

Sermon Title: **“Yet if Jesus Says So”**

Bible: **Isaiah 6:1-8 & Luke 5:1-11**

When: on the 5th Sunday after the Epiphany, February 9, 2025

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube Live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. God works through all kinds of people!

Today’s two Scripture Readings from the lectionary are about calling and responses. God called Isaiah first. And what was the first response of Isaiah? “I am lost; I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips.” In other words, Isaiah said “I am not worthy.” When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Simon Peter experienced a miracle of catching many fish. Then, Peter’s response was, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” In other words, Peter said, “I am not worthy.”

What is your response when God is calling you? Does God use only certain people? In the Bible, there are many examples about whom God worked with. When Samuel went to Jesse to identify the next king among Jesse’s sons, who did the next king turn out to be? It was David, the youngest, the shepherd boy who was still out in the field. Yes, God works with young people: David, Joshua, Esther, and Timothy in the Bible, and our children, youth, and young adults in our church. When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh to spread the good

news, Jonah denied God's calling and did not want to go to Nineveh. Nevertheless, God worked with Jonah. Peter denied Jesus not once, but three times when Jesus was arrested. Nevertheless, God worked with Peter. Yes, God works with those who deny God. The apostle Paul used to not only deny Jesus, but also to persecute Christians. Nevertheless, the resurrected Jesus appeared to Paul and God worked with Paul. Yes, God works even those who persecuted God's people.

As we read from today's Scripture Readings, we might be afraid when God calls us. What we can learn is that God works through all kinds of people. God works with foreigners, too, as you see with me on this pulpit. There are many other examples in the Bible and in our reality. All of them are open to whatever God might do. They say, "Here am I, send me!" They say, "I am not, yet if my Lord says so, I will."

2. Call Committee?

I am so thankful to see each of you, because God calls each of you by name to this church. And I am so joyful to serve you as your pastor. Finally, I am so blessed to serve you and this church with our lay leaders. In the United Methodist Church, we have a Committee for Nominations & Leadership Development. Some people might want to regard it as a "Call Committee," because we do not nominate people so much as God uses it to call people God has already chosen. As a pastor, I am a chair of this committee. And I would like to mention that this committee is not only for nominations, but also for leadership development. When God called Moses, God provided him a staff, and helpers, like Miriam and Aaron. I try to

provide our lay leaders with some basic task-related skills or guidelines. I also try to help, mentor, and empower them, like Aaron and Miriam helped Moses. If there are any mistakes made by our lay leaders, it is not because of them, but because of me. And please remember that God works with our lay leaders. And let us be patient and be open to how wonderful God uses our lay leaders for our church and this community! And if you feel a calling to serve this church as one of lay leaders, please let me know. To be a lay leader requires diligence and a strong commitment, but it will be a joyous and rewarding experience.

3. Recognition of 2025 Lay Leaders

I would like to close my message with a blessing to our lay leaders. In the United Methodist Book of Worship, there is an order for the recognition of leaders in the church. After I share the church committees and our lay leaders for 2025, we will have a time to bless them altogether.

UM Book of Worship, page 599 “AN ORDER FOR THE INSTALLATION OR RECOGNITION OF LEADERS IN THE CHURCH”