

# SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 17, 2021 - 10:00 AM

## Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223  
www.livingspringscolumbia.org

*All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God.*



*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus... (Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2)*

### PRELUDE

*"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)"*

*Oceans (Where Feet May Fail); words and music by Joel Houston | Matt Crocker | Salomon Lighthelm  
CCLI Song #6428767 © Hillsong Music Publishing Australia  
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### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*We stand as able*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**Pastor:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose voice is upon the waters, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation.

**People:** Amen.

**Pastor:** Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

*(Silence for reflection - we kneel as able)*

**Pastor:** Holy God,

**People:** **you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways. We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them; receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.**

**Pastor:** How vast is God's grace! Through the power and promise of † Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are claimed as God's own beloved. Indeed, we are forgiven. In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

**People:** Amen.

We focus on the cross as it enters the sanctuary.

## GATHERING SONG

### "O Zion Haste"



1 O Zi - on, haste, your mis - sion high ful - fill - ing,  
3 He comes a - gain! O Zi - on, ere you meet him,



to tell to all the world that God is light;  
make known to ev - 'ry heart his sav - ing grace;



that he who made all na - tions is not will - ing  
let none whom he has ran - somed fail to greet him,



one soul should per - ish, lost in shades of night.  
through your ne - glect, un - fit to see his face.

#### Refrain



Pub - lish glad tid - ings, tid - ings of peace,



tid - ings of Je - sus, re - demp - tion, and re - lease.

*O Zion Haste; Text: Mary A. Thomson; Music: ANGELIC SONGS, James Walch*

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

**Pastor:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**People:** **And also with you.**

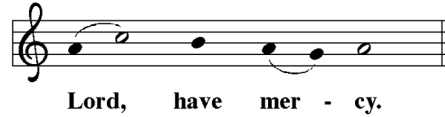


## KYRIE & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



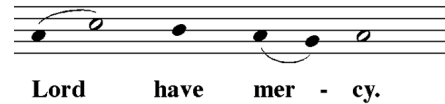
Pastor: For the peace from above  
and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Pastor: For the peace of the whole world,  
for the well-being of the church of God,  
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Pastor: For this community of faith,  
and all who offer their worship and praise,  
let us pray to the Lord.



Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us Gracious Lord.



Pastor: Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

*We are seated*

### CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Ashley Ramsey

*Children, youth, and young at heart are invited for a special message. You may collect your coins or dollars at home for the bucket collection and bring them to in-person worship, to the Parking Lot Communion Distributions, or drop them off at the church office. Current collection is for the Disaster Response Fund.*

*Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)  
Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)  
Keepin' our eyes on Jesus,  
We're runnin' the race!*

*Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)  
Forward in faith (clap, clap, clap)  
Keepin' our eyes on Jesus,  
We're runnin' the race!*



## FIRST READING

*At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the Lord comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.*

Lector: A reading from 1 Samuel.

*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.*

*(1 Samuel 3:1-20)*

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 139:1-6, 13-18

Lector: LORD, you have searched me out; O LORD, you have known me.

**People: You know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.**

Lector: You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

**People: Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

Lector: You encompass me, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

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

Lector: For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

**People: I will thank you because I am marvelously made;  
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

Lector: My body was not hidden from you,  
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

**People: Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;  
all of them were written in your book;  
my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

Lector: How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!

**People: If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;  
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.**

## SECOND READING

Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.

Lector: A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*“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. (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)*

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

*We stand for the reading of the Gospel*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John.

**People: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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.” (John 1:43-51)*

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*We are seated*

## MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*"Will You Come and Follow Me"*



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call  
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call  
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't  
 your name? Will you care for cruel and  
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



know and nev - er be the same?  
 kind and nev - er be the same?  
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my  
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -  
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be  
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer  
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"  
 pray'r in you and you in me?"  
 grow in you and you in me.

*Will You Come and Follow Me; Text: John L. Bell; Music: KELVINGROVE, Scottish Traditional  
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**INSTALLATION OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL/OFFICERS**

The following people have been elected to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will lead us in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

Gary Bradham, president

Wayne Bracey

Dea Jones

Adam Woodruff, vice-president

Doug Danner

London Mancuso

Raegan Prest, secretary

Kellee Flores

Jeff Tenhover

Bill Franck, financial secretary

Gary Ginn

Laura Turnmire

Mike Davidson, treasurer

Preston Ginn, youth rep.

**People: 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 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.**

*A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)*

You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church.

You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.

You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified. You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices to which you have been elected?

**R: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

*Those being installed face the assembly.*

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

**People: We will, and we ask God to help us.**

I now declare you installed as officers/council members of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

**People: Amen.**

#### **+ BLESSING OF 2021 GIVING INTENTS +**

Pastor: O God, your unconditional love and grace is more abundant than we can ever comprehend.

