

“What do you want?” The grump growls: “What do you want?” Do you dare answer? You’re the young child sitting on Santa’s lap; Santa asks: “What do you want?” You know the right answer - you want a new shovel because you want to shovel the driveway for Mom and Dad. Not so? Your teacher is returning the test you took last week, what do you want? Your boss is passing out end-of-the-year envelopes, what do you want? You’re at the doctor’s office waiting for test results, what do you want?

What do you want? In our lesson, Andrew could have had such a long list of wants. Put yourself in the place of Andrew. As a Jew, he was one of God’s chosen people. He lived in the Promised Land. He was one of God’s people living in God’s country. Life was supposed to be good. Instead, Andrew lived in a world gone wrong. Living in the Promised Land wasn’t life in paradise. Instead, every day you were reminded that life in the Promised Land wasn’t the way it was supposed to be. Unless you hid out in the desert, every day the sin of the world was pushed on you. Unless you had enough money and power to be a somebody, every day you were reminded you were a nobody living in a land ruled by Romans and Roman puppets, like Pilate whose way to rule was to bully and make people bleed, and Herod whose way was just sleezy. Life in the Promised Land wasn’t easy. And living as one of God’s people didn’t come easy either. If we think living as a Christian today is hard, living under God’s Old Testament law could be crushing, and living under God’s law when the chief priests who were supposed to represent God lived and acted more like mob bosses looking out for themselves than priests looking out for God’s people - oh, that would have been hard to stomach. For Andrew, most everything a Jewish man would hold to and hope for was contaminated, twisted, darkened, and spoilt.

So Andrew was searching. Not just for another toy. Not just for more stuff to add to his collection. Not just for another experience to check off his bucket list. Searching for his place in life, Andrew could have tried to connect with money and power - like Zacchaeus. Searching for his place, Andrew could have gone rogue and become a rebel - like Barabbas. Searching for his place, Andrew could have connected with the Pharisees - with the Pharisee way to make Israel great again. Searching for his place, Andrew could have run away into the desert and joined some Jewish purity sect like the Essenes.

Instead, God led Andrew to John the Baptist. John the Baptist wasn’t into stuff. He wasn’t into chasing the good life, making himself comfortable and cozy. And John wasn’t into making Israel great again. Instead, John the Baptist was into Jesus. God had shown John that Jesus was and is the Son of God, the Messiah, the One God had been promising for hundreds of years to deliver his people.

Knowing Jesus made John eager. John was eager to have his disciples know Jesus as he knew Jesus. So John pointed them to Jesus, not just as the Messianic King who

would deliver them from all that was wrong in their world. But John was eager to point them to Jesus as the Lamb of God who would deliver them from all that was wrong in their selves. In our lesson, John points to Jesus - "Look, the Lamb of God." The day before, John pointed to Jesus - "**Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.**"

What did John mean by Lamb of God? At the temple in Jerusalem, day after day, priests and people offered lambs to pay for their sins, and day after day they had to offer more and more to pay for their more and more sins. Whatever priests and people could pay was never enough. But God promised and offered a different kind of sacrifice; he offered his Son, Jesus, as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world. And God's sacrifice was enough - once and for all.

That was enough for Andrew, to get Andrew to go after Jesus, to follow Jesus. That's when Jesus turned around and asked: "What do you want?"

With what Andrew knew of Jesus, Andrew knew he wanted more than this or that. He wasn't looking for some crumbs from Jesus, some favor, some little blessing, his life made better in some way. No, with what Andrew knew of Jesus, Andrew knew he wanted more than just this or that. Andrew knew he wanted to be with Jesus.

But that's not all, is it? With what Andrew knew of Jesus, Andrew knew he wanted more than just himself to be with Jesus. Andrew wanted his brother Peter to be with Jesus. Not just in a wishy-washy wishing wanting kind of way. He wanted his brother Peter to be with Jesus in a way that got Andrew to go to Peter first thing to talk to Peter about Jesus, to bring Peter to Jesus.

I don't know this, but it sure seems that Andrew and Peter had talks. Not just about work. Not just about chariot races and fantasy who knows what. Not just griping and grumbling about this, that, and the other thing. But it sure seems they talked about the important stuff. I'm not saying they talked about feelings, but I will say they must have talked about faith - God's promises and their hopes, God's answers to their needs. So when Andrew got to know Jesus, Andrew knew his brother Peter would want to know Jesus. It sure seems they had those kind of talks - neat, isn't it? So what does Andrew do? First thing, he goes to Peter: "**We have found the Messiah!**" And he brought Peter to Jesus.

