

## Advent I

in the filtered light  
of a low sun  
bathing short winter hours  
with a meagre paleness  
the brilliance seems so fragile  
as it lies across the morning frost  
it's light thinner, longer  
than at any other time  
the last of the dried leaves  
shimmer on barren twigs  
and the promise of rebirth  
seems another world away  
and so it is  
for time is still shrinking  
towards the solstice  
the winter cold growing  
alongside the eclipsing of the light  
but creation knows  
this is the last great gasp  
the deep in-drawing of breath  
before reversal  
a game of holding onto the promise  
for just a few weeks longer  
another day of retiring light  
holding back  
the renewal  
toying with the excitement  
the unexpected surprise  
the turning  
towards incarnation

rg  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2010

advent, light, waiting, promise  
advent 1A  
Isaiah 2:1-5

## Advent II

Toast and tea  
remain unfinished  
lying on the breakfast table:  
a flash of a conversation  
hardly begun  
sits alongside the riches  
of the longer, slower  
deeper growth of promise  
now left to yesterday  
to care for and bless;  
a few words have been  
scattered like crumbs  
across a morning hour  
waiting to be picked up  
at some future moment:  
a word yet to be fulfilled  
in some continuing conversation  
at the kitchen table;  
unfinished tales  
paused in their telling  
waiting for another time  
when paths will cross  
and words can be drawn together  
to speak of what has happened  
and what is yet to be:  
crossover moments  
between past and future  
that beats an advent rhythm  
of tangled, unfinished story  
and tentative expectation

rg  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2010

advent, conversation, never-ending story  
advent 2A  
Matthew 3:1-12

## Advent Headlines

Six news headlines were printed across daily newspapers. Six people at the front lifted them and opened the newspaper at the appropriate verse. Each newspaper had one word of the phrase: **PREPARE - THE - WAY - OF - THE - LORD.**

Have you heard the news:

Get the news writers ready  
to rearrange their headlines  
with words of hope and expectation

Get the economists excited  
with news of upturns and renewal  
in people's values rather than financial value

Get the politicians lobbied  
to test their new measure  
of the nation's gross national happiness index

Get the poor prepared  
ready to sit at table  
and feast on a banquet shared with the rich

Get justice underway  
busy crushing the darkness  
and countering the lies of propaganda

Get the bread baked  
the wine poured  
and bring in the Advent of God

Prepare the way of the Lord

rg  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2010

advent, good news, prepare  
advent 2A  
Matthew 3:1-12

## Light Blessing

I wish you could see  
the light that lives in you  
that shines from your eyes  
and glows in your smile

I wish I could show you  
when you are tired or afraid  
the amazing light  
of your own being

I wish others to know  
about the light you release  
that scatters all shadows  
when you are around

I wish you the universe  
born of light  
to be your guardian  
child of stardust

May the light gifted to you  
shine into this world  
for it holds the story  
of the prince of light

I wish you the journey of light  
that scatters all your fears  
that moves you from story to Word  
born in us, among us, for us

rgH  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2010

light, blessing,  
light festival  
1 John 1

## Advent III

street lights  
reflect  
from the snow clouds  
low and heavy  
with their white gift  
that promises a reprieve  
from the peeling railings  
and dirty street markings  
and the crack in the pavement  
I step over every day  
that reminds me of bygone games  
and childhood legends  
a temporary renewal  
that imagines the future  
cleansed  
returning to the morning after  
incarnation  
no stain  
no taint or tarnish  
no crack in the pavement  
all is rebalanced  
reborn  
blessed  
in a covering of snow  
falling  
from those pregnant clouds  
in a new  
yet ancient  
magnificat

rg  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2010

magnificat, snow, hope  
advent 3A  
Isaiah 35:1-10

## Flowers in the Desert

A sheet of material with a number of slits cut in it symbolises a desert. It hangs in front of the communion table: and a desert created. After each voice a flower is slipped into the desert. At end of service let others do the same.