**People: Even when the world presents challenges, you continue to bless us, so that we can be a blessing for others.**

Pastor: O God, we look at the cross, and recognize we could never outgive you!

**People: And yet, we respond to your giving with lives of gratitude, that our generosity might grow .... to bear witness to Your great generosity for all the world.**

Pastor: O God, we seek your Blessing upon the Intents of Giving we make, that these commitments might place You at a deeper place in the center of our lives in the months ahead.

**People: Receive these Intents and all our giving to make an impact on many lives with your love - and join us more deeply to the work of your Kingdom hope for the world!**

Pastor: Let us pray.

**People: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. As living lights of your hope for the world, move us forward in faith and forward in generosity. Bless all that we will offer this year, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, the Light of the world, we pray. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assist: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

*+ A brief silence +*

Assist: For the body of Christ gathered throughout the world and for all servants of the gospel, that following Jesus, the church lives out its calling every day, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Assist: For the well-being of creation, for plants and animals, and for all that God has marvelously made, that we serve as wise stewards of Earth, our home, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Assist: For first responders and public safety officers, for attorneys and paralegals, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Assist: For those lacking food or shelter, for those who are imprisoned or homebound, and for those who are sick or grieving, especially *the McMurphy family; the Kaiser family; Bill Ramsey; Anne Hanford; Ann Lynn Caughman; Elizabeth Maddox; Helen Brahdam; Ed Brennan; Dolores Harmon; Rhea Pye; Wendy McKenzie; Karl Schmidt; Charles Kauffman; Bunie Talbert; Pam Deselem; Brandon/Meghan Ramsey; Bob Holmstrom; Kelly Koziol; Lila Bell; Wilma Bracey; Levi Brown; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...*, that God console all who suffer, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Assist: For our neighborhood, for those worshipping from parking lots, online or in other ways, that all who seek to know God are nourished by word and sacrament in ever creative forms, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Assist: In thanksgiving for the saints who have gone before us, *especially Antony and Pachomius, renewers of the church, whom we commemorate today*, that their lives give us a vision of the gospel in action, let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Pastor: O God, as we face ongoing uncertainties around coronavirus, we continue to pray for ..., let us pray.

**People: Have mercy, O God.**

Pastor: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

**People: Amen.**

## SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**People: And also with you.**

*We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."*

## OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.



## OFFERING PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.

**People: O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. Amen.**



## THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: We have been made one as the body of Christ through the waters of baptism. In our journey of faith & life, we are fed with Christ's own body and blood. Even though we do not celebrate Holy Communion in this virtual gathering, we pause to give thanks for the gift of Holy Communion — as we anticipate, with joy, those times when we are fed at your table.

Pastor: O God most mighty, O God most merciful, O God our rock and our salvation, hear us as we offer our praise and give you thanks. When the earth was a formless void, you formed order and beauty. When Abraham and Sarah were barren, you sent them a child. When the Israelites were enslaved, you led them to freedom. Ruth faced starvation; David fought Goliath; the psalmists cried out for healing, and full of compassion, you granted the people your life. You entered our sorrows in Jesus our brother. He was born among the poor, he lived under oppression, he wept over the city. With infinite love, he conquered death and granted the people your life.

We give you thanks and praise for the gift of Holy Communion and for the blessing it brings to your people. Even though we abstain from your meal in this moment of worship, for reasons you understand, we still sense the power of your forgiveness and grace offered to us and the world through your Son. Awaiting those times when we share in this meal, we still cherish in our hearts the words which Jesus gave us:

**People: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of Me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of Me."**

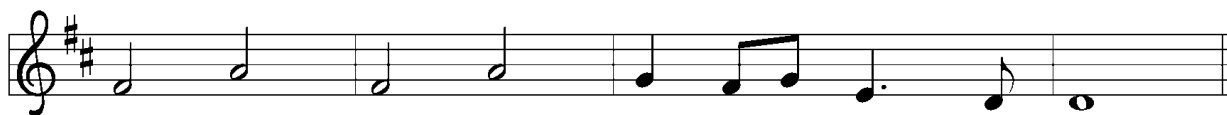
*We take time for prayer and reflection as we sing together, giving thanks to God for all the times we have been fed with our Lord's body & blood—and look forward to the time when we gather with others around the Lord's Table.*

## COMMUNION REFLECTION

*"Lord, Be Glorified"*



1 In my life, Lord, be glo - ri - fied, be glo - ri - fied;  
2 In our song, Lord, be glo - ri - fied, be glo - ri - fied;  
3 In your church, Lord, be glo - ri - fied, be glo - ri - fied;  
4 In your world, Lord, be glo - ri - fied, be glo - ri - fied;



in my life, Lord, be glo - ri - fied to - day.  
in our song, Lord, be glo - ri - fied to - day.  
in your church, Lord, be glo - ri - fied to - day.  
in your world, Lord, be glo - ri - fied to - day.

