

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (14–20 Jan)

Introit (*Psalm 19:1–4a,b; Antiphon v. 14*)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight,*

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,* and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.

Day to day | pours out speech,* and night to night reveals | knowledge.

There is no speech, nor | are there words,* whose voice | is not heard.

Their measuring line goes out through | all the earth,* and their words to the end | of the world.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son* and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,* is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight,* O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

Collect of the Day Almighty and Everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings

Isaiah 49:1–7 [It is too small a thing for you to be My servant....]

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar.

The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me;

he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

And he said to me, “**You are my servant**, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God.”

And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant,

to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—

for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—

he says:

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob

and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,

the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

Psalm 40:1–11 (ant. v. 3)

1 Corinthians 1:1–9 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 1:29–42a The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “**Behold, 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 before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness **that this is the Son of God.**”

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 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?” 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. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all you | nations;* extol Him, all you | peoples.
For great is His | love toward us,* and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for- | ever.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His Name;* bring an offering and come in- | to His courts. (*Psalm 117; 96:8*)

Verse

Alle- | luia.* Alle- | luia.
“Behold, the | Lamb of God,* who takes away the sin of the world!” Alle- | luia. (*John 1:29b*)

Hymn of the Day

When Christ’s Appearing Was Made Known LW 81; TLH 131

Suggested Hymns

The Star Proclaims the King is Here	TLH 131
All Glory Be to God Alone	G LW 210; TLH 238
When All the World Was Cursed	G LW 187; TLH 272
O Love, How Deep	G LW 275
Lamb of God, Pure and Sinless	G LW 208; TLH 146
Jesus, Priceless Treasure	G LW 270
O God of God, O Light of Light	G LW 83; TLH 132
Hail to the Lord’s Anointed	G LW 82; TLH 59

Epiphany 2 a January 16, 2011
Rev. David C. Pelsue, Pastor
Church of the Reformation – Lutheran
Affton, MO

On a Mission from God -

John 1:40-42a

Intro – While in Branson, MO between Christmas & New Years, I bought a new tie.

When I buy a tie – don't want too much "in your face"- religious, I want to be subtle – hold up; (describe & read the print) it says, "On a Mission from God." It's a famous line from the movie, The Blues Brothers, starring John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd. For the sake of those who haven't seen the movie, here's Wikipedia's short summary - (It is a tale of redemption for the paroled convict Jake Blues and his brother Elwood as they decide to take on a "mission from God" and reform their blues band in order to raise funds to save the Catholic orphanage where they grew up.)

Our readings this morning made me think of this tie – more importantly, the phrase on it. In each reading there is someone . . . "on a mission from God." 1st in our Old Testament reading a mysterious servant of the Lord is on a mission from God; 2nd in **Our Epistle** – St. Paul is referring to himself as "called by God" – "an apostle" – which means "one sent" – sent on a mission from God to the Corinthians to strengthen them in their faith and calling from God. Finally, in our text **for today** Andrew is on a mission from God to reach his brother, Simon, with the good news, "we have found the Messiah."

All these people are on a mission from God **because God was first on a mission to man** in the **person of His Son** spoken of in **Our Old Testament reading**. It is the 2nd of Isaiah's "Servant Songs," that speak of God on a mission through His Servant.

I. God's Holy Spirit inspired the prophet Isaiah to write 4 such Servant Songs. And while it's true the initial fulfillment of these songs is in corporate Israel as God's Servant called by God to love God and love their neighbor and to reach out to the world with God's message salvation. We all know how that turned out. . . in their sinful rebellion, their idolatry, ultimately their exile, even after a faithful remnant returned from exile, God continued calling to His people, but now was focusing their vision through His prophets on His greater and perfect Suffering

Servant to come. He is Israel reduced to One, Jesus Christ.

