

Sunday, February 10, 2019
Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (Year C)
Isaiah 6.1-8; Luke 5.1-11
The Rev. Michael K. Fincher

The Old Testament reading we heard this morning is commonly used at the ordination of clergy, as it details the call of Isaiah by God to be one of his prophets. A reading that is used particularly because of its ending with the words of God's call and Isaiah's response: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' While used at ordinations, these words are not only applicable to those of us with collars, but to all who are servants of God and followers of Christ. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" A call to which we are all hopefully able to obediently respond, "Here am I; send me!"

The universality of this call to be sent forth to serve God is even more evident in the Gospel reading, which details Jesus' call of his first disciples. Jesus did not seek out the likes of scribes and Pharisees to be his followers. Instead, as we heard today, Jesus seeks out and calls Peter, James, and John—just common folk, just fishermen—to follow him into ministry. In this account, we hear Jesus call to Peter "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." To which Peter responds, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." And we are told that "When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break." This is a reminder that anyone can be called into ministry. But even more so, it is a reminder that if we are faithfully obedient to our Lord's call to do as he asks, we will be successful beyond our wildest imaginings.

This is what we celebrate today, as we hold our annual meeting. Yes, there are important pieces of business that canonically need to be transacted in the annual meeting: the election of Vestry members, the election of Diocesan Convention delegates, and the presentation of the annual parish budget. That is all that needs to happen at an annual meeting. But the really important thing that we do at our annual meeting, at least as I see it—the reason we present ministry reports—is to celebrate our life together and the common ministries we engage in as the Body of Christ. To celebrate that God has called each and every one of us into ministry. Callings to be part of the ministry of this place. Calls to which we have each have willingly said "Here am I; send me!" Trusting that when we faithfully and obediently work together to answer God's call, to answer Christ's call, we will indeed be successful in helping to bring the Kingdom of God to fruition.

In this time together, we celebrate just how we have been faithful to God's call. How we have lived the Gospel in our common life. And seek to move forward in this new year, determined to continue proclaiming the Gospel in our words and in our actions, in new and exciting ways.