*Lord, Be Glorified; Text: Bob Kilpatrick; Music: BE GLORIFIED, Bob Kilpatrick  
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## LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**People: 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 and ever. Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

Pastor: God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter † keep you in peace.

People: **Amen**

## SENDING SONG

*"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"*



1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to thee we raise;  
4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, pres - ent in thy ho - ly word;



man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far,  
grace to im - i - tate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;



branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem:  
that we might be - come like thee at thy great e - piph - a - ny,



an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in flesh made man - i - fest.  
and may praise thee, ev - er blest,

*Songs of Thankfulness and Praise; Text: Christopher Wordsworth; Music: SALZBURG, Jakob Hintze*

## DISMISSAL

Assist: Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### † COMMEMORATIONS FOR TODAY †

#### **Antony of Egypt, renewer of the church, died around 356**

One of the earliest of the Egyptian desert fathers, Antony gave away his sizeable inheritance and became a hermit. Later he became leader of a group of monks who devoted themselves to prayer, worship, and labor.

#### **Pachomius, renewer of the church, died 346**

Born in Egypt, Pachomius became a Christian while a soldier. He became a hermit (a solitary monk) and organized others into a religious community. His rule for monasteries influenced later ones in both the Eastern and Western churches.



It is with great joy that the  
Council of Living Springs Lutheran Church announces....

**CALLED CONGEGATION MEETING**

**\*\* Vote for Call of Associate Pastor \*\***

(plus possible Updated Action on Road-Widening, if needed)

**Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> @ 11:50am**

**Church Parking Lot**

**(immediately following 11am worship)**

*Persons may remain in their vehicles in the parking lot,  
utilizing FM station 87.9.*

*Following our recent 2020 Constitution Update,  
a VIRTUAL LINK is also available:*

[meet.google.com/uaf-mtkk-yqx](https://meet.google.com/uaf-mtkk-yqx)

***\*\*If at all possible we encourage you to come to the parking lot  
and participate from your vehicle,  
as this simplifies the voting procedure.***

**COME INTRODUCE YOURSELF & MEET  
OUR CANDIDATE FOR ASSOCIATE PASTOR:**

**Today – 11am Outdoor Worship**

*(Candidate will be introduced at worship -  
come speak to him by vehicle as we depart worship)*

**Today – Virtual Drop-In, 2:00-2:45pm**

[meet.google.com/esm-tsrz-dys](https://meet.google.com/esm-tsrz-dys)

Printed copies of the letter/bio that was emailed out are available in the admin lobby or [click here](#).

# God's Love Shared Through You ...



## One Life Deeper !

Our prayerful goal is that God will work in every LS disciple to have an impact of faith and hope in the life of one person during the year. **What shoes might they be wearing?** It may be someone you know already—at work, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, in your daily life. It may be a stranger whom God will bring to you this year. How will the Spirit work through you to bring someone deeper? **Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Grace, Deeper in Love!**

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: inviting, involving, mentoring, discipling relationships 1 person at a time!**

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: for the work of God's kingdom in our community and world!**

**SHARING GOD'S LOVE: with those who are hurting, alone, marginalized, or feeling unloved!**

**SHARING GOD'S STORIES: so we do not remain silent about God's ongoing work in the world!**

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY:

*Where Nothing Is Expected*

At one of his life's worst intersections, when legs trembled and steps were mired in bogs of doubt, his companion looked into the man's hollowing eyes and said, "I believe in you. I know you." Have you ever needed such a word?

The list is painfully long that names all of the circumstances and places from which it is assumed nothing good can come. Perhaps you have compiled your own catalog of those who fall short, the irredeemable neighborhoods, or the situations beyond hope in the life of others. Perhaps you find yourself on someone else's list, among those whose life and plight has been dismissed as "nothing good." So it was thought of Jesus, whose life was rooted in the hillside soil of a sidetracked town—Nazareth—where nothing remarkable, not much at all, was expected to grow up. That town and its people were on the "unfavorable" list.

It is a riddle of scripture that the likes of Philip (or Peter, John, James, and Andrew—those gospel familiars) would, seemingly without discernment or a second thought, leave everything when Jesus interrupted his settled life and bid him, "Follow me." For Nathanael, it was different. He took an honest and reasonable step back. He knew all the talk about nothing good coming from Nazareth.

So many of our stories wither and so much of who we are dies when we are confronted with the "I know about you" list of painful failures instead of a loving, hopeful invitation to "come and see" (John 1:46).

There is a mighty mercy, an opening of heaven itself before our very eyes, a retelling of each "Nazareth" in our lives if we dare to "come and see" Jesus. Then that painful, long, imposed or self-inflicted list is no longer our truth because we, in seeing Jesus, begin to see ourselves and others as Jesus does. An epiphany happens: "I believe in you."

## January Book of the Month: Proverbs