

2 Epiphany A, January 20, 2008

### Calling All Church Members!

Imagine Jesus Christ as he walks along Lake Tiberius—imagine Andrew as he decides to follow him. What did he see or feel that so touched him that he had to share it.

Imagine what it might be like to see him today.

How would you feel if you met him and he asked you to follow him?

I was reading the reports of the various committees and ministries we engage in and there are so many! The valentine tea, the food pantry, warm winter nights, mission trips, the picture directory, youth group, bread bakers, altar guild, gardening, roof repair, so many activities!

I wish we could draw a big chart that shows all we do and all the people it takes to run this parish. In 2007 we established an adult mission team, a parking lot committee, a risk management committee, an environmental committee, a technology committee, a legacy committee, a senior ministry group, and a justice committee. That was just this past year! We only have four people who get a salary from our budget—and yet we have over 100 people who work with us on a regular basis.

Some of you—many of you—are here more than on a Sunday. How did that happen? Why do you do this work? Who led you here?

There was someone in your life that brought you here today. Like John the Baptist who pointed the way, there was someone who pointed the way for you.

Do we have something of value to share? If so, what is it we want others to experience? Do you have the language—the words to invite? When I said we have over 100 people who regularly work with us to further the goals of ministry—I think I was under reporting.

I have a very clear picture of what it means to the church that our regular members do so much. But I'm not as sure of the many who aren't here in our midst—what does it mean to them that we exist? What do we make of the people who are not comfortable coming to functions other than Sunday morning worship?

And the bigger question is of those who don't have a church home—how do we reach them? Who'll be John the Baptist for them?

We have a committee—an Evangelism Committee—Josie Nwosu is the chair of the committee, and he asks who is on his committee. The answer is that we are all on the committee. The role of the church

is to bring people to Jesus Christ—today's Gospel gives us a vignette of the first call of the apostles.

It's time for us to issue a call too. All we have to do is remember our own experience of call—how did the person who influenced us to come here, do it? In our own way—we will also be able to influence others to come to Jesus Christ.

Is your life better because you came here? Has belonging to St. Paul's Episcopal Church made a difference in your life? We have two goals here—to be the place where we can make a positive difference in people's lives and then invite people here. That's what we want to do—be the place where we make a difference and share that with others.

Do you know someone who could stand to have a better life, maybe someone who might benefit from belonging to a community like ours? Find a way to invite them—help them see that there is a way to have a wonderfully purpose-filled life. We have so much to offer—Jesus Christ has a lot to offer, but unless we make an effort to spread that around, we haven't done what Jesus has asked of us.

Be an active member of the Evangelism committee—tell of your spiritual experiences, invite people to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. We're expecting at least 100 new members this year! Amen.