

Welcome

Welcome to worship with Tyndale Baptist Church, wherever you are, whoever you're with, whatever you're feeling today. Though separate, we are one body, joined in faith and love, called to witness to God's presence in the world, called to be a community of hope. And so we offer our worship to the living God, in words and music, prayer and stillness. God is with us, and invites to spend this time listening and seeking.

Song [To be in your presence](#)

Call to worship

One thing I have asked of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life;
to behold the beauty of the Lord
and to seek Him in His temple.

Call: Who is it that you seek?

Response: We seek the Lord our God.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your heart?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your soul?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your mind?

Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Call: Do you seek Him with all your strength?

Response: Amen. Christ, have mercy.

Song [Crown him with many Crowns](#)

Opening Prayer

Today we recognise you as the one who is here, present and able to speak to us in ways that we can understand. You are the maker of heaven and earth and we give you thanks for the blessings of our lives and we offer you again the struggles of our lives. You know us. It says in your word that have counted even the hairs on our heads. You remind us so often that you are the one who sees our hearts. You don't judge us on appearances you see both our good and our bad, our light and our shade, and you love us the same. More than that, yours is the power to transform our living every day.

Any hope we have for the future of this world is found in you. You are the one who set the foundations in place for life itself to grow. We know that you love what you created. Just as we know you hate the evil that mars and spoils what was good and that hurts your children. Today we lift our thoughts beyond our selves, and bring to you those we love that you have loved first, and we offer you the little that we have out of our recognition that you love each one of us, you know us by our names, and you see our potential.

Forgive us again for the times we turn our eyes from you and fail to listen to you. Forgive us for the times when we care more about self that we do about others. Forgive us when we make poor choices or take for granted those we share our lives with. Forgive us for all those things which we do that are the opposite of trusting you. We thank you for the hope of the cross where the burden of our lives rolls into your caring arms, stretched wide in love. We thank you that you overcame even death to open up a way for us to live both now and for eternity. No matter how bad things seem no matter how well we are doing, you are the same today and forever. And we give you thanks that you are trustworthy and faithful, seeking our good and calling us onwards into your love and life. You make every day new. Today send your Spirit here to make us new once more and we will sing our praises and speak of your goodness and humbly wait before you, in our words and in our silence, because there is none beside you. You have the words of eternal life and come to receive from you once more. In the name of Jesus, Saviour and Lord who taught us to pray:

Lord's Prayer:

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Song **Celtic Alleluia** by the Tyndale Singers

Declaration of faith
To whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.

Reading [1 Samuel 3: 1-10](#)

Song [I am not alone](#)

Reading [John 1: 43-51](#)

Sermon Calling

What strange and exhausting times we're living through. And we have stories about calling to listen to today.

It's significant to think about and try to understand this because of the ways people are using God's calling to justify their actions, impose particular ideologies, follow particular leaders, choose which rules to obey. Massive world events, on the one hand, individuals with choices and responsibility, on the other.

First of all Samuel, the child who obeys his teacher and is charged with keeping the lamp lit just in case God should speak. But it's been many years.

We're told it was rare for the Lord to speak or give visions and Eli had grown tired of being alert and Samuel waited instead, except Samuel didn't really know what he waited for, and for a while neither did Eli. What a surprise it was. It must have been a bittersweet moment for Eli when he realised what was happening and told Samuel what to say to God. He should have been ready and waiting. He should have been the one to whom God spoke. He'd lost the will to expect God and instead Samuel was there, in his ignorance, waiting for the voice of God. It's Samuel who responds to one he has yet to become acquainted with. But God knows Samuel.

I can't help feeling sad for Eli. His story is a bit depressing really. To have become so weary and disillusioned, disappointed with how his sons had turned out and living with a sense of failure. There's something very Eeyoreish about Eli.

Do we live with the expectation that God is going to meet us? Have we grown disappointed with God, or disillusioned with waiting for God to speak? Do we expect anything to change? Are we ever surprised by God or does it all seem so familiar it's lost the power to move us? These are the questions Eli invites us to answer today.

Yet, Eli still had faith. It may have been at a low ebb, but it was still there. And there was generosity too. He didn't go stumping along to confront God. He recognised Samuel's calling, and God's timing. Perhaps he was just glad that God was still there after all. There's a generosity about Eli. And in his own way Eli should be remembered as someone who overcame disappointment and made it possible for God to be heard again.

Samuel's whole start was steeped in religion but it was not enough. Samuel still needed to encounter God himself, to find his own relationship with God. He couldn't do that on his Mother's faith, nor on Eli's faith as his teacher. He had to learn to recognise God himself. As must we all.

Samuel's life was decided very early on. He was surrounded by the things of God as a child and lived and learned in the temple fulfilling a promise his mother made when she asked God for a child in times when barrenness was considered a reflection of God's judgement on a woman and her family line. Hannah railed against God until her prayers were answered. Just as Mary sang her song of protest, her Magnificat, so Hannah, Samuel's mother, lifted her heart and lungs and sang a song of love and praise that spoke of the God who lifted up the poor and needy, that was greater than the powerful and in whose hands all the earth is held. It's a song which believes that God is sovereign. Quite a remarkable woman of faith. She spoke of things beyond her small sphere of concern, her experience led her to believe that God was the Lord of heaven and earth and the source of all life. If Eli's faith was tired, Samuel's faith a spark, Hannah's faith was vibrant and tenacious. She offered her son, her longed for child, to God in that sense ensuring he would one day hear from the God who made him.

Samuel learns to listen to the wisdom around him and in that sense both Eli and Hannah offer their own 'Come and see' to Samuel whose own calling is encapsulated in the words, 'As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him'.

