.

Holy God as we celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit at Pentecost we remember our baptism. Keep us faithful to the promises we have made to serve you through serving others. Help us to listen to the signs of your calling in our lives, speak to us in ways that we can understand.

We pray for the leadership of our church, for all who have been called to leadership and ministry and for those who hear the stirrings of your calling today. Help us to recognise and celebrate all the gifts that you have given to us.

As we pray for the Church in Wales today we pray also for the worldwide Anglican Communion and for the strengthening of the bonds of unity and love between all people.

In our diocese and deanery today we pray for...

*Silence.*

Here I am, Lord

**Send me!**

God of justice, creator of all, we pray for good leaders and wise advisers throughout the world. Help us all to know that all power comes from you. Lead us to use the gifts you have given us with wisdom and generosity. Turn our concerns into action and our words of prayer into good news for those who live in need.

Today we pray particularly for...

*Silence.*

Here I am, Lord

**Send me!**

Generous God thank you for all the love and encouragement we have found amongst our friends and family and for those who have trusted and taught us over the years.

We pray for those whose lives connect with ours today. Make us thoughtful and forgiving people, willing to listen and open to learn more of your love from others.

*Silence.*

Here I am, Lord

**Send me!**

Healing God, you bring order and beauty even out of chaos and confusion. Take the broken fragments of our lives and renew us in wholeness and holiness for your service.

We remember before you today all those known to us who are in any kind of need... Help us to show them your love.

*Silence.*

Here I am, Lord

**Send me!**

God our strong hope we pray for those who are at the end of their lives here on earth today. For those who long for a release from pain and who are weary of life and those who are fearful of death and feel unprepared to leave this world.

We pray for them, for those who watch and wait with them and for all who are mourning today. We remember here today...

Fill them and us with your love, courage and gentleness at this time.

*Silence.*

Here I am, Lord

**Send me!**

Thank you God for your confidence in us and that you promise to renew your people in faith, hope and love.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## Suggested hymns /worship songs.

Anfon, Arglwydd, i'th gynhaef  
Arglwydd mawr y nef a'r ddaear  
Beth yw'r tristwch sydd ar gerdded  
Bywha dy waith, O Arglwydd mawr  
'Dilyn fi', medd Iesu ieuanc  
Dos, Efengyl, O Galfaria  
O gariad, O gariad, anfeidrol ei faint  
O Iesu mawr, rho nerth i mi  
O par i'th Eglwys, ti'r winwydden wir  
Rho d'arweiniad, Arglwydd tirion  
Tyrd, Ysbryd Sanctaidd, oddi fry  
Wele'n sefyll rhwng y myrtwydd  
Ysbryd Sanctaidd y gwirionedd

Christ's is the world  
For I'm building a people of power  
Forth in the peace of Christ we go  
I the Lord of sea and sky  
I want to serve the purpose of God  
I will offer up my life  
Jesus you are changing me  
Just as I am  
Love is his word  
Make me a channel of your peace  
O Jesus I have promised

O thou who camest from above  
Over all the earth  
Spirit of the living God  
Take me Lord  
Take my hands Lord  
We have a gospel to proclaim  
Will you come and follow me.  
Take my life

### **Ezekiel 36.24-28**

Breathe on me breath of God

### **Acts 16.16-34**

There is power in the name of Jesus

### **John 17.20-26**

As we are gathered  
Forth in the peace of Christ we go  
God forgave my sin

### **2 Samuel 23.1-5**

Put thou thy trust in God

### **Ephesians 1.15-23**

All praise to our redeeming Lord  
Jesus is King

### **Isaiah 65.17-25**

Though pilgrim strangers  
Great is Thy faithfulness

### **Revelation 21.1-8**

Be still, my soul  
O Lord, all the world belongs to you.

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## **SECOND SERVICE READINGS**

**Collect:** Holy and ever-loving God, who has given all authority in heaven and on earth to your Son, Jesus Christ, who led and loved His disciples though they faltered: Grant that those who seek to follow in His footsteps may be given wisdom, power and compassion. From amongst us reveal those whom You have called to serve Your church through the ordained ministry. Remove from us all our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh that we may be filled with Your Spirit and walk in Your ways. For the coming our Your Kingdom, we pray. **Amen.**

### **2 Samuel 23.1-5**

Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favourite of the Strong One of Israel: The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

### **Psalm 47**

**Response: *Sing to God, sing praises to his name.***

Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy. For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth. R

He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. R

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. R

For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm. God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. R

The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted. R

### **Ephesians 1.15-23**

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

### **Mark 16.14-20**

Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.' So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## **THIRD SERVICE READINGS**

**Collect:** Holy and ever-loving God, who has given all authority in heaven and on earth to your Son, Jesus Christ, who led and loved His disciples though they faltered: Grant that those who seek to follow in His footsteps may be given wisdom, power and compassion. From amongst us reveal those whom You have called to serve Your church through the ordained ministry. Remove from us all our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh that we may be filled with Your Spirit and walk in Your ways. For the coming of Your Kingdom, we pray. **Amen.**

### **Psalm 104. 26-35**

There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works—  
who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD,  
O my soul. Praise the LORD!

