



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Third Sunday after Epiphany January 25, 2026

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.

Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Homily

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

As many of you are aware, I have spent more of my life sitting in the pew, where you are sitting this morning, than standing in the pulpit. I could extend the thought a little by suggesting that the pew wasn't your normal church pew but a place in the choir loft. Sometimes it was in the balcony of the church and other times in the chancel. And sitting in the chancel meant you always had to be on your best behavior and you wouldn't dare to think of closing your eyes in the sermon especially after a late Saturday night!

Singing in a church choir is a commitment; a rather large commitment. Singing in the choirs of St. Matthews and later St. Peter's Kitchener, rehearsals were an hour and a half each Thursday evening. This was imperative because we sang an anthem each and every Sunday. So yes, belonging to a church choir is a huge commitment.

When I stop to think of this for a moment, I have heard a lot of sermons during my thirty plus years sitting in the choir loft. Only a very few I remember to this day and others barely made it to the entrance door at the end of the service. So, I know how it is during this time of the service. Sometimes it is difficult to follow the preacher and their thoughts and connect them to our life's context.

I have to admit, there are times when the teaching time just didn't happen for me. And when it didn't, something else did; it might have been in the scripture reading, the anthem for the day or words from a hymn that lit the call with me so I could face a week in the world.

When I read today's words from Matthew the sense of calling seemed to permeate the passage. The sense of calling, not just our call, but the call; God's call, God's call to each and every one of us.

If we look into this passage we read about the call of John the Baptist, even though it leads to imprisonment. We hear Jesus withdraws, which in this gospel is not about retreating but rather an intentional time to listen and respond to God's call. Then there is Jesus' own call to the crowds to "come and see" and become a part of God's in-breaking kingdom. This is followed by his call to a few specific fishermen. He calls them to be disciples to catch all kinds of people in the net of God's grace.

There are all kinds of callings, yet each one is from God!

So, the question I have been pondering is: Do you feel called? Or is this something you leave for the clergy because they are the ones who are called to ordained ministry?

I propose this question because often when in my younger days while sitting in that comfort pew I had a difficult time seeing a direct connection between what I did and what I believed.

So today, possibly part of the problem is focusing on too much on what we do than who we are! You see, God's call isn't simply to *do* but rather to *be* something and that something is a child of God.

Is that what made it possible for John to proclaim the coming Messiah and challenge the powers that be, even when it meant his imprisonment? That he knew God had called him to *be* the forerunner for Jesus and God's work?

Is that what beckoned such an immediate response from Peter and Andrew, James and John, that they felt called to *be* more than they had imagined? They probably have no idea what being "fishers of people" even means at this point in the story, but they do know that Jesus sees something in them, something of value and worth. They have no idea where they will go, or what they will do, but they do know that Jesus is calling them to *be* his disciples, and they trusted that the rest will become clear in time.

We are called to be children of God; to a God who values and honours and loves each one of us. And if we are open to this calling, we will over the course of time learn what this means and we will find all kinds of things to do in response to God's call.

Maybe your “doing” will come at your place of work. A colleague may come to you with a deep concern that needs wisdom and understanding and council that only you may have to share.

Maybe your “doing” is through your volunteering be it at the hospital, food bank, schools or library. Your doing is through building positive relations while living out your calling in word and deed.

At the heart of our “doing” is God. Yet before God calls us to *do* anything God first calls us to *be* something: God’s own beloved children.

Calling isn’t only for individuals; it is also for congregations and this congregation of St. Timothy’s.

God is calling St. Timothy’s to be the gathering of God’s beloved children.

God is calling St. Timothy’s to be the place of welcome and acceptance.

God is calling St. Timothy’s to be where God’s word is taught and the good news of the kingdom is proclaimed.

God is calling St. Timothy’s to be a place where God’s children can find healing.

My Friends in Christ. Joining Sunday to Monday morning can be difficult, I realize this. But if we can focus on being – just being – God’s beloved children, and let that grace-filled identity seep into the deepest parts of ourselves, I have little doubt that those things we are called to do will become clear. 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.

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC Communique

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

Shrove Tuesday February 17 – Pancake Supper mark your calendar. Supper to include: pancakes, maple syrup, sausage, baked beans, fruit and beverages. Adults \$10, Children 10 to 6 years, \$5 and children under 5 years eat free!