Do we believe that God will answer our prayers? In which case, what are we called to pray for? How do our prayers reflect our own hearts? And how do our prayers reflect our understanding of God?

Whether we ask that in the light of massive questions about election results and national identity and Presidents, or about the concerns we have for our family, our friends and how we live well in the current restrictions we face, it's one of the most important questions we are called to face. Who do we believe in? And so how does that shape us?

John's gospel tells us that Jesus was the Word that came to live with us and yet the same Word that was there at the beginning of the world, part of the creation team so to speak. Quite a different introduction to Jesus than the other gospel writers. Then the rest of chapter one gives witness to who Jesus is with a series of stories that call us to follow, to open up to new possibilities, to see a new thing. First through John the Baptist. Then as he sends some of his own followers to follow Jesus instead and so a pattern is set for 'Come and see'. People bringing people. Faith sparking faith.

This gospel is written by someone who knew the end of the story, who knew that with the word and sign that was Jesus, there was also the cross and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The whole book is written by John in the light of the destiny of Jesus to suffer rejection and condemnation by the world, and of Jesus followers similar experience of opposition from the authorities of John's own context.

Witness is an important theme right through John's gospel. It's like a case in a law court where all the relevant facts are presented for deliberation. So John calls forth witnesses to testify to who Jesus was, right through to his final trial. And in the story about Philip and Nathanael we begin to see the witnesses for the defence – those that were going to tell others who they'd met and what they'd believed.

Although, the first witness, is Jesus! It all begins with Jesus. So it's Jesus who found and called Philip. Then Philip went to Nathanael who found it difficult to believe Philip's claim to have found the Messiah and says so. A Messiah coming from Nazareth? Well, that's akin to a king being born in a stable! Nazareth was nothing. No mention in the OT, the Talmud, or Midrash, and roots were important. Philip's answer – Well, Come and see!

Nathaniel's calling was to leave behind his prejudices, his expectations, even some of his own identity, open his eyes and see the Son of God. And he did!

The common theme here is about ordinary people: an old man, a woman, a child, a family member, a disciple and a friend: who all hear God's voice and that changes everything in that it catches them up in the purposes of God.

Eli, Hannah, Samuel, John, Philip, Nathaniel even dare I say it Jesus are all part of the same story. They are the witnesses. Because there is in the end only one story! There is the story of the one true God who created this earth and set life in motion and is working for its fulfilment and unless we look and measure, evaluate and ultimately make a choice we are in very real and present danger from our own humanity!

Can we see our lives in the same way? As I was writing this, my sister was texting about job interviews and about finding the right place for her. That followed on from a conversation about the death of Peggy, a friend of Beryl, who we shared communion with in her home on several occasions. That followed on from speaking with someone in distress who was struggling to keep on going with the weight of grief. All of these lives find their purpose and the call to live, from the one true God. Each of them in their own ways was looking to hear the voice of God, to help them, guide them, bring them home. Can you see yourself in the purposes of the one true God? Can you hear God speaking? Words of peace, words of faith, words of comfort, words of challenge, words of Calling?

What strange and exhausting times we're living through. And we have stories about calling to listen to today. It's your story too.

Song [He will hold me fast](#)

Words of Offering

We pause in this moment to recognise the gifts we each bring to our common life, for our time and talents offered for the building of God's Kingdom through Tyndale and beyond.

Intercessions Let's pray:

God, grant us the grace to see the needs of God's kingdom and respond with passion, kindness, generosity and hopefulness.

May our prayers create the space you need to work in the dim places where human need is at its greatest and where human greed and selfishness cause deep chaos to abound.

We remember before you, those you call us to serve.

The broken, the depressed, the victims of crime, the lonely, the addicted, the poor, the stranger, the prisoner, the homeless, and those you have placed in our hearts specifically today...

We remember before you, those we are called to love: our parents, our children, our sisters and brothers, family near and far, our friends, and our neighbours, and those whom God brings to our minds today... particularly we pray for Thelma Moulton's family and give you thanks for all that Thelma contributed to our life together here at Tyndale.

We remember before you, those you call us to walk alongside: those who are grieving, those who are scared, those who are waiting, those who feel hopeless, those who are celebrating, those who need to know they are not alone, those who are working tirelessly in schools and hospitals, pharmacies, care homes and shops, those who are unsure of their future because exams are postponed, graduations delayed, jobs unavailable...

We remember before you those you call us to challenge, who hold power over others' lives and have responsibility for our communities common purse, whose decisions from afar affect the poorest and most vulnerable and can be life affirming or life destroying. We pray for compassion and wisdom and words with meaning.

And today we pray for the United States as a nation divided and fearful. We cannot see a way ahead without violence. We have people, family & friends, caught up in the events being played out. We ask for an unearthly peace to descend upon communities. We ask that prejudices and discrimination will be overcome and hatred to cease. We pray for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as they take their oaths. Give them safety, wisdom and strength for the days ahead. We pray too for Donald Trump and his outgoing administration. Pour your spirit of peace and love upon them.

God, grant us the grace to see the needs of God's kingdom and respond with passion, kindness, generosity and hopefulness.

May our prayers create the space you need to work in the dim places where human need is at its greatest and where human greed and selfishness cause deep chaos to abound.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer Amen

So we share the grace with each other:

The Grace is said: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.*

Canticle

(Together)

*Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.*

*Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.*

Christ under me;

Christ over me;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.

*This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.*

*Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.*

*This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.*

Christ as a light;

Christ as a shield;

Christ beside me

on my left and my right.

Song [I the Lord of sea and sky](#)

Blessing

The blessing of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always. Amen

[Shelter me](#)