

Faith Begins by Staying, Not by Knowing

John 1:29-42 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Faith does not begin with answers, but with an invitation to stay.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In recent weeks, we have been reminded of something deeply reassuring: that God is already at work among us. God is not absent, not waiting for the right conditions, not standing at a distance until we are more organised or more certain. God is already here.

Today's Gospel takes that truth and gently asks us what comes next.

If God is already present, then the question is no longer whether God is at work, but how we recognise that work, and how we respond to it in the ordinary moments of our lives.

John the Baptist stands by the river and points. He does not draw attention to himself. He does not try to hold on to followers or protect his position. He simply says, "Here is the Lamb of God."

And remarkably, that is enough.

Two disciples hear his words and begin to follow Jesus. They do not announce themselves. They do not yet understand who Jesus fully is. They simply take a few steps in his direction.

Jesus turns and asks them a question that still reaches us today: "What are you looking for?"

It is not a trick question. It is not a challenge. It is an invitation to honesty.

In a community like ours, made up of people who have come from different countries, cultures, and seasons of life, that question matters. Some of us are looking for stability after a time of uncertainty. Some are looking for belonging in a place that still feels unfamiliar. Some come to church carrying gratitude, while others come quietly carrying fatigue or unanswered questions.

Jesus does not correct their desire. He does not tell them what they ought to be looking for. He allows space for longing to be named.

They respond with a simple question of their own: "Where are you staying?"

It is a practical question, but also a deeper one. It is really a way of asking, “Where can we remain with you? Where can we spend time in your presence?”

Jesus does not give them an address. He does not offer an explanation. He gives them an invitation: “Come and see.”

And they do.

They go with him. They stay. They remain with him that day.

That detail is easy to miss, but it tells us something important about how faith grows. Faith does not always begin with certainty or confidence. Often it begins with staying. With giving time. With allowing encounter to happen without pressure.

In a world that pushes us to decide quickly, to prove ourselves, and to justify our choices, this Gospel reminds us that God works patiently. God allows space. God invites us to remain.

Later, one of those who stayed goes and finds his brother. He does not bring a full explanation. He does not offer a polished argument. He simply says, “We have found the Messiah.”

Faith, in John’s Gospel, spreads through witness, not persuasion. Through encounter, not control.

For us at St. Catherine’s, this is an important reminder. We are not called to manufacture faith or manage outcomes. If God is already at work among us, then our task is to remain attentive, to make space for encounter, and to invite others gently to come and see.

Some will stay for a season. Some will stay longer. Some will simply take a few steps and pause. All of that is part of the journey.

As we continue our life together in this place, may we be a community that points to Christ without anxiety, that welcomes questions without fear, and that trusts that God meets people where they are.

And may we hear Jesus’ question addressed to each of us, not as pressure, but as grace: “What are you looking for?”

And may we find the courage, in our own time and in our own way, to stay, to listen, and to walk with him. Amen.