

FROM STAYING TO FOLLOWING

Matthew 4:12–23

3rd Sunday of Epiphany, 25 January 2026

What began with noticing God at work and learning to stay now becomes a shared call to follow Christ together. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Over the past weeks, we have been listening to a conversation that did not begin today.

We began by reminding ourselves of something deeply grounding: God is already at work among us. We are not trying to summon God's presence by our effort, nor are we compensating for God's absence through planning or activity. God was already here, already dwelling among us, already shaping this community in ways both visible and quiet.

Then, last week, we were invited to take that truth one step further. If God is already present, then faith does not begin with certainty or control. Faith begins by staying. By remaining attentive. By giving time and space for encounter. By resisting the urge to rush ahead of God.

Those two movements have shaped how we have lived this day together. We did not gather today because something is broken, but because something is alive. We stayed with one another long enough to listen, to reflect, to name both our hopes and our limits, and to discern together how we might live more faithfully as a community.

And now, at the end of this shared work, the Church gives us this Gospel according to Matthew.

This Gospel does not undo what we have done today. It completes it.

In Matthew, Jesus begins his ministry not with a plan, not with a structure, not even with an explanation. He begins with a call: "Follow me."

He speaks those words to people who are already busy, already committed, already carrying responsibilities. Fishermen at work. Nets in their hands. Boats that matter to their livelihood. Jesus does not wait until they are free, prepared, or certain. He calls them where they are.

That matters for us, especially now.

After a day like today, it is easy to leave carrying quiet weight. A sense of responsibility. Questions about who will do what, how much is enough, and whether we ourselves can carry what lies ahead. The Gospel gently interrupts that anxiety.

The fishermen do not carry the future of the kingdom on their shoulders. They are not asked to design it or sustain it alone. They are asked to follow the one who goes ahead of them.

This is where today's workshop finds its true meaning.

All that we named today matters. Shared responsibility matters. Sustainability matters. Vision matters. But the Gospel reminds us that these are not first of all management questions. They are discipleship questions.

Before we organise the Church, we are called to follow Christ.
Before we carry responsibility, we are carried by grace.
Before we worry about the future, we listen for the voice that says, "Follow me."

Notice something else. Jesus does not call one disciple and send him off alone. He calls people together. Brothers. Companions. A community that will learn, fail, argue, and grow side by side.

This is not solitary heroism. It is shared following.

So if today has surfaced both willingness and hesitation, that too belongs here. The Gospel does not shame reluctance, nor does it glorify exhaustion. It invites trust. It promises presence. It reminds us that following Christ is never meant to be done alone.

And then, at the end of this long day, we are not asked to carry everything forward ourselves. We are invited to the table.

Here, we place not only bread and wine, but the whole day we have shared. Our conversations. Our questions. Our plans. Our uncertainties. We lay them down, not because they are unimportant, but because they do not belong to us alone.

The workshop ends here. But discipleship begins again at this table. And that is enough. Amen.