

Come and See, then Do
 January 18, 2026 MLK Weekend
 John 1:29-42
 St. Paul's, Lansing
 The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

May the God who creates us, redeems us, and sustains us, be with us this day and remain with us always. Amen.

Good Morning.

Venezuela. Greenland. Renee Good. Minnesota.

What to do? How to be in a world where up seems to be down and down is sideways and sideways is backwards. It feels to me as if all that I thought was foundational in our country is up for grabs, readily being reinterpreted and spun in a way with a crass authority that rivals the pigs in George Orwell's quaint dystopian novel of another century. What to do? How to be?

And I hear myself saying, silently, quietly and then sometimes rather loudly, "Where is God?"

And John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." As Jesus walks by, (What I would give right now to have Jesus walk by...) As Jesus walks by John the Baptist says to some of his followers, "There he is." And then John gives a brief account of baptizing Jesus and saying it wasn't until he saw the Spirit descending from heaven that he figured out who Jesus was. But now he knows, and John the Baptist points him out.

A day later John the Baptist is standing with two of his disciples and once more Jesus walks by—and John true to form and right on time says to his followers, "There he is! The lamb of God." I'm not sure that John's followers knew what a lamb of God was or is, but John pointing out Jesus is enough.

The two followers leave John and begin to trail after Jesus. I imagine them kind of nonchalantly slouching on down the side of the road behind our Lord. Jesus hears them shuffling along and turns and says to them, "What are you looking for?"

I don't think they know what they are looking for, because they don't answer that question. Instead, they say to Jesus, maybe to figure out just how long of a walk are they going to be doing, they say, "Ah—where are you staying Jesus?"

And Jesus says to them and maybe even to us, "Come and See."

So they do. They see where Jesus is staying and they stay with him for the rest of the day. And then Andrew, finds his brother, Simon Peter and says to him, "We have found the Messiah."

A quaint sacred story from long ago, and how I want to know, does it apply to me, to those of us, who are maybe overwhelmed with what we hear, what we read and what we see as we "doom scroll" the night away.

Two pieces stand out to me.

The first is that Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, needs to be pointed out for those who were there to understand who he is. We do not always know right away that holiness is in our midst.

John the baptizer says, “I didn’t know it was the Messiah until after I baptized him and saw the Spirit descending.” Not until then did he know. Likewise, John’s followers are equally clueless until John points to him.

So it turns out---in our fraught, cracked, broken world, we may need some guidance and reminding to see and know when holiness is in our midst.

Remember that.

Secondly, when we begin to follow, when we begin to shuffle along, begin to walk in the way of our Lord, Jesus will turn and ask us, “What are you looking for?”

Friends, do we know what we want? Do we have in our minds, if I flip my life and change my patterns to begin following Jesus, do we have any idea for what exactly we are looking, longing and hoping.

I don’t think John’s followers know—so instead they just inquire—“Where do you live?”

Jesus doesn’t give them an address or a description, instead he replies, “Come and see.”

He does not answer their question, instead he gives them and all of us an invitation: “Come and see.”

Our faith cannot be, and Christianity cannot be a head game: solely an intellectual pursuit. Instead, we need to invest all of ourselves, we need to get up, change our patterns and walk on down the road with him. For Jesus Christ is embodied and incarnated. Our faith is not a sideline, spectator sport. Our God is not a removed pundit offering theological insights perched in a skybox on high, delivering play by play color commentary. Our God is with us—Emmanuel.

And frequently the world is so screwed up, such a fecal festival that we need people like John the Baptist to point out holiness when it walks on by. And in order to truly understand holiness we need to change how we act and *Go and See*.

This weekend that is exactly what a number of our young people across the state are doing. This Martin Luther King Weekend, twenty some young people from our diocese and the diocese of the Great Lakes are gathering in Lansing [have been together here at St. Paul’s] diving deep into the connection between, creating a safer gun culture and our baptismal vows to respect the dignity of every human being, and love our neighbors as ourselves.

This group of young people and adult observers from the across the greater Episcopal church are combining the tools of community organizing with the call of our faith, to develop their individual and communal skills so that they might be leaders in decreasing gun violence. They are following and embodying Jesus’ call to love our neighbors as ourselves.

In a country that is locked in a perpetual cycle of grievance and harm, here we have young people saying, we can take steps to break that cycle, to create safer, more caring, connected communities: using God’s call and the world’s tools to offer a model of a better way of being.

What's it take?

A notion, a vision of what could be and the grit and will to come and see, to learn and then to do.

Have you noticed the Lamb of God walking by? Have you pointed out the Holy in our midst?
Have you dared to alter your patterns and follow?

Bit by bit, morning by morning by seeing the Holy and taking the time to follow our Lord, we can change who and how we are.

Our world, our country, does not have to be as it is.

Thanks be to God for those here and all around who are willing to risk and invest in a Holy vision of what could be.

Amen.