Voice 1:

What Mary says about the coming of Jesus:

What God has done for me will never be forgotten,  
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.  
His mercy flows in wave after wave  
on those who are in awe before him.  
He bared his arm and showed his strength,  
scattered the bluffing braggarts.  
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,  
pulled victims out of the mud.  
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;  
the callous rich were left out in the cold.  
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;  
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.

*Put flower in desert*

Voice 5:

These are the impossibilities of the incarnation  
the absurd hope we hope in anyway  
as unlikely as a barren land bursting with flowers  
may we hope in what seems impossible  
now that God is coming among us

Voice 2:

What John's Father says about the coming of Jesus  
Just as he promised long ago  
through the preaching of his holy prophets:  
Deliverance from our enemies  
and every hateful hand;  
Mercy to our fathers,  
as he remembers to do what he said he'd do,  
What he swore to our father Abraham—  
a clean rescue from the enemy camp,  
So we can worship him without a care in the world,  
made holy before him as long as we live.

*Put flower in desert*

Voice 5:

These are the impossibilities of the incarnation  
the absurd hope we hope in anyway  
as unlikely as a barren land bursting with flowers  
may we hope in what seems impossible  
now that God is coming among us

Voice 3:

What Jesus says about the coming of Jesus  
God's Spirit is on me;  
he's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to  
the poor,  
Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set the burdened and battered free,  
to announce, "This is God's year to act!"

*Put flower in desert*

Voice 5:

These are the impossibilities of the incarnation  
the absurd hope we hope in anyway  
as unlikely as a barren land bursting with flowers  
may we hope in what seems impossible  
now that God is coming among us

Voice 4:

What The Prophet says about the coming of Jesus  
Blind eyes will be opened,  
deaf ears unstopped,  
Lame men and women will leap like deer,  
the voiceless break into song.  
Springs of water will burst out in the wilderness,  
streams flow in the desert.  
Hot sands will become a cool oasis,  
thirsty ground a splashing fountain.  
Even lowly jackals will have water to drink,  
and barren grasslands flourish richly.

*Put flower in desert*

Voice 5:

These are the impossibilities of the incarnation  
the absurd hope we hope in anyway  
as unlikely as a barren land bursting with flowers  
may we hope in what seems impossible  
now that God is coming among us

rg  
9<sup>th</sup> December 2010

deserts, impossible, belief  
advent 3A  
Isaiah 35:1-10

## Waiting

when all has gone quiet  
and the world begins to sleep  
cooed in and snug  
beneath a blanket of frost

when the universe holds it's breath  
and angels begin to stretch their wings  
and stars begin to slide  
into constellations of hope

when music seems to hang in the air  
and creation hums it's own carol  
about the longing for light  
and birth again from wintertime

then the waiting ones gather  
to listen to these rumours  
and whisper about the birth  
of a child made all of light

and together pass the word  
that soon and very soon  
advent will slip into sign  
and waiting into birth

so let us gather with ever beating hearts  
staying with Mary and Joseph  
wondering, labouring, longing, expecting  
the promise to break through the night

rgH  
9<sup>th</sup> December 2010

waiting, night, anticipation  
advent 4A  
Nativity

## I'll be there

A dialogue for those who seem to be always standing at the back of the stable. This is an imaginary conversation/fight between Mary and Joseph on the doorstep of the stable.

