

**Sunday, January 14, 2024 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study**

**Second Sunday After the Epiphany**

**“Your Servant is Listening”**

**1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) and John 1:43-51**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). Have participants answer: “Is there anyone in your life who helps you discern when God is calling or speaking to you?”

**1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20). Context.** This week’s reading recounts God’s call to Samuel. Samuel comes on the scene at a crucial moment in Israel’s history: the loose social order that existed among the tribes of Israel for several generations after they settled in the land following the Exodus from Egypt had begun to unravel through weak political leadership in the face of the Philistine threat and corrupt religious practice. Samuel’s mother, Hannah, had dedicated him at birth to the Lord at the shrine at Shiloh, where we meet him some years later in this passage, serving under the Eli the priest.

**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 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) and 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 text?

**Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) and John 1:43-51 again -**

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

- Why was Samuel unable to recognize the voice of the Lord the first three times the Lord called him? (1 Samuel 3:7)

- *“It’s loud in our world with distractions aplenty, voices calling, blaming, warning, vying for our attention. It’s loud in our souls, where we are filled with our own questions and fears, filled with our own failures and inadequacies.”* What are noises impede us from listening to the voice of God when God speaks to us?
- What kept Nathaniel from believing Philip when he told him that Jesus from Nazareth was the Son of God?
- What does it take to recognize God’s voice and receive God’s message? [We need to listen attentively to the Lord. Samuel answered, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening’ (1 Samuel 3:9).]
- Do our biases and prejudices impede us from recognizing God’s voice proclaimed through other humans? What might you do this week to listen to God?

### **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). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

God, our guide and comforter, help us recognize your voice amid the many noises that distract us. Please give us the wisdom to listen attentively to your voice and respond to your call. **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.