

Sunday January 17, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – John 1:43-51
“Anything Good”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, name the last time you did something good for someone else.

John 1:43-51. Context. This week’s reading concludes the account of Jesus calling his first disciples as we read it in John. In John’s gospel, following Jesus starts with knowing Jesus and acknowledging who he is. Already John the Baptist had pointed Andrew, one of his followers, to Jesus, and Andrew had brought his brother Peter. Notice how Philip and Nathanael identify Jesus with a number of different titles and descriptions. In the preceding verses, Jesus had already been identified as “Lamb of God” and “Rabbi.” The image Jesus uses at the end of this passage of the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man suggests the description of Jacob’s ladder, which Jacob saw in a dream at Bethel, a place where heaven and earth come together. Here the ladder is replaced by the Son of Man, who in Daniel’s visions, is the one who brings God’s kingdom to the earth.

Read John 1:43-51

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read John 1:43-51 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- In this passage, Nathanael had to reassess an assumption (that the Messiah would come from a town of importance. Nazareth was tiny and unimportant). What would Nathanael miss if he held on to his assumptions? Name a time in your life when you had to reassess an assumption.
- Read the Communion liturgy from *The United Methodist Hymnal* or [online](#). (Focus on the invitation and the confession and pardon.) How might these reminders help us to examine where we have done harm or failed to do good?
- Discuss: While it is natural to think that those who are like us do good, it is much harder to consider that those who are different from us are good or are capable of doing good. This

passage and the Communion liturgy invite us to self-examination. We are confronted with the question, “Can anything good come from us?”

- How does God’s grace give us assurance beyond right or wrong opinions?
- Why are difficult conversations so anxiety producing?
- While some might see difficult conversations as futile (“I know what I believe. You know what you believe. We’re not going to convince each other, so what’s the point?”), what good might result from having these conversations? [Hint: We grow in our perspectives of what others believe. We deepen the reasons for our beliefs. We might persuade others to amend their perspectives, and they might persuade us to amend our perspectives. Ultimately, we might grow closer to God as we see more and see God in others.]

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Gracious God, we confess our imperfections and times when we have failed to live and act as one of the baptized. May we see ourselves defined by your grace and not by our faults. Help us to see how you are transforming us into your image and that we might see how you are at work in others, even those who count us as enemies. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

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.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.