What does that mean for us?

What do you want? We don't have to settle for this or that. We don't have to settle for a good day at school or at work; we don't have to settle for good news at the doctor office or a good day with the family. We don't have to get suckered into the world's idea of what is good - this world's idea of what is good is going up in flames.

Jesus has better for us. So what do you want? Do you ever feel guilty before God? Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world; that means Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away your sins. And that means there is now no condemnation for those - for you - in Christ Jesus. You don't need to think of Jesus as a Grinch or a Scrooge or out to get you. You get to think of Jesus as out to bless you. So what do you want? Do you ever feel overwhelmed? Jesus invites - **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”** Do you ever feel a bit frightened by dying and death? Jesus promises: **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”** Do you ever wonder how you are going to make it from now until that day Jesus takes you home to heaven? With Jesus - there is nothing in all creation that can separate you from the love of God ... and with the love of God, you know that all things will work for your good. Jesus has better for us than just this and that. Jesus has better for us than whatever the world has to offer. Jesus has better for us.

Whom do you know who needs what Jesus has? Whom do you know who is looking for what Jesus has? If you can't think of anyone, perhaps it's time to have some talks, talks about something more than news, weather, and sports. It doesn't matter if you don't know what to talk about. You can listen. Ask “What do you want?” and listen. Who knows what doors the Spirit may open for you. And if you really have no one in your life who needs what Jesus has, then don't despair, like the hymn says, “you can be like faithful Aaron holding up the prophets hands”; talk to us - we have ways for you to be a blessing.

But if you do have people in your life who need what Jesus has, you can be like Andrew and bring them to Jesus. It doesn't matter whether you live an hour away from St. John, you don't need to bring them to St. John, you can be like Andrew and bring them to Jesus. It doesn't matter if you don't have all the answers; Andrew was on Day One with Jesus when he brought Peter to Jesus. It doesn't matter if - whatever - you can be like Andrew and bring them to Jesus. But what if they won't follow? Then you can be like Peter - Praising God, living good, and “Always ready to give an answer for the hope that you have.” Amen.

**SERVICE SETTING 2**

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we've started a new season of frenzy chasing after what we think we want and what we think they want (or should want).

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we hear Jesus ask: "What do you want?" And now, knowing Jesus, we are eager to share what we have in Jesus!

**"COMFORT, COMFORT, ALL MY PEOPLE"**

**A Gathering Rite**

**P:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**John the Baptist's voice is crying in the desert far and near,  
Calling people to repentance for the kingdom now is here.  
O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.**

**P:** During the season of Advent, we hear John the Baptist call us to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. We approach our God with humble and penitent hearts. We are weak and easily drawn to sin by our own flesh, the Devil, and the World around us.

**C:** **"All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass." (Isaiah 40: 6b, 7)**

**P:** We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. For our many sins and our lack of love toward You and our neighbors, we deserve punishment both now and forever.

**C:** **But Jesus, my Savior, has paid for my sins with His innocent suffering and death. Trusting in Him, I pray: God have mercy on me, a sinner.**

**"Comfort, comfort all my people; speak of peace," so says our God.  
"Comfort those who sit in darkness, groaning from their sorrows' load.  
Speak to all Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell them that their sins I cover, that their warfare now is over."**

**P:** Our gracious Father in Heaven has been merciful to us. Promising comfort and peace, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by His authority I forgive

you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Though your sins were as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow!

**C: "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40: 1-2)**

P: "And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together."

**C: "For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isaiah 40: 5)**

**All our sins our God will pardon, blotting out each dark misdeed;  
All that well deserved his anger he no more will see or heed.  
We have suffered many a day; now our griefs have passed away.  
God will change our aching sadness into ever springing gladness.**

P: Today we light our first candle ... (usher lights candle) ... as we eagerly await the *Imminent Arrival of the One Who Calls*.

**C: We join Isaiah and Jesus in calling family, friends, neighbors—all those Jesus has brought into our lives.**

P: "You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'"  
(Isaiah 40:9b-d)

**C: "Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)**

**Now make straight the crooked highway; make the rougher places plain.  
Let our hearts be true and humble, ready for his holy reign.  
For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is spread abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token that his word is never broken.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength, and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### **FIRST READING**

*Isaiah 40:6–10*

A voice says, "Cry out."  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

“All people are like grass,  
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.  
The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.  
Surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God endures forever.”

