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THE BULLETIN - READINGS

Sunday 14 January, Epiphany 2

Collect for Epiphany 2

Almighty God,

in Christ you make all things new:

transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives

make known your heavenly glory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

1 Samuel 3:1-10: Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a

third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Revelation 5:1-10: The Scroll and the Lamb

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song:

'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.'

John 1:43-end: Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city

of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

**Readings for 21 January 2018, Epiphany 3, are:
Genesis 14:17-20; Revelation 19:6-10; John 2:1-11**

Forests and Foxes *by Rodney Nicholson*

The Prime Minister's announcement of a northern forest of 50 million trees to be planted between Hull and Liverpool is excellent news. It also came in the week when the book of Genesis is being read at Morning Prayer. The account of the creation in Chapter 2 says that God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

The northern forest will indeed be pleasing. Environment Secretary, Michael Gove rightly said: "Trees are some of our most cherished natural assets and living evidence of our investment for future generations." The project, he added, "will create a vast ribbon of woodland in northern England, providing a rich habitat for wildlife to thrive, and a natural environment for millions of people to enjoy."

As Genesis says, trees supply people and wildlife with food. Their often needless destruction across the world extinguishes whole species and imperils our human existence, since we depend upon planet earth. Eliminate the bees, for example, and we eliminate

ourselves. What the writer of Genesis could not have known is that trees prevent flooding. The 120 mile area of forest is reckoned, over the next 25 years, to protect 190,000 homes. Trees have been called the earth's lungs, being vital for the atmosphere. To this end the forest will soak up emissions and carbon dioxide, as well as helping to tackle climate change. Environmental groups, such as the Woodland Trust back the scheme. Approval has also come from Friends of the Earth, saying: "England is one of the least wooded nations in Europe, so the new Northern Forest is extremely welcome. Theresa May is also to be commended for dropping the Government's plan for a free vote in Parliament over reversing the fox hunting ban. Privately Mrs May is not against hunting but she accepts that most people see it as a cruel activity. The 2004 ban will therefore continue for at least the life of this Parliament. The Bible does not forbid hunting for food. It is hard, however, to imagine Jesus blessing a so-called sport which sees a hunted animal torn to shreds by a pack of hounds. We want peace and harmony in our world. Back to the forest, almost the last words in the Bible (Revelation 22) are: ".....and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations".