Mary:	Do you think you're funny! There's no way!
Joseph:	But Mary there's nowhere else. Everywhere is full.
Mary:	I don't care. I'm not going to have my son's first night in a cattle shed.
Joseph:	We've had worst nights.
Mary:	Where have we had worst nights?
Joseph:	At your mum and dads.
Mary:	No, <i>you've</i> had worst nights at my mum and dads. Dad only put you out in the shed just in case.
Joseph:	Yeh, and look where that got us!!
Mary:	Well, just leave my mum and dad out of this.
Joseph:	Gladly.
Mary:	So where are we going to sleep tonight?
Joseph:	Why can't we just take the stable? The innkeeper was really kind and said we could have it all to ourselves.
Mary:	If you don't count the four sheep, three goats, an ox and a rather tetchy ass
Joseph:	You don't need to get personal.
Mary:	Personal!! You don't know what it's like. I've got a son on the way whose dad is God. I was told by an angel that the Almighty thought it would be a good idea which didn't leave me much choice. I've got a sore back, sore head, sore feet and now, just when things are going sooooo well, I'm going to be a mum and there's no one around to help. Don't talk to be about taking this personally.
Joseph:	<i>(Silence)</i> I'll help.
Mary:	<i>You'll</i> help! This is definitely my lucky day. Joseph do you know anything about babies?
Joseph:	No.
Mary:	Do you know which end screams and which end... well you know what I mean.
Joseph:	No.
Mary:	Well what good are you going to be?
Joseph:	I'll be here. When <i>you're</i> tired, <i>I'll</i> stay awake. When you're anxious, I'll hold your hand.

	<p>When people gossip, I'll defend you.          When you wonder what all this is about, I'll remind you.          When you tell me our boy is God's son, I'll believe you.          When you are remembered and I am forgotten, I won't mind.          When an angel tells you this is the work of the Holy Spirit, I'll trust you.          And when we need somewhere to stay, I'll not rest until we find somewhere.</p>
Mary:	Like now?
Joseph:	Like now.
Mary:	Oh Joseph... the stable will be just fine. Any chance of a coffee?
Joseph:	Don't push you luck.

rg  
 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010

stable, nowhere to stay, joseph  
 advent 4A  
 Luke's birth story

## Advent IV

the frost crackles  
as I cross the lawn  
finding a midnight space  
in a midnight sky  
clear of clouds  
and moonbows  
to watch  
the Geminid meteor  
blanch the atmosphere  
with strips of light  
and mark the season  
in this traditional way  
for light always was the first  
to call us to the way  
starlight from beyond  
brought us then  
as it does now  
to the moment  
of new beginnings  
where history turns  
on the sound of a child  
and all creation  
caked in hoar-frost  
and waiting halleluiahs  
bows silently once more  
as light curves overhead  
and leads towards  
birth

rg  
15<sup>th</sup> December 2010

star, geminid, birth  
advent 4A  
Matthew's birth story

## I wish for you

An advent blessing of incarnation

I wish for you the light  
that was born in you  
when God first spoke  
your name

I wish for you the word  
that echoed in heaven  
when she heard of God's plans  
for you

I wish for you the time  
to grow into what God imagined in you  
in the first moment  
of your creation

I wish for you the hope  
that keeps you travelling  
across whatever horizons  
shape your life

I wish for you the promise  
of incarnation  
of birth and hope  
and word and journey

I wish for you the advent  
of life always coming true  
through God's own word  
born in you today

rg  
16<sup>th</sup> December 2010

incarnation, blessing  
advent 4A  
Matthew 1:18-25

## Four corners

This is the night of Solstice, the longest night of the year. Now darkness triumphs; and yet, gives way and changes into light. The breath of nature is suspended: all wait while the Empire of Night is brought down by the Infant Light. We watch for the coming of birth, when a Mother again gives birth to the what is more powerful than all the darkness, a new life made of light, one who is bringer of hope and the promise of light. We are awake in the night. We make ritual to bring in the light. We call the child from the womb of darkness.

We have four symbols gathered which we wish to move out to the four corners, symbols of promise, that call on the light; symbols that we move in faith, trusting that as we move into the darkness, we take the light. The action brings the light.

As these are described they are moved to one of the corners:

- Seeds: symbol of new birth, the hope to come of feasting and plenty once more
- Swaddling bands: symbol of new birth, and one birth perhaps in particular
- Ice candle: symbol of the melting away of the winter and warmth once more
- Bible: Prophetic Words: symbol of the long hope, the gathering over time of the light and the promise and hope of its coming, now.

