

Service Music
February 5, 2012

Prelude - *Trumpet Tune in D Major* - This music is another 'Trumpet Tune' attributed to the English composer Henry Purcell (1658-1695). Having become a chorister at the Chapel Royal at the age of ten, Purcell showed his talent as a composer and musician, later serving as assistant keeper of the king's instruments and then becoming organist at Westminster Abbey. He became the organist at the Chapel Royal in 1682. Purcell wrote music for the organ as well as six operas, incidental music to fifty-four plays and religious music.

Chiming of the Hour - *Westminster Chimes*

Offertory - *The Calling of Matthew* - "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, 'Follow me'. And he left all, rose up, and followed him." Luke 5:27-28 (KJV) In 1597 or 1598 the Italian artist Michelangelo Merisi (1573-1610), commonly known as Caravaggio, created a painting called '*La vocazione di San Matteo*' (*The Calling of St. Matthew*). The painting appears on page two. This painting is truly extraordinary. In contrast to the style of painting of religious subjects before the time of Caravaggio, this painting suggests a sense of realism. Indeed, the entire painting might be characterized as 'common', with its dark interior and plain decor. Prior to the time of Caravaggio, artists depicted religious subjects and people in a grand, elevated way, but Caravaggio chose to show the glory of God in the world of the ordinary events of life. Looking closely at the painting, several characteristics appear. First, there are two groups of people in the picture. The group on the left includes Matthew (the man pointing to himself) and his companions seated at a table. The group on the right consists of two people, a poor man in the foreground and a man standing behind him. The man standing behind the poor man is Jesus with His arm and hand extended. How does one know that this man is Jesus? Here is one of the marvels of the painting. The halo around Jesus' head is almost invisible, so this does not make His identity obvious. But, look at the hand of Jesus. The hand of Jesus is a mirror-image of the hand of Adam in Michelangelo Buonarroti's painting called *Creation of Adam*. Caravaggio is telling the viewer of the painting that Jesus is the second Adam. This is one element which declares the identity of Jesus. Most importantly, however, the identity and presence of Jesus is made more obvious by the beam of light which invades the dark room, finding its way, through the extended hand of Jesus and above His head, to Matthew. In my view, this shows Jesus as the light of the world. The light of Christ shines in this dark corner of ordinary events and humanity, extending a call to an ordinary tax collector. In my view, like Matthew, we, as Christians, have been called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One way in which we have been called to preach the Gospel is through the vocation (the calling) which He has created for us. The calling of Christ extends to pastors, teachers, building contractors, engineers, musicians — indeed, to all who have been made new in Christ. God is not enclosed in the walls of a building on Sunday morning. He is present and active in the calling which He has given to each Christian. All of these different callings make up the fabric of God's mantle of grace in the world. The loss of any one thread in this fabric of grace diminishes the glory of God in the

world. Caravaggio and the Scriptures are right. God is present in the world, even in the seemingly common, ordinary events of that world. The Improvisation will consist of two parts.

I. *The Calling of Matthew*- A dark, minor musical theme will begin the Improvisation, illustrating the darkness of the room in Caravaggio's painting. The theme will be followed by a theme which goes to a major key with a mounting crescendo, reflecting the light of Christ entering the room and falling on the face of Matthew, showing the call of Christ to Matthew.

II. The Improvisation will end with an arrangement of the hymn *Teach Me, My God and King*. The words of this hymn, written by George Herbert (1593-1633), reflect the idea that all the work of Christians brings glory to God, for He is the One who has created us "in Christ Jesus unto good works". (Ephesians 2:10a) The tune of the hymn, *Carlisle*, was written by Charles Lockhart (1745-1815).

