

**November 10, 2019**  
**Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Veterans Day**

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**21 Church Street**  
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**Rev. Steve Becker**

## **CALLED?!**

Exodus 3:9-12a, 4:10-12

Matthew 28:16-20

In hopefully a fairly short period of time this congregation will extended a "Call" to your new pastor. The extension of a call is an exciting and joyful time for sure. We pastors take the whole "Called" thing pretty seriously. A "Calling" is not just a job. It is a purpose. It's the answer to the question, "Why am I?" It is anchored in God...beginning, middle, and end.

Today we are thinking about "calling", "God" and "Life and this world in which we live."

God called Moses. Moses didn't think he could do what was being asked. And he had good reasons. But, God said he could and he did.

God called Jeremiah. Jeremiah didn't think he could do what was being asked. He too had good reasons. But, again, God said he could and he did.

Stories such as these about the people of God being in oppression or other life-diminishing conditions or contexts and God speaking to those people and conditions through other people are snippets of history. They are also stories that represent the conditions and contexts of life that are ours. They represent God's presence in such conditions and God's desire to and work to bring people into conditions that are better.

In the Bible there are lots of similar stories. In our history since biblical times, there are more than can be counted.

We believe God created everything and it was very good. Over time, the experience of life has become less than what it was created to be. The Spirit of self-interest has birthed and continues to birth a myriad of things that diminish life.

God is focused on Re-creating. God is focused on Redemption. God wants our experience of life to be better; less mired in the challenge, and even evil, that is brought on by humanity's inclination toward self-interest. God wants humanity's experience of life to be more Joyful and our world to be a better place. It is to this end that God Calls.

That God Calls is good news for us. It reminds us that God's love never fails and never ends. We need to always celebrate this and our ability to hear the call, to respond to the call and the blessings and the progress that is made because God calls and because we accept.

Jesus tells us to "go into all the world"; to preach, teach, and make disciples. This passage is referred to as the "Great Commission"—the "Great Calling" if you will.

1 Corinthians 12 (the verses about the church being a body and having many parts) and other places in scripture remind us that we have unique gifts and abilities. And, given that, we can make a difference; that each of us is unique and special; that we are part of a larger whole that depends on all the individual parts doing and being what they were created to be and do.

The larger whole is The Church. The Church is God's presence in our world; the power of God at work in this world. The Church is Love. The Church is help for all people who need help. I will go on record saying that The Church—the Body of Christ in this world—and by that I mean each individual person all the way up to the World on the global scale, is more needed and necessary than anything else. God wants humanity, all over the world, to know life as we were created to know it; life as Joy and love. God "calls" every day to make that happen.

Today I encourage each of us to embrace the truth of our own personal specialness and the value and importance of our own personal contribution.

The need is for all of us to be involved. While I was serving at Perinton Presbyterian Church we had two events by which we stepped up and said as Isaiah said, "Here Am I, send Me." We had a dedication form that we asked people to fill out in September. It listed all the ministries of the church. With this form people stepped up and said, this is what I will do in the coming year. Then around the end of October into November we gave everyone another form on which people committed their finances. I know for certain that right now that particular form is in all of your hands. These are means by which we recognize that each of us does have abilities, we recognize that God is calling, and that each of us is a crucial part of The Church implementing God's desire to make the world a better place. As we make our commitment this is our time to say, "Yes, The church, the work, and presence of God in this world is MOST IMPORTANT!!!"

Sadly, the world's view of the church has changed. Today, more and more, the church is seen as an archaic, ritualistic, meaningless institution. Among other things, our calling is to show the world that this is not the case. Ours is to show the world God is Here and that God is empowering people and then calling people to make the world better. We, The Church, make it so as we hear and answer God's call.

So, when your new pastor shows up, and in fact even now we need to remember, it is not just that pastor who is called. The call of God is upon everyone of us. To the Glory of God, to the betterment of life, for all, let us take that call.