Simply, as and if you feel comfortable, take a candle or candles from the bowl in the centre and move into the darkness and place the light by any or each symbol: and take the light into the darkness: pull the world away from darkness by going there and bringing on the dawn once more.

Play the totally fabulous Sarah McLachlan's 'The First Noel/Mary Mary'

rg  
20<sup>th</sup> December 2010

light, solstice, presence  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Christmas Eve A

## Edge of the seat

For watchnight

When we wait in the night  
in the hush that only stars can hold  
as they bend towards the coming of the light;

when we wait in the night  
labouring with anticipation  
of what midnight shall bring;

when we wait in the night  
listening to the cadence of minutes  
beat in rhythm with the birth of hope;

may we hold our collective breaths  
with the angelic host  
as they clutch their restless alleluias,

for God is on the way:  
the mother is labouring  
the father pacing  
the stable readying  
the word is waiting  
the light is sliding  
and the promise is breaking through

When we wait in the longing for midnight  
in expectation of Good News  
may we choose to wait together

and find we have moved to the edge of our seats  
for in such anticipation  
it is the only place  
for the Word will be born among us.

rg  
22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

waiting, anticipation, word  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Christmas Eve A

## Nativity Questions

Everyone has questions, especially about the Christmas story: how did that happen, what if Mary said no. Here are some questions, not always the ones we ask, but perhaps ought to ask, the comes from the readings we love in this season, that lead us into the truth of what is happening and waiting to happen on Christmas Eve.

One	The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But what is the sound of light?
Three	The yell of joy from a woman holding a plate of food for her hungry children The sound of a key unlocking prison cells The slow crack of ice melting after winter This is the sound of light
One	For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But what is the weight of God?
Three	A loaf of bread freshly baked and broken on the table A cross-bar of wood thick enough to carry a man The half dozen ounces of a baby newly born This are the weight of God
One	Lo the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But what does an angel look like?
Three	A shepherd brimming with excitement with a story to tell A father holding a new born in awe of the wonder Our enemies waiting for us to accept their help This is what an angel looks like
One	And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But how far is it to Bethlehem?
Three	A journey of a lifetime but takes only a second As close as your neighbour and as far as your enemy The distance between hope and expectation This is how far it is to Bethlehem
One	and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But what is God's first name?
Three	The name of every person we oppress, divide or shun The name that holds your name within it The name that proclaims God with us, in us, around us, Emmanuel This is God's first name

One	She brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.
Two	It's not a question you often hear asked, But why was there no room at the inn?
Three	Because the world was too busy to notice Because we choose to build walls between communities and live in fear Because we do not have room to share what we have This is why there was no room at the inn
One	In such questions we find no answers Just the encouragement to live the story And let the promise be born in us

rg  
22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

questions, reality, nativity story  
Isaiah 9:2-7 & Luke 2:1-20  
Christmas Eve A

## Right Time

For the cusp of midnight on Christmas Eve

When the time was right  
God spoke  
And the light slipped through

When the time was right  
God drew breath  
And the word was delivered

When the time was right  
God hesitated  
as the son fell from heaven to earth

When the time was right  
God cried  
And let the saviour go to redeem the world

When the time was right  
God knew  
This was the moment of birth

And when there was no more time  
God laboured  
And God knew the time had come

rg  
22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

time, Christmas eve  
Luke 2:1-20  
Christmas Eve A

January Material  
for Year A  
from previous years

## Who is he?

There are lots of questions surrounding Jesus Baptism. Maybe we should leave them to the theologians. The bigger question is simply who is he who has asked us to follow? It's not a question with an explanation, but a question with a journey. Not a little trust is involved here... While Voices 2 and 3 read, Voice 1 runs his or her fingers through a bowl of water sitting prominently in the centre of the worship space.

<b>Voice 1</b>	Who is he?
<b>Voice 2</b>	<p>When he stepped into the river, and faced John the Baptist, we thought he was just one of the crowd.</p> <p>But John paused, water in hand ready to baptise the line of people waiting.</p> <p>But the Baptist stopped, hesitated, and dropped the water back into the Jordan.</p> <p>What made him halt this baptism when so many unclean, unworthy, unknown, were being baptised?</p> <p>Who is this man?</p>
<b>Voice 3</b>	<p>God, when we do not know and do not understand, when we do not grasp and cannot fathom love</p> <p>let it be, let it be for now.</p>
<b>Voice 1</b>	Who is he?
<b>Voice 2</b>	<p>When he looked at John, and John looked back, we wondered who this man was.</p> <p>John seemed to question and step back.</p> <p>Was there even an intuitive lowering of the head?</p> <p>And the man reached out and touched John's shoulder preventing him moving any further, picking him up from his stoop, and you could hear him say, "Let it be for now."</p> <p>What meaning does this have? Who is this man?</p>
<b>Voice 3</b>	<p>God, when we do not know</p>

and do not understand,  
 when we do not grasp  
 and cannot fathom  
 love

hold us in it  
 and never let us go.

**Voice 1** Who is he?

**Voice 2** And John reached for his head,  
 and pushed him under,  
 just like all the rest.

And when he came up from the water,  
 eyes closed and mouth shut,  
 suddenly both opened,  
 searching heaven.

What did he see?

Just then,  
 doves took to the air from the tree behind us.  
 The crack of their wings  
 slapping through the air,  
 made us turn to watch them  
 take flight high into the air.

Who is this man?

**Voice 3** God,  
 when we do not know  
 and do not understand,  
 when we do not grasp  
 and cannot fathom  
 love

may we trust  
 beyond reasoning

**Voice 1** Who is he?

**Voice 2** “My own dear son”, they say.  
 I never heard the voice,  
 but that’s what they said it said,  
 those who know him,  
 who spoke to him after the Baptism.

They say he heard something.  
 They said it meant he was a prophet.  
 He was on a journey.  
 It was a calling.

To where?

Who is this man?

**Voice 3** God,  
 when we do not know  
 and do not understand,  
 when we do not grasp  
 and cannot fathom  
 love

may we hear our names  
and follow you in faith.

**rg**

7<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Baptism

Call

Following

**Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17**

## Who Am I?

When John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God" what does the image mean? This expands a little of the idea of what the meaning "Lamb" take on. The song between each could be "Behold the Lamb of God" from the Iona Community.

Voice 1      Who am I?

Voice 2      I am light.  
I am light for the world.  
I am born always in the shadows,  
in the prisons  
of people's loneliness,  
in the darkness  
of oppression,  
of debt,  
of ignorance.  
I am light,  
and darkness will never put me out.

*Song and candle brought forward*

Voice 1      Who am I?

Voice 2      I am water.  
I am water for the thirsty.  
I live in the barren places  
of lives  
sapped of imagination,  
dulled by politics,  
limited by religion,  
of lives thirsty for laughter again,  
for passion again,  
for the fullness of life again.  
I am water,  
and the desert does not hold me back.

*Song and bowl of water brought forward*

Voice 1      Who am I?

Voice 2      I am the earth.  
I am the earth you walk on.  
I grow the grain you eat,  
and the grape you drink,  
and I break the bread and pour the wine  
for a world restless for hope,  
edgy for justice,  
anxious for peace,  
uneasy for salvation.  
Break bread with me.  
Drink wine with me:  
body and promise.  
I am earth,  
and I nurture the covenant of heaven.

*Song and bread and wine brought forward*

Voice 1	Who am I?
Voice 2	I am yours. I am your companion on the way, and your fellow traveller. I am your bearer, and your carrier of burdens. I bear the cross for you, hold the world for you, break the bread for you, rise at dawn for you. I am yours, and I am for you.
	<i>Song and cross is brought forward</i>

**rg**  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Behold the Lamb of God  
Jesus  
Companion  
**Scripture: John 1:29-42**

## A net would be easier

The idea of being “fishers of people” suggests ours is to catch people for the Realm of God. Even trap them. And then once reeled in, there is no escape. But it’s not like that...

