

Vocations Sunday

25 January 2009

This pack includes material based on the Revised Common Lectionary readings set for Epiphany 3, Year B:

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

Psalm 62: 5-12

1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

Mark 1: 14-20

The production and collation of Vocations Sunday Material for 2009 has been led on behalf of West Midlands Synod by a group of 'TLS survivors' in the Coventry and Warwickshire Area:

- George Jones
- Peter Kimberley
- Bill Young

It has been this group's particular concern that the material should not focus only on the vocations of those called to lead worship or to ordained ministry. Although a headline title has not been given to this material, 'Vocations for All' would have been appropriate. It has been important to us to gather together contributions from other people, especially accounts of their sense of calling.

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This material therefore includes:

- This introductory leaflet with a seasonal comment on Robert Burns
- Reflections on our individual calling
- Sermon notes and material for all-age worship and a sketch
- Other worship material including a new hymn of commitment and prayers.

The United Reformed Church website www.urc.org.uk contains Vocations Sunday material from a number of previous years. To locate this, it is easiest to enter 'Vocations' in the search box on the home page. The material on the URC website includes substantial lists of hymns appropriate for use in Vocations Sunday worship, which are not repeated here.

A separate website www.vocations-sunday.org.uk has been set up by the group to house certain material that was not used in the printed version of this pack, notably pictures that emerged from the exercise, Exploring Vocations with Young People. It also contains links to older URC Vocations Sunday material as above, and material on the same topic, found elsewhere on the web, usually originating in other denominations.

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Poetry

Robert Burns

25 January 2009 will also mark the two hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. The amount to which this affects your congregation will obviously vary, but our denominational history suggests it may be significant for a proportion of us! There may have been events within the Scots or Scotland-leaning part of your congregation to (at least) allude to.

Burns' poetry gives us a considerable variety of themes, though 'being called by God' may not be directly one of them. Certain of his poems, such as "For a' that" have a very strong theme of the equality of all – a suitable sub-theme for Vocations Sunday, and who would argue with the prayer that "man to man the world o'er should brothers be"? But we do not have particular recommendations for using Burns this year.

Nevertheless, poetry can feature in a service, in preparatory articles in magazines and newsletters. Here is a poem by Emilie Jones, written on hearing of Vocations Sunday:

Emilie Jones **Gifts**

*Give me patience,
So I may teach.
Give me mystery,
So I may discover.
Give me kindness,
So I can inspire.
Give me freedom,
So I may speak.
Give me power,
So I can lead.
Give me strength,
So I can cope.
Give me happiness,
So I can share it.
Give me time,
So I'll make a difference.
Give me faith,
So I can believe.
Give me love,
So I will succeed.*