

“We Are Called: a Prayer Service”

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Leader: We are called by the Spirit:

All: To act with justice.

Leader: We are called by the Spirit:

All: To love tenderly.

Leader: We are called by the Spirit:

All: To serve one another.

Leader: We are called by the Spirit:

All: To walk humbly with God.

Choose one of the following readings to be proclaimed by a reader.

Leader: Let us listen to the Word of God.

Jeremiah 1: 4-8

The word of the LORD came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. “Ah, Lord GOD!” I said, “I know not how to speak; I am too young.” But the LORD answered me, Say not, “I am too young.” To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.

1 Samuel 3: 1-11

During the time young Samuel was minister to the LORD under Eli, a revelation of the LORD was uncommon and vision infrequent. One day Eli was asleep in his usual place. His eyes had lately grown so weak that he could not see. The lamp of God was not yet extinguished, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, “Here I am.” He ran to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.” “I did not call you,” Eli said. “Go back to sleep.” So he went back to sleep. Again

the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But he answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep." At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet. The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Judith 8, 9a, 10b, 11-17

Judith sent for the elders of the city, to visit her. When they came, she said to them: "Listen to me, you rulers of the people of Bethulia. What you said to the people today is not proper. When you promised to hand over the city to our enemies at the end of five days unless within that time the Lord comes to our aid, you interposed between God and yourselves this oath which you took. Who are you, then, that you should have put God to the test this day, setting yourselves in the place of God in human affairs? It is the Lord Almighty for whom you are laying down conditions; will you never understand anything? You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or grasp the workings of the human mind; how then can you fathom God, who has made all these things, discern his mind, and understand his plan? No, my brothers, do not anger the Lord our God. For if he does not wish to come to our aid within the five days, he has it equally within his power to protect us at such time as he pleases, or to destroy us in the face of our enemies. It is not for you to make the Lord our God give surety for his plans. God is not man that he should be moved by threats, nor human, that he may be given an ultimatum. So while we wait for the salvation that comes from him, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our cry if it is his good pleasure."

Ezekiel 2: 1-7

Son of man, stand up! I wish to speak with you. As he spoke to me, spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard the one who was speaking say to me: Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have revolted against me to this very day. Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD! And whether they heed or resist--for they are a rebellious house--they shall know that a prophet has been among them. But as for you, son of man, fear neither them nor their words when they contradict you and reject you, and when you sit on scorpions. Neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. (But speak my words to them, whether they heed or resist, for they are rebellious.) As for you, son of

man, obey me when I speak to you: be not rebellious like this house of rebellion, but open your mouth and eat what I shall give you.

Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

John 20: 11-18

But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her.

Each of the above passages are call stories in which God calls directly to the person or the call arises out of a response to a situation. Discussion questions:

1. As a (name of group) how do we experience the call of God and what is God calling us to accomplish?
2. How do we communicate this call to the entire parish community?

Leader: Let us pray.

All: God, our Father,
You have called us out of darkness
Into the light of your presence;
From the hectic schedules
To your peace filled joy.
Send your Holy Spirit upon us
That we may hear your call;
And give us the courage and perservance
To accomplish your will.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Scriptural passages are from *New American Bible.*

Rev. Dennis A. Dirx, author.