### **Isaiah 65.17-25 The Glorious New Creation**

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an

infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

### **Revelation 21.1-8**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death.'

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



## **RESOURCES:** *Second and third service readings:*

### **2 Samuel 23.1-5**

Beautiful words of trust are given here as the last words of King David, one of the greatest leaders of God's ancient people. They locate authentic leadership as the gift of God, guided by God's Spirit and characterised by a beauty that mirrors the wonder of creation. David is able to look at the wonderful gifts that God has given to him and his people throughout his life and to compare these to the amazing hope and wonder that are evident in the natural world. David is able to connect his own life with that of his forebears and with his hopes for the future. Psalm 47 continues this confident theme of God protecting and ruling over all creation.

- ❖ Looking at the spiritual leadership in our own lives and communities; how has God blessed and gifted us?
- ❖ What are our hopes for the future; for us, our communities and for the world which we inhabit?

### **Ephesians 1.15-23**

St Paul prays for the Christian community in Ephesus in words that are full of faithful love and hope. His words are written to encourage them in their discipleship and in building up the wider church beyond their own community. He reminds them of their vocation and that all that they seek to do and be is rooted in God who is the true and only ruler of all things. It must have been a very great support to the earliest Christian communities to receive such words of encouragement and to know that they were being prayed for.

- ❖ Where do we give and receive encouragement in our discipleship today?
- ❖ If St Paul were writing to this community/church, what good things might he have heard about us?

### **Mark 16.14-20**

Jesus, as usual, knew exactly what the disciples needed at that moment and he brings them both consolation (by appearing amongst them) and challenge (by "upbraiding" them – telling them off for their lack of faith). It is interesting that they are able to receive this help and challenge when they are gathered "at the table". This tells us something exciting and significant about how and where we discover our calling, and about the importance of the Eucharist as a place of blessing. After giving them encouragement and a gentle push they are sent out to continue his work. The signs that they are to look for are just as he had told them already when he had said, "by their fruits you shall know them" (Matthew 7.16) Mark's account of the Ascension includes this hint that the disciples needed some help and encouragement to begin to take on the tasks of Jesus' ministry themselves. The passage ends with the reassurance that Jesus was faithful to his promise and blessed their work.

- ❖ Where might there be space for us to notice God's consolation and challenge in our worship?
- ❖ At every service we are sent out to continue our discipleship in our daily lives, what could help us with this?

### **Isaiah 65.17-25**

The prophet has a wonderful vision of the transformation of the world by God's hand. Joy and delight are central to God's work and long-life and an end to suffering give a vision of great hope for all whose lives are marked by suffering. In the visions of unusual pairings of animals we have a picture of creatures learning new ways and of enemies managing to make space for one another. The serpent – the symbol of temptation, manipulation and the misuse of power will not flourish – it will consume the useless waste of the earth. The last line of the reading tells the most important message – Creation – "God's holy mountain" is sacred and it is ultimately not a place of hurt or destruction but of hope and life.

- ❖ What new learning would it take for a wolf and a lamb to feed together? Does this have any bearing upon our calling?

### **Revelation 21.1-8**

St John has a vision of the whole of creation redeemed and renewed in words closely linked to those of Isaiah and of the psalmist. These words are words of great comfort for those who were suffering because of their faith. The passage centres upon the hopeful message that God chooses to make his home amongst us here on earth and accompanies us from the beginning of time to the end of all things.

- ❖ If we take seriously the promise "I will be their God and they will be my children" what family likeness are we looking out for in our Christian community?
- ❖ God promises, "I am making all things new". Where are we open for renewal in our lives and communities?

# Ministry and Calling Sunday



*Activities for children and young people.*

***Draw a picture of yourself or stick a photograph here.***



**Ask different people in your group or church to list some of the gifts that God has given to you:**

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_**

**My gifts include:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Find out about what happens at a Baptism or share what you already know about this:**

**Have you been baptised? If so, how old were you when this happened?**

**What promises are made when people are baptised?**

**How can you use your gifts to be a follower of Jesus?**



*Holy God, thank you for all the gifts that you have given to me and for all the friends we have in the family of your church. Help us all to know that we are your children and that everyone is called and gifted. Amen*

*Write your own prayer here or draw what you would like to pray for today:*