A net would be easier.  
Just throw it out and see what is caught.  
A haul each time.  
Indiscriminate.  
No quotas.  
A net would be easier!

But there is no net,  
is there.  
There is life.  
There is a way of living.  
There is what we are seen to be,  
and do.  
There is what focuses us,  
draws our attention,  
prioritises our lives,  
that catches people.

But a net would be easier!

Fishing God,  
lead us into deep waters for justice;  
may we get more than our feet wet with truth;  
offer us the dangers of love,  
and the deep questions of faith;  
may we touch what is unclean for you;  
and talk about what hurts in the world;  
may we mention the word peace in earshot of presidents,  
sit down and share with the bigoted;  
spend time loving the rich back to life and the poor back to justice;  
living a different way,  
trusting  
that by our living example,  
the realm of heaven is seen.

A net would be easier,  
but we have no net,  
just ourselves,  
our questions,  
our foolishness to choose to follow you,  
and your broken love.  
It’s all the kingdom has.

But it’s enough.

rg  
21<sup>st</sup> January 2005

Discipleship  
Gifts  
Work  
**Scripture: Matthew 4:12-23**

## Pursuing Justice

Justice is not about getting the laws right but getting the living right. Its effects are not so much prescriptive as a way of seeing others and living life.

May our words be just,  
and echo with heaven.

May our touch be in love,  
and graced with mercy.

May our silence be deep,  
and hold all pain.

May our acts be kind,  
and proclaim a blessing.

May our faith be true,  
and revel in each moment.

May our ways be grace-filled,  
and shape a holy beauty.

May our journeying be untiring,  
and pursue justice.

May our dreams be restless,  
and filled with spirit.

May our living be yours,  
and bless the world.

Just God,  
may all we do  
turn us always towards heaven;  
our living  
make real your desire for all righteousness;  
and our words  
give language to your longing for life.

May we pursue justice,  
love kindness,  
and walk humbly with you, O God.

rg  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Justice  
Living  
Righteousness  
**Scripture: Micah 6:1-8**

## Baptism

A reflection for our blog ([abbotsford.org.uk](http://abbotsford.org.uk)) to inspire images of the text

Every handful of water  
contains the story of salvation  
cupped and held for a moment  
before being set free over the head  
of God's newest followers

*In* that water  
has been breathed the word of salvation  
spoken by folk who have found  
the way of justice and truth  
breaks open the world to live fully

*From* that water  
comes our names first called by God  
breathed upon us in the moment of life  
our own names  
as only God can call them

*Beside* this water  
*we stand and know*  
the one who stands beside and knows us  
who too had held is  
breathed into it  
and been called from it  
into every place  
and this one.  
Welcome.

**rg**  
10<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Epiphany 1A

Baptism, Jesus' Baptism, identity  
Matthew 3:13-16

## Come and See

Voice 1	<p>“Where do you live Rabbi?” “Come and see.”</p>
Voice 2	<p>I watched him draw a line in the sand listening to the bickering of the Pharisees about who shall throw the first stone, and without looking up, and without stopping his drawing, he simply spoke, “Why not the one without sin throw it.” And after a pause, a scuffling of feet, an angry murmur, it was only him and I who were left. Then he looked and spoke...</p>
Voice 1	<p>In the calling of people to new life, found in the forgiveness and grace of heaven, this is where Jesus lives. Come follow.</p> <p>“Where do you live, Rabbi?” “Come and see.”</p>
Voice 2	<p>A large crowd of lame, blind and paralysed were hunched by the pool. I was among them. How well I knew that place for long had I lived there unable to move to the water when it stirred. I had lost what day it was, and he asked, “Do you want to get well? Pick up your mat and walk.” And I did, but I was chastised by the authorities for carrying my mat on the Sabbath.</p>
Voice 1	<p>In the calling of people to new life, focusing on the needs of people, rather than the needs of the tradition, this is where Jesus lives. Come follow.</p> <p>“Where do you live, Rabbi?” “Come and see.”</p>
Voice 2	<p>There was never going to be enough food for everyone, and a wee boy with a wee basket of wee loaves wasn't going to be much help, until Jesus blessed them, broke them, and shared them. It was a kind of communion with a hungry people looking for food beyond they bellies, but for their souls. And they were fed.</p>

