

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024:** Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.*



**StF 30 MP 381 'Jesus, stand among us'** by Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

### **Opening Prayer**

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

**Old Testament reading set for today:** Jonah 3 v 1 – 5, 10

### **To think about**

Can you remember the background to Jonah's obedience to God in chapter 3? It is instructive and interesting to look at what happened in chapters 1 and 2!

**Gospel reading set for today:** Mark 1 v 14 – 20

### **Message from a Circuit Friend**

Today's readings have a similarity in as much as Jonah had been recruited by God to fulfil the role of a prophet, and Jesus was busy recruiting his first disciples. What was it that singled out these individuals to be chosen to do God's work? Let us begin with Jonah and consider his character. We know that he was Godly (1:19), courageous (1:12), prayerful (2:1-9) and obedient even if it was after chastisement (3:3-4), but he also displayed human frailty through his selfish attitude (3:4-10,4:1). Initially, he was more concerned with his own agenda than fulfilling God's will.

Now let us consider Simon, Andrew, James and John. One thing they had in common was their occupation as fishermen. Undoubtedly, their skill-set was one factor that led to Jesus selecting them (1:17). They were also God-fearing believers with a reputation that was known, and presumably, respected among the local community. They were used to hard work and long hours, sometimes experiencing bad storms and fruitless expeditions. Their work was directly connected with feeding the local community as well as themselves. They knew how to mend broken nets, work together and independently. Judging by the account we are given, they were also willing and able to respond to Jesus' request without offering excuses as to why it was inconvenient to do so. We, too, must be mindful of Jesus calling us to serve him in the world today.

What is it that he is calling you to do?

**Quentin Stephen (Local Preacher and member of Watton Methodist Church)**

**StF 250 H&P 141 'Jesus calls us o'er the tumult'** by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 – 1895)

### **Prayers of Intercession**

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

### **Prayer from the suggested service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:**

Lord Jesus, who prayed that all might be one, we pray to you for the unity of all Christians, according to your will, according to your means. May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by division, to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope. Amen.

*(This needs thinking about before praying it! – Ed)*

**This year's theme, prayers and service have been prepared by Christians in Burkina Faso (you might like to look up where this is). The overall theme is based on the story of the Good Samaritan and a sentence from the story is used as the theme for each of the daily prayers for the 8 days of the week or 'octave' (18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January). See [Resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024 \(ctbi.org.uk\)](https://www.ctbi.org.uk)**

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**StF 682 H&P 712 'God of grace and God of glory'** by Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878 – 1969)

**May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.**