With amazing precision, 700 yrs prior to the time this Servant was born, Isaiah vividly depicted His life from the manger, to the cross, to the tomb, and to his resurrection. He wrote how this Servant, would be born of a virgin, and atone for the sins of all the world through His own suffering and sacrificial death. No other person could so perfectly fulfill this Suffering Servant's mission from God. In our Old Testament for today **this Servant** would be "**called** by God from the womb" and "**named** by God" (49:1) according to His purpose. We heard it in recent readings, you shall name Him "Jesus" for He will save His people from their sins. The prophet Isaiah even speaks of His rejection and humiliation as "**one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,**" This Servant's mission is "**to raise up** the tribes of Jacob and **to bring back** the preserved of Israel; (But not just that,- that would be too light a task), No, **I will make you as a light for the nations,** (says God) that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." In Christ, **God was personally on a mission** breaking into our reality; into human history to take away our sin and bring us salvation. That's the good news of the Epiphany season. The Gospel is unleashed to go to all the world.

That's the good news we hear from John the Baptizer in our Gospel today: **John saw Jesus** coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God,** who takes away the sin of the world!" And John bore witness: "**I saw the Spirit** descend from heaven like a dove, and it **remained** on him. . . . I myself did not know him, but **he who sent me to baptize** with water **said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he** who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" And I have seen and have borne witness **that this is the Son of God."**

Here is God Himself – in the flesh – "on a mission from God." No wonder **Andrew** & John's other nameless disciple were intrigued, . . . inspired, . . . were **moved by the Spirit** to follow **Jesus** and **stay** with Him. When Andrew **sees and meets** Jesus, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," he is **immediately** "on a mission from God" to **find his brother** Simon and **tell him**, "we have found the Messiah!" and **to bring** him to Jesus. It's spontaneous.

He can't help himself. **God sends him "on a mission,"** short and simple though it is. He brings Simon to Jesus. And **we know the rest** of Simon Peter's story.

All of us are here today, by God's working in the same way. **God was on a mission** in His Suffering Servant Christ to purchase and win our Salvation thru His righteous life, His vicarious death, His victorious resurrection, His Ascension (filling all things), and **His sending His 1st disciples on a mission,** saying "go and make disc's of all people, baptizing them and teaching them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Israel of old was **not worthy,** the disciples were **not worthy,** and we are **not worthy** either, but **for each** of us **God sent someone** on a mission. In **most cases** it was our **parents** (there were Pastors & grandparents, Sunday School teachers, etc. encouraging them), But they brought us to Jesus through Baptism, and they kept bringing us to Jesus thru regular worship and Sunday School, thru catechesis and confirmation, etc. In **some of our cases** it was a Christian **friend** or maybe a **total stranger** inviting us to church – **or back to church.** **God sent people on a mission** to tell us, "Jesus is **your Savior**", & to **bring us** to Jesus – & thru His word & sacraments we've been **staying with Jesus** ever since.

Question is what's **your response** to knowing the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? **Now that** God's mission in Christ has **found you, are you** on a mission from God? **And to whom** – to reach your brothers . . . and sisters? Perhaps your spouse, or grandchildren, a cousin, niece or nephew, or s/o down the street. Are you "on a mission from God," to bring them to Jesus? **God wants you to be an Andrew to somebody.** That's why God sent His Lamb – to take away our sin. By His sacrifice, the suffering Servant **makes us worthy,** declaring us righteous in God's sight, washing us in Baptism, giving us His Spirit and **sending us on a mission** and **sustaining us** on that mission with Christ's own body and blood for our forgiveness and strength.

I don't have a tie for all of you, and you don't need a hat and sunglasses like the Blues Bros. but you can remember the phrase – you're "on a mission from God," not like John

Belushi and Dan Ackroyd to form a blues band, but **like Andrew** who went and **found his brother** and **brought him** to Jesus. **Who's your Simon** to go and **tell** that, "Jesus is the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world – **your sin and mine.**" Invite them to come and see. **Jesus will do the rest** thru His Word & Sacraments. Amen.