

## WORSHIP NOTES

*Third Sunday after Epiphany • January 22, 2012*

### **The Season**

On the Sundays after Epiphany, we focus on themes of call and mission, and it offers a time for the church to examine its life and witness. As we prepare for our annual meeting, our texts remind us to see our opportunity for mission. “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” It is a call that is at the center of everything we do, every time we meet. It is a call that reminds us that any church, regardless of its size or budget or average attendance, can be a place of Good News . . .

January 18–25 is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Originally called an “Octave of Prayer,” this ‘week’ began in 1908 and now involves Christian communities from around the world and from almost every denomination. We pray in this week for the unity of all God’s people . . . “that all may be one.”

### **In Word . . .**

Today’s first reading is the “recall of Jonah” or the second call to this reluctant prophet. This time Jonah follows God’s word, goes to Nineveh and proclaims God’s message of repentance, and the whole city repents. Our Gospel begins with a similar call as Jesus summons the people to a change of heart, to take a new look at their lives, and to put their trust in the good news. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.” At the same time Jesus calls his first disciples (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) to share in the mission, changing their lives and launching them on a new venture. It is more than a story from the past; it is a clarion call for today. Jesus continues to call us to use our gifts to proclaim God’s enduring love. The places we live, our families and friends, the locations where we work, all are all places for proclamation of the good news. Jesus’ call challenges us to change direction, to move to a new way of thought and life. The first disciples demonstrate that we must listen and be ready to respond, but the story is about more than Peter and Andrew, James and John. It’s about the word of God, the moment of trust, which asks the ultimate question and makes the ultimate claim: follow me. Now is the time, come and follow . . .

### **And Song . . .**

#### **Traditional (9:00)**

“Jesus Calls Us, O’er the Tumult” was written by Cecil Alexander for St. Andrew’s Day and first published in *Hymns for Public Worship* (1852) with five stanzas of four lines. The hymn quickly gained popularity and later hymnals introduced slight variations of the original verses. This hymn acknowledges Jesus’ claim not only over the lives of those first disciples, but over the lives of all of us; and the call for a total commitment, a “follow me” that supersedes all our earthly “cares and pleasures.” The tune, GALILEE, was composed for this text in 1851 by William Herbert Jude, a distinguished organist and editor of several music publications. It is named for the lake where Jesus met Simon Peter and Andrew.

#### **Contemporary (10:30)**

“The Summons,” is a text by John Bell, an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and a member of the Iona Community of Scotland. Bell has produced many collections of original hymns and songs, and two collections of songs of the World Church. He is often a presenter at worship conferences and workshops throughout the United States and Canada, and he is passionate about the renewal of congregational worship at a grass roots level. The text of our song of the day is a personal invitation to commitment and discipleship. The first four stanzas ask the question, “Will you come and follow me?” The final stanza provides the response, “Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.” The text is set to a traditional Scottish tune, KELVINGROVE.