

Morning Prayer for Epiphany

From Epiphany through Presentation

GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Introductory Responses

Blessed are you, David's heir, born to rule,
you received gifts from the magi.
**Blessed are you, Son of Man, baptized by John,
you saved us from ourselves.**
Blessed are you, Servant Lord,
teaching and preaching, healing and comforting,
you proclaimed God's gracious reign.
**With all the voices of heaven and earth,
we celebrate your epiphany.**
Let heaven and earth shout their praise.
**Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity, one God.
Blessed be God for ever.**

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

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

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

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

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

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

I try to count them -- they are more than the sand; I come to the end -- I am still with you.

**Glory to God, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.**

1st Samuel Chapter 3, Verses:1-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever." Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am."

Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him." As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

The Responsory

**O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before God.
Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is sovereign.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
Tell out the salvation of God from day to day.
Let the whole earth tremble before God.
Declare the glory of the Holy One among the nations
and the wonders of God among the peoples.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before God.**

1st Corinthians Chapter 6, Verses:12-20

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

The Canticle: *'The Song of Zechariah' (Luke 1.68-79)*

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
you have come to your people and set them free.
**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.**

Through your holy prophets,
you promised of old to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us,
**to show mercy to our forebears,
and to remember your holy covenant.**
This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham: *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship you without fear,
holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.
**And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,
to give God's people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.**
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
**Glory to God, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.**

John Chapter 1, Verses:43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

A Sermon for the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

The Word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. It seemed the people were adrift. The sons of the great Eli, were corrupt and stole from the people. Eli had like all men grown old, his vision like his power over his sons failed. A malaise set in over the people, the leaders could no longer be trusted, you could say these were the mean times.

And onto a woman was born a young boy. In time his mother brought him to the temple, gave thanks in song for his long expected birth, and offered his life to God.

Hannah left her boy Samuel at the temple where he grew and ministered to and with the great leader Eli the priest. It was an act of great faith for Hannah, Samuel was her only son. A child she had dared to hope for when it seemed there was no reason to hope for anything. The boy she would give up, but the Hope that had pierced the darkness was hers forever.

One night after everyone had left the temple, old Eli retired to his quarters - the boy Samuel was left alone in the dark temple. Only the fading and failing light from the lamp of God pierced the darkness. And then it began. Some say it was a dream, some say it really happened just as it's told - either way it marked a new beginning for an entire people. It marked the change from old to new.

Young Samuel heard a voice calling to him out of the seeming darkness. Samuel, Samuel!. Three times he ran to old Eli, waking him from his sleep saying "Here I am". - Samuel was an eager and faithful young boy. It's hard to say who woke up to what was happening first, Samuel or Eli. Yet awoken for the fourth time Eli finally understood. Go lie down again and when the LORD speaks reply - "Speak LORD for your servant hears".

And through the cold and darkness of an ancient temple, the Word of the Lord came to the child Samuel. The message was hard, abrasive, and devastating. Eli and his family would no longer rule.

To an old and tired Eli God's message offered only grief and humiliation. Yet for Samuel the message brought power and authority. When they faced each other the next morning it was like 2 presidents on the podium of an inauguration. One destined for the shadows of history the other bravely stepping into the light. The message was clear there would be a change of authority in Israel. Eli finished it when he spoke: "It is the Lord, let him do what seems good to him." And with a child a new day was born - a people began anew. Hope was rekindled to burn bright once more.

For you see Samuel and Eli had a dream. And they permitted their dream from God to override the sordid realities of human politics, represented so skillfully by Eli's sons. Who by law should have ruled in place of their father. Yet with authority rooted in the freedom and promise of God - Eli and Samuel turned things upside down. Samuel would reign, not Eli's sons. Hope would be restored to Israel. Hope born of the Honesty to relinquish an old dream, and the courage to receive a new one.

The courage of Eli and Samuel may be what the church needs today. There is ample evidence that we live in a time of great disappointment and loss. The dream of a Canadian society founded on the Christian church is lost. We no longer occupy the center of our

society reinforcing its culture, economics, and morality. The dream of a great Christian nation in North America was lost a long time ago. A new dream, a new church is struggling to be born.

A church that contains the pain and disappointment of those who like Eli have experienced the loss of an old and comfortable dream. A church that walks the middle way between fake evangelism which retells the old dreams with shameless certitude and a mysticism which would screen out history and hide in ritual alone. A dream that continues to seek growth, influence, health and respectability for the church but that also looks to faithfulness, renewal, and new opportunity. This is fertile and rich ground for Anglican's; our dream has always been that we walk the middle way.

But it is a dream that requires the honesty and faith of Eli and Samuel. Honesty to look at ourselves once again and count the costs of our hyper respectability, past influence and traditions. And faith to see a new day and to listen to hear a new dream from God. A church passionate about the faith, committed to healthy communities, and rooted in life giving traditions, in a culture dominated by apathy, ignorance of the past and individualism. The future is ours, given to us by the God known fully in Jesus, crucified and risen. Jesus who pierces thought the darkness of our age and offers us the courage to dream a new dream. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith : The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

The Litany

Leader: Everlasting Light of creation, may your people in all world
worship in spirit and in truth.

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

Leader: May the church discover that unity which is your will.

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

Leader: May the nations of the earth seek after the ways that make for peace.

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

Leader: May the whole creation be set free
to enjoy the glorious liberty of your children.

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

Leader: May all who with Christ have entered the shadow of death
rest in peace and rise in glory.

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

Leader: In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Anglican Church of Australia;

For our Bishops Linda our Primate, Mark our National Indigenous
Archbishop, Anne our Metropolitan, and Susan our Bishop;

In the Diocese of Niagara, we pray for St. John, Ancaster, The Reverend
Canon Joseph Asselin, Rector, The Reverend Richard Dentinger, Honorary
Assistant, The Reverend Mary Ryback, Honorary Assistant, The Reverend
Olive Shepherd, Honorary Assistant, and the people of that parish;

For all the clergy and people who share in the ministry of our parish of St.
John's.

Today we pray for the following people and their families: Barbara Blythin,
Brandon & Jody Boone, Donna Boone, Allan & Lil Booth, Susan Booth.

And in our community we give thanks and pray for those who volunteer and
offer leadership to Meals on Wheels.

We remember those who are close to us, for those who are ill: Lucas, Maria, Kelly-Lynne, Jan, Aisling, Helen, Bev, Kathy, Adam, Wendy & Gary, Maryse, Gary, Cassandra & Max, Shirley, Lee, Mary, Barb, Mylee, Betty, Patti, David, the Guerin family the Sorley family, baby Parker, Betty, Pat, Michael, Larry, Karen, Vicky, Carol, Rachel, Wally, Vera, Jane, Barry, Margaret, for all affected by Covid-19, and for others who need our prayers, ...

People: **Holy One, shine upon us and hear us.**

The Collect of the Day

Leader: Insistent God, by night and day you summon your slumbering people.
So stir us with your voice and enlighten our lives with your grace
that we give ourselves fully to Christ's call to mission and ministry.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Believing in the promises of God and gathering our prayers and praises into
one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE COMMUNITY

The Dismissal

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Morning Prayer may conclude with the following Sentence.

May Christ, who sends us to the nations, give us the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**