Voice 1	<p>In the calling of people to a new life, breaking himself for the crowds, feeding the needs of the many, with bread, wine, fish, presence, this is where Jesus lives. Come follow.</p> <p>“Where do you live, Rabbi?” “Come and see.”</p>
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**rg**  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Epiphany 2A

Transformation, seeing Jesus, following.  
John 1:29-42

## Call us

Where the darkness surrounds us,  
call us, O God,  
to step into it  
and bear the light.

Where injustice breaks us,  
call us, O God,  
to live through it  
and witness your life.

Where silence mocks us,  
call us, O God,  
to speak within it  
and proclaim your promises.

Where prejudice welcomes us,  
call us, O God,  
to work against it  
and celebrate your diversity.

When faith questions us,  
call us, O God,  
to listen to it  
and discern your voice.

When selfishness becomes us,  
call us, O God,  
to pull ourselves out of it  
and live in your grace.

Hear us, O God,  
as are called to be in the world,  
with the reign of heaven  
even as it fits so awkwardly.  
May it change us so completely  
we find our way again  
to live beside you.

So be it  
Amen

rg  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Epiphany 3A

Following, In the world  
Matthew 4:12-23

## Finding Jesus

Religion makes certain where we find Jesus... as Messiah... as divine being... as someone so extraordinary that fishermen leave everything to follow... clearly the saviour... but maybe Jesus needs to be discovered as being bit more human... God found in the everyday places... God found not so much in the creeds... but in the life of all God's People... There we meet him...

Voice 1:

We have found Jesus  
We found him on the cross

Voice 2:

But before that we found him on the beach  
in border places between wilderness and orthodoxy  
between acceptance and denial  
between magician and messiah  
ready to accept all who came to him  
We haven't found Jesus  
Jesus has found us  
Come, leave the beach and wait with him

v1 Jesus Christ is waiting

Voice 1:

We have found Jesus  
We found him on the cross

Voice 2:

But before that we found him at the well  
when the sun was highest in the sky  
meeting a woman hiding in the noon heat  
meeting her denial and rejection  
meeting the pain of heaven at the familiarity of prejudice  
angry at all that denies humanity  
We haven't found Jesus  
Jesus has found us  
Come, leave your prejudice and rage with him

v2 Jesus Christ is raging

Voice 1:

We have found Jesus  
We found him on the cross

Voice 2:

But before that we found by the bedside  
of daughters ill and the unclean rejected  
of lepers abandoned and paralytics forgotten  
willing to touch all who came to him  
and offer life once more  
We haven't found Jesus  
Jesus has found us  
Come, leave your pity and heal with him

v3 Jesus Christ is healing

Voice 1:

We have found Jesus

We found him on the cross

Voice 2:

But before that we found him among people  
from every roadway inviting them in  
from every station inviting them to a banquet  
from every journey breaking bread  
willing to accept each one round the table  
We haven't found Jesus  
Jesus has found us  
Come, leave your loneliness and eat with him

v4 Jesus Christ is dancing

Voice 1:

We have found Jesus  
We found him on the cross

Voice 2:

But *after* that we found him on the beach again  
with disciples stories half told  
fish and bread half cooked  
and the journey only half taken  
for he calls each one to feed, heal and journey again  
this side of resurrection  
We haven't found Jesus  
Jesus has found us  
Come, leave your beach and follow him

v5 Jesus Christ is calling

**rg**  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Epiphany 3A

Following, Finding Jesus, the world  
Matthew 4:12-23