

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church

Shobonier, Illinois

Epiphany 2A

January 18, 2026

John 1:29-42a

Point, Invite, Find

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus.. (John 1.29, ESV)

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

The Epiphany season is all about revealing Christ as a shining light in a sin-darkened world. This fulfills what God says through Isaiah, "I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Is. 49:6). While he certainly wrote of Christ, it also applies to His Church.

In today's reading from John, there are several examples of that light shining through personal witnessing. Now, before we can tell others of Christ, we need to first receive the good news for ourselves. Then, with our faith and forgiveness firmly established in Christ, we can hear God's Word for what it says about witnessing to others. For the Gospel has the power to both bring the good news to us and to help us bring the good news to others.

To begin, we read, “John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” Thus, John the Baptist points people to Jesus. That’s what he’d come to do, after all. He pointed people to Jesus, the Christ Who would be crucified as the sacrifice for sin.

Notice that Jesus takes away the sin of the world. The word “sin,” though singular, is also a collective. While it includes individual sins, it also refers to man’s sinful condition. And this is important, because people tend to downplay and excuse certain sins. But we cannot deny “the abominable condition of the entire human race in its state of rebellion, separation from God, and spiritual death.” The Lamb of God removes this whole deadly mess, lifting it off us by His sacrifice.

Thus, when John says, “the sin of the world,” we need to realize that we are the world! It is our sin, our part of the whole deadly mess, that’s included in “the sin of the world.” Think of a big ball of mud and dirt, as big as the world itself, and each one of us has contributed our part. It’s that whole world of sin, the sin of the world, that would crush each one of us and all of us together under its weight.

That’s why John points us to “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” That huge boulder of guilt and death, weighing us down—Jesus comes and takes it away! Christ picks up that big ball of sin, lifts it off us, and puts it on His own shoulders and carries it to the cross. Yes, Jesus takes away all your sin, the whole deadly mess. Trust in Him. In Christ, you are forgiven and free.

Jesus takes away the sin of the world, and He does it as “the Lamb of God.” What all the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament pointed ahead to, Christ fulfilled and accomplished. He shed His blood as our substitute, as our atoning sacrifice. Jesus died that we might live. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him”—on Christ, the Lamb of God—“the iniquity of us all.” (Is. 53:6).

Having been pointed to Jesus, we then point others to Jesus too. We want them to know Jesus as we know Him.

To that end, we learn to invite. And we learn this from Jesus Himself. Two of John's disciples hear John calling Jesus "the Lamb of God," and they begin to follow Him. "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, 'What are you seeking?' And they said to him, 'Rabbi, where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and you will see.' So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day."

Having heard John's proclamation and following Jesus, Jesus stopped what He was doing and engaged them in conversation. He drew them out with an open-ended question: "What are you seeking?" They wanted to know where Jesus was staying, to go and find out more about Him. Jesus simply says, "Come and you will see." This is His invitation. Once they get to where Jesus is staying, they can get to know Him better.

Now, this is an example for us in our personal witnessing. In your daily encounters, as you engage in conversation and a door opens, when the other person's curiosity or interest has been piqued, what do you do then? If you don't know what to say, or feel comfortable trying to explain something, you might simply invite the person and say, in effect, "Come and you will see."

Invite people to come and see. Invite them to the place where Jesus is staying, where they can find out more about Him. That would be the church. This church. Jesus is here, where His gospel is. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matt. 18:20). Jesus is here, really present, with us in our midst. And through the preaching and teaching of the gospel, Jesus is giving out His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. So, one of the best things you can do is simply to invite, or even bring, your friend or family member to come and join you here in church. And you can do that with confidence, because this is where Jesus is staying. And, in fact, most people, by far, come to a church because someone invited them.

Lastly, we hear about Andrew, one of the two who came and saw. Andrew "first found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah.'" The invitee becomes the inviter! Andrew had been invited to come and see, and now he in turn finds someone else to invite. That's often the way it goes. Jesus has invited us to come to Him. We have been here where Jesus is. And what we've found here is so wonderful we can't help but go and find

somebody else to share our happiness. It's the first thing Andrew does. He's excited and enthused because of his encounter with Jesus. He can't wait to tell somebody what he found.

Now, no one has to tell a newly engaged woman to tell others. In fact, just try to stop her. She flashes her ring in front of everyone she meets. She posts pictures on social media. You can't miss the perpetual smile on her face. She simply must tell everyone the good news.

Now, you and I have something much greater and way more exciting. We have the good news of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let that gospel be news for you once again! Think of how wonderful your Savior is. Think of all the great things He has already done for you and what He has in store for you in the future! For eternity! Do that, and you can't help but have some of the enthusiasm of an Andrew.

Thus, Andrew "first found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah.'" Note, Andrew found two people. He found the Messiah, and then he found his brother. As to his "finding" the Messiah: it was really Jesus who found Andrew. Just like Jesus finds us. We were lost and wandering in our sin, and Christ the Good Shepherd came and found us. Now, in our excitement and sense of discovery, it may seem like we found Him. And because of the joy that we have in Christ, we want to go and find somebody else who needs Christ. So, we go and we find our brother, our sister, our neighbor, our friend, our co-worker. And we say, "Wow, listen to what I have found!" And you bring them to where Jesus is.

Yes, like John, we point people to Jesus and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" We invite our friends, saying, "Come and you will see." And we find our brother and say, "We have found the Messiah." But the beginning point—and the ending point—is that Jesus has found you and invited you to follow Him. Christ, the Lamb of God, has taken away your sin and invited you to His wedding feast! And through you, this same Jesus Christ continues to do the pointing, the inviting, and the finding. The Epiphany light is shining today! It is shining for us. And through us the light of Christ will shine forth to the people in our lives.

If you cannot speak like angels,

If you cannot preach like Paul,

You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say He died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the judgment's dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Savior's waiting arms. (LSB 826.2)

God grant if for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener