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Worship Devotional

January 25, 2026

We encourage households and neighbors to gather together to participate in the liturgy below as a way of still gathering and praying when we cannot make it to the physical building. We hope this is a meaningful experience and way to experience the grace of God together. The devotional can be read aloud to the group or individually.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we are listening. Fill our hearts and homes with your peace as we listen to your Holy Spirit.

One of my favorite quotes is from John Muir, the American naturalist who explored much of the West, and made very detailed drawings which helped botanists and biologists understand what was out there in the unexplored wilderness. He said, "The mountains are calling, and I must go." Many times, most of the time, our callings are not as clear as that, or as clear as Jesus talks about in Matthew 4:12-23.

Move to Galilee

Now, when Jesus heard that John was arrested, he went to Galilee. He left Nazareth and settled in Capernaum, which lies alongside the sea in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali. This fulfilled what Isaiah the prophet said: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, alongside the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who lived in the dark have seen a great light, and a light has come upon those who lived in the region and in shadow of death. From that time Jesus began to announce, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" Calling of the first disciples As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen.

"Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him. Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee, their father, repairing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Ministry to the crowds, Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. He announced the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness among the people.

While we may not have a voice calling us like Peter and Andrew, or mountains for John Muir, I would venture to say that many of us have experienced something in our lives that shifts our center of gravity. It's like a gyroscope, which will continue to spin as long as it is stable, but a disturbance in its orbit will knock it off balance, and it cannot recover the same equilibrium state. Having children can be this for some people, as it certainly was for me. A new job, or a lost job. A new place, or a place we have always known changing. A health diagnosis and miracles can all shift our center of gravity. Jesus is that force that changes how we order our world and order our lives, and so we need to reorient to that new reality. The good news is that Jesus is also the one who orients us.

I read a fascinating book about cave diving by Jill Heinerth called *Into the Earth: My Life as a Cave Diver*. In that book, she talks about one of the major dangers of swimming through underwater caves, when you literally have your gravity shifted, is that you can lose track of which way is up. So they have to employ all of these techniques and instruments to reorient themselves if they ever lose track. They remind themselves of where they are, and then they can know where to go.

I know so many in our community who are experiencing a shift in their gravity. What used to be normal in our everyday lives has moved, and it's amazing to me how we, as humans, will keep trying to force a new reality back into our old ways of thinking and behaving. We will fit it into our schedule or come up with a new routine.

I believe in calls from Jesus, and I do not believe they are a one-time event. When anyone asks me about my call story, I usually respond with, "Which one, or which time?" Because I believe Jesus calls us over and again, which is an act of grace. Grace for us to get it right this time. Grace for us to offer forgiveness and heal harms. Our calling is not a one-time event, and so we need the church and community to reorient us each time it happens. This can look like the Lenten Bible studies we are offering, it can look like the opportunity to host the youth at your house for the Super Bowl, or it can look like regularly volunteering in so many different ways in the church, particularly in teaching. As people are having their center of gravity thrown off through calls, we need teachers who can help them figure out where they are so they can know where to go. I think this is another part of God's grace and call; we aren't all called the same or

at the same time, because we need one another to reorient ourselves to what God is doing.

Most parents will tell you that a way God teaches us patience is through children. That's the nice way of putting it. In our household, I am being taught patience in how we leave the house. I will say, after several time warnings, "It's time to go!" and I will get the response, "Wait! First, let me..." Something I noticed about Peter, Andrew, James, and John in both verses 20 and 22 is that when Jesus called, they went. It's almost as if they were there waiting, and no matter what they were doing, they knew it was time to go. Jesus is calling, and I must go. It's an adventure, but one I hope we don't ignore.

Responsive Music

As part of our worship from home experience, I encourage groups and families to pray together. To talk to one another about our lives and how we can pray for one another.

Prayer Discussion

Ask those you are with, or anyone in your small groups, how and to what is God calling you right now?

Tell me about a time when your center of gravity was thrown off, what stabilized you, and what do you do differently now?

If you are being called, it's disorienting. What people do we need to help us find out where we are so we can know where to go?

Closing Prayer

Lord, we are experiencing a tumultuous world right now where the order of things has shifted. Our center of gravity has been thrown off as trust erodes and hatred is seemingly carrying us through. Forgive us. Thank you for the grace of calling us again. We are listening, Lord, to hear how we might stand up to injustice, and how we might offer freedom. We are praying for healing and listening for your call to be instruments of healing. We pray for the call to see like Jesus, and to enter this chaos with grace and truth. We pray to reorient our lives to you, and we expectantly wait for your call.