



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Second Sunday after Epiphany January 18, 2026

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: John 1:29-42

The next day, John the Baptist 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).

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World. Amen.

The month of January has been a time of reflection for myself and I am sure for most pastors as well. It is annual report time; year-end reports not only for St. Timothy's but for Synod and the National Church.

Annual reports touch on many aspects of the life of the church; the congregation. Actually, I enjoy reading committee reports – to see where God has led them and leading them to. Over the years I have noticed one report disappearing from the collection – the report from the Evangelism Committee.

Evangelism. It has become an extinct word in some mainline churches. Actually, I believe most people are frightened by the word evangelism. I believe it would be fair to say that if I were to try to form an Evangelism Committee today, I would be hard pressed to strike a committee of three. Why, because the word frightens us. Let's face it; we all have been on the receiving end of someone else's evangelism and it has been uncomfortable.

"Have you accepted Jesus?" by a domineering aunt or "Do you know where you're going when you die?" by a good customer on the phone or of course, the knock at the door by two well dressed folk greeting you with a smile, one clutching a black briefcase, the other holding a magazine (and it's not the Canada Lutheran) asking, "With all the terrible things happening in the world today many wonder if God exists or cares....What do you think?" Too many of us have experienced evangelism as coercive or even threatening.

For the rest of us it isn't so nearly antagonistic. It maybe we were taught never talk about religion, or our faith is very private, or the desire not to be perceived as one of *those* people.

But really, most of us have little experience when it comes to evangelism so we are downright frightened by it. This in itself cripples our ability to reach out with the good news. John's story of Jesus' baptism might be the perfect reading to help us to overcome our apprehension with evangelism.

John's account of Jesus' baptism is not told exactly the same story as revealed in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Each of these writers testifies Jesus coming to John the Baptist to be baptized. Each of these writers describes the descent of the dove. Each of these writers shares the message of the heavenly voice. We heard all of this in our gospel lesson of last week. But the Fourth Evangelist is different. We get from John a second-hand account from the testimony of John the Baptist. John only shares what he sees.

John the Baptist does that here. He sees the dove descend upon Jesus and tells others what he sees. That's it. Andrew later does the same. He tells his brother what he and John's other disciples saw – the person they believe is the Messiah – and invites Peter to come along and see for himself. John the Baptist plays an important role in the life of Jesus. He provides testimony as to who Jesus is and points the way so that others come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

Could evangelism be that simple? May I share this with you; evangelism is noticing what God is doing in our lives, sharing that with others, and inviting them to come and see for themselves!

You see – this isn't only what John the Baptist does, and it's not only what Andrew does. It's also what Jesus does. When Jesus notices some of John's disciples following him, he asks them, "What are you looking for?" They ask where he is staying. He doesn't give an answer. All Jesus does is offer an invitation: "Come and see."

Notice. Share. Invite. These are the three elements of evangelism: sharing the good news of what God had done and is still doing through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us and all the world.

Now – most of us have very little experience in any of these activities and so I have been thinking how we can develop our selves.

At first it may be difficult for us to name where we have seen or felt God's presence in the world or in our lives. We may begin with naming places where we see God needed – places of tragedy or distress or hurt. And then in time we may get better at noticing where God actually is – in doctors, nurses, first responders, home support workers, a caring neighbour or friend.

Most of us are nervous about sharing our faith because as good Lutherans we've never done it. That means that practice is probably the only solution to this problem. This morning, I would like you to turn to someone near to you and share one reason you like this church, one reason why you come. Let's do this! Now....that wasn't hard.

Now invite. This just may be the hardest of the three. But is it really? Think about it: we invite people to things all the time: to come for dinner, or play golf, or a fund-raising event, or to the movies or to go shopping. We are quite good at inviting friends to come to things – things we like and enjoy doing – just not to church. So, pick a friend who doesn't belong to a church and invite them to come to church with you. It's easy. And don't worry about losing a friend; they will always be your friend!

My friends in Christ. Notice. Share. Invite. These are small things yet they can create huge results reaching far beyond what one could ever imagine. John the Baptist simply shared the wonder he saw and Jesus gained his first disciples, people who carried his message to the ends of the earth.

God delights in taking little things – things the world decides are nothing – and doing something wonderful through them. Our initial attempt to share what we have seen and felt will feel like very small efforts, yet the God who brought light from darkness wants to – and *will!* – do marvelous things through them.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

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STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Nancy Briscoe, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

