

January 15th, 2023
Year A; 2nd Epiphany
1 Corinthians 1: 1-9
Psalm 40: 1-12
John 1: 29-42

John 1:29-42

John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

I attended a church in Richmond named St. Andrew's. In fact, St. Andrew's was the church that sponsored me for ordination to the priesthood, and I am still a member of St. Andrew's.

Being named for Andrew, everyone in the church knew the story of Andrew that we glimpse today in our gospel reading.

John the Baptist had two followers who hear him say, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” while pointing at Jesus. So those two followers of John the Baptist took off following Jesus, curious I imagine, wondering where the Lamb of God was going.

But Jesus turns around and says to the two:
“What are you looking for?”

The two avoid this very deep question by asking another question to the Teacher, “where are you staying?”

And Jesus takes them as they are and says, “Come and see”.

After a day with Jesus, the two seem convinced that Jesus is the real deal, and one of the two is finally identified as Andrew. Andrew feels an urgency to tell his brother, Simon, about Jesus, and so he finds his brother and tells him: “We have found the Messiah.”

This is big news, this is the savior they have all been looking for, hoping for, praying for, the one who will liberate them from Roman rule. Impressive news Andrew brings his brother, and then Andrew went on to insist that Simon, come and see the Messiah for himself.

So one of those two guys who had been hanging around Jesus all day, shows up again, bringing another guy. Evidently Jesus sees something in Simon, because he does not speak to Andrew, but instead looks right at Simon and knows him, saying:

“You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” which the text tells us translates as, Peter.

As members of a church called St. Andrew’s, we always felt a little sorry for

Andrew as, though he seeks out Jesus and then believes he is indeed the Messiah and wants to share this news with his brother and urges his brother to come and meet Jesus, it is his brother Simon, or Peter, who gets a new name and an unwavering call from Jesus.

And it is important to know, that this is it for Andrew's starring role. Andrew is one of the 12 disciples but if you look him up in the Bible, you get references to lists of the 12 and he is named. Or you get references that say things like: "Peter, and his brother Andrew, went to...."

At St. Andrew's Church we knew this was our namesakes big and only moment, in sharp contrast to his brother Peter, who has dozens of starring moments in the stories of Jesus, and of the early church.

But rather than muttering things like: "Always a bridesmaid, never a bride..." we at St. Andrew's deeply appreciated Andrew's role.

Andrew's role may seem small, but it was crucial. Andrew pointed the way to Jesus. He went, he saw, he believed and he shared the crucial news of what he saw, and he shared that news with his brother.

Nothing to sneeze at, pointing others in the direction of the light, helping others in the darkness to see a glimmer, to feel hope anew or even for the first time, after a long cold lonely winter.

Most of us are not Peter, always next to Jesus, close to the action, speaking up sometimes with brilliance, but often told by Jesus things like, "get behind me Satan".

But many of us are Andrew, quietly watching, paying attention to what is happening, even when someone just walks by, giving energy to tuning into the holy, and inviting others, echoing the words Jesus said to Andrew, and I like to imagine Andrew saying to others, including his brother:

“Come and see.”

A lot of folks need someone to quietly point toward the light. The church in 2023 needs to shine light and hope in many places, not only in a pew on Sunday morning.

I am awed by the communities that have formed at our community Food Pantry, at our Chair Yoga and Line Dancing classes and the tangible sense of God’s light and love in these surprising places.

So, on this 2nd Sunday of Epiphany, a brief but crucial season often called the season of light, I invite you to ponder on Andrew, and if you notice one of those Holy Spirit nudges, say to someone:

“Come and see.”

And tell them you will be there too, saving them a spot in the back pew, or in the front row of chair yoga. Yes, you will be there too, quietly pointing towards the light and welcoming them.

Amen.