Dear friend,
I enclose this week's virtual service, prepared by Judith.

As a hymn, she has suggested "Be still and know that I am God"; in this version it is given a nice blue grass-style treatment, appropriately enough, by Shiloh worship

https://youtu.be/zWIsMDsxeBI

There are echoes of the passage from 1 Samuel in this ballad “Speak Lord, I’m listening” by John B Miller

https://youtu.be/87QoP21iM6A

The passage from Revelation leads on to the following text, "Worthy is the Lamb", memorably set by Handel, followed by the Amen chorus at the conclusion of Messiah, with rolling score for singers to join in

https://youtu.be/3x2fSxOeij4

A worship song “You carry me”, based on the start of psalm139

https://youtu.be/GhtvRkwTEM8

If you would like to recap the story of Jesus and Nathanael. Here it is, with figs

https://youtu.be/9j5CPuAUCAg

Finally, I hope you enjoy the theological insight of the attached Covid-related cartoon stolen from Private Eye.



With every blessing,
Chris

Sunday 17th January – Epiphany 2

Lord, before ever you made us, you loved us. Nor has your love ever slackened, nor ever shall. In love all your works have begun, and in love they continue. In this love our life is everlasting, and in this love we shall see you and be glad for ever. Amen. *(Julian of Norwich)*

CONFESSION

Forgive us, Lord, when we listen, but do not hear; when we look, but do not see; and when we feel, but do not act; and by your mercy and grace draw us into the righteous deeds of your kingdom of justice and peace; through Christ our Lord, Amen. *(Maria Hare)*

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen. (Common Worship)

COLLECT

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.

READINGS 1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-5,12-18; Revelation 5:1-10; John 1:43-end.

REFLECTION Today's readings build from what we remember as a well-loved Sunday School story to awe-inspiring prophecy. Samuel, asleep in the temple at Shiloh, is visited by the Lord, and eventually listens, hears God's message, and tells it to Eli. The Psalm delves into the depths of God's knowledge of all humanity; the whole Psalm, not just today's chosen verses, is worth reading, just to be able to echo the psalmist's cry, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.' Jesus's knowledge of Nathanael's character goes far beyond the mere sight of a man under a fig tree, and promises 'far greater things' – the vision which is expanded upon in the passage from Revelation showing us Jesus himself, the Lamb, the only one worthy to open the scroll revealing God's final purpose. Here is 'heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.' The dawn of understanding, such as Nathanael's, can lead us on to deeper and deeper comprehension of the awe-inspiring, all powerful, wonder of God.

PRAYERS

Eternal Lord, our beginning and our end: bring us with the whole creation to your glory, hidden through past ages and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Common Worship)

We pray for the church: We praise you, Holy Spirit, for calling us to serve you now, for baptising us to represent you in this broken world. Help us to be Christ's united body to heal and reconcile; help us to share Christ's life with everyone (*NZ prayer book).*

We pray for the world: for the United States as a new President is inaugurated; for areas where war continues; for places where poverty, famine and disease persist.

We pray for the sick and suffering, and for all those who care for them – all those with Covid19 and also the many people who have other health problems. In particular, we pray for those in our own minds at this time……
We pray for the bereaved, the anxious and the lonely. Grant them the peace and comfort of your healing love.

We join in saying **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

We share **THE GRACE**

'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.' *Jeremiah 29: 11,12.*