Sermon: **“Come over to Macedonia and help us!”** (Acts 16.9)

Names are funny things. For those that use them they are important whether places or people.

Sharon’s father came from Darwen (Lancs, not Darwin, Australia) and post sometimes arrived via Australia!

Plenty of names in our reading – Macedonia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Thyatira, never mind v6-8 with Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia and Bithynia! (show them on the map).

TEXT. We could say *No one is calling to us*

Acts 16.9-15 changes from they/them to we/us, as if Luke has joined the group – was he the Macedonian?

If so the calling came from someone Paul knew – is not this often the case? – the call often comes from people we know. We simply have to have ears to listen.

TEXT*. Who is our Macedonia?*

For a parish looking outward, this is the imp task.

For Paul the call came after a long period of frustration (6-8). People might have said “Go to Egypt. Plenty of Jews there” “Go to Rome, centre of government” “Preach in your home area of Tarsus”

It is easy to think that God calls a parish to the obvious – young people, prisoners, students, etc, or to a hobby horse of someone within the parish.

To where and to whom we are called might only come after a long period of frustration…

TEXT. *What kind of help is called for?*

Again it might seem obvious. Paul probably looked for a synagogue, but as there was none he went to the river – there was a group of Jewish women and he talked with them about Jesus. To simply talk with others about Jesus might be what God wants from us, but it might not be.

Note that help was two way – Lydia gave help to Paul, not just vice versa.

The story tells us to be open to God’s call, be patient, especially in frustration, and be prepared to receive as well as give. Pray for our Pastoral and Outreach Committee and Parish Council as we seek to improve our outward focus as a parish.