

# *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*



St Aidan's Uniting Church  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Second Sunday of Epiphany

## Call to Worship

We come to God who knows us:

**God, who is closer than our very breath;  
God, who loved us into being.**

We come to God who surprises us:

**God, who comes from unexpected places;  
God, who is present in unexpected people.**

Let us gather and worship our God.

## Prayers

Loving God,

we confess there are times  
when we think of places  
as being outside of your reach  
and ask:

Can anything good come from *there*?

We confess there are times  
we look at people  
who come from the wrong side of the tracks  
and dismiss them because:

Can anything good come from *there*?

Forgive us when we want to limit your love  
or fit you into the boxes of our own expectations;  
challenge our prejudices  
dismantle our assumptions  
and help us to see your face and your action  
in the places we expect it the least.

Remind us that something good  
can come out of anywhere  
and nowhere is beyond your love.  
Amen.

## Words of Assurance

Indeed, nowhere is beyond God's love  
and all people are loved deeply by God.

Be reminded again of Christ's words of grace:  
you are loved;  
you are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Prayer of Intercession

Loving God, as we pray for the needs of the world,  
we especially remember those  
who have been limited by stereotypes  
and the discrimination they experience.

We pray for the children and adults  
who have been told they will never amount to anything  
because of their disability  
or the place where they live.

We pray for the people around the world  
who have to remain in virtual hiding  
because of their gender identity or sexuality.

We pray for the people  
who are seen as untrustworthy  
or are assumed to be criminal,  
simply because of the colour of their skin.

We also pray for the many people  
who give support to challenge those stereotypes  
and empower others to find a voice  
that breaks down the walls  
our society builds.

Amen.

## Benediction & Blessing

We come to God who knows us:

**God, who is closer than our very breath;**

**God, who loved us into being.**

We come to God who surprises us:

**God, who comes from unexpected places;**

**God, who is present in unexpected people.**

Let us go out and live our lives  
ready to see God  
in those unexpected people and places.

Amen.