You who bring good news to Zion,  
go up on a high mountain.  
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with a shout,  
lift it up, do not be afraid;  
say to the towns of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”  
See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and he rules with a mighty arm.  
See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 96A*  
*(see next page)*

#### SECOND READING

*Romans 10:10–17*

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Refrain



Let the heav-ens re-joice, let the earth be glad, let all that is  
in them sing to the LORD. Let the heav-ens re-joice, let the  
earth be glad, let all that is in them sing to the LORD.

Tone



Sing to the LORD a / new song;  
sing to the LORD, / all the earth.  
Sing to the LORD, / praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day / after day.  
Declare his glory among the / nations,  
his marvelous deeds among all / peoples.  
Ascribe to the LORD the glory / due his name;  
bring an offering and come in- / to his courts. *Refrain*

Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, / for he comes,  
he comes to / judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in / righteousness  
and the peoples in his / faithfulness.  
**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. *Refrain***

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Isaiah 40:9

Alleluia! You who bring good news to Zion,  
go up on a high mountain.  
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with a shout,  
lift it up, do not be afraid;  
say to the towns of Judah,  
“Here is your God!” Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 1:35-42

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"  
"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

*"Prepare the Royal Highway"*

Hymn 302



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a -



near! Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a  
King! Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread  
King! Your King, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its  
bove. His rule is peace and free - dom and



lev - el road ap - pear! Then greet the King of  
gar - ments! Shout and sing! God's prom - ise will not  
trib - ute too should bring. All lands, bow down be -  
jus - tice, truth, and love. So let your praise be



glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
 fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
 fore him! All na - tions, now a - dore him!  
 sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



*Refrain*  
 Ho-san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's Word!

SERMON

*John 1:35-42*

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is,  
 seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,  
 God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made,  
 of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,  
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
 and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who in unity with the Father and the Son

is worshiped and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

#### OFFERING PRAYER

As we offer our gifts to you, we are reminded of your call to step out into the world and let the world know you are coming. Give us courage and wisdom as we engage with the world around us, sharing your love and truth with others. **Amen.**

#### OFFERING

*If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.*



#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- M** Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.
- C** **We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.**
- M** As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.
- C** **Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**
- M** You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.
- C** **Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.**
- M** Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.
- C** **Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.**
- M** Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.  
*Silent prayer.*
- M** Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.
- C** **Come, Lord Jesus! 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.

### THE SACRAMENT

The Lord be with you.  
And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts.  
We lift them up to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er,  
God of might. Heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the  
 Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho -  
 san - na in the high - est!

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

**JESUS, LAMB OF GOD**

Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.  
 Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.  
 Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

*“Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”*  
Hymn 319



1 Je - sus came, the heav'ns a - dor - ing, came with peace from  
 2 Je - sus comes a - gain in mer - cy when our hearts are  
 3 Je - sus comes to hearts re - joic - ing, bring - ing news of  
 4 Je - sus comes on clouds tri - um - phant when the heav'ns shall



realms on high; Je - sus came to win re - demp - tion,  
 worn with care; Je - sus comes a - gain in an - swer  
 sins for - giv'n; Je - sus comes with words of glad - ness,  
 pass a - way. Je - sus comes a - gain in glo - ry;



low - ly came on earth to die; Al - le - lu - ia!  
 to an ear - nest, heart - felt prayer, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 lead - ing souls re - deemed to heav'n. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 let us, then, our hom - age pay, Al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia! came in deep hu - mil - i - ty.  
 Al - le - lu - ia! comes to save us from de - spair.  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Hope to all the world is giv'n.  
 ev - er sing - ing till the dawn of end - less day.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

*"The Advent of Our King"*

**Hymn 303**

### Acknowledgments

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## Join Us In Worship This Holiday Season!

Advent Wednesdays  
at 3:30 and 6:30 pm  
Advent Dinners at 5 pm

December 3 – Evergreens  
December 10 – Lights  
December 17- Nativity Scenes

Sunday, December 14 - Children's Christmas Service at 3:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 5 pm  
Christmas Day Festival Service - 9 am  
New Year's Eve Service - 5 pm