

Questions about seeing (Epiphany 2A, John 1:29-42)

"Look!" says John. "Come and see," says Jesus.

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At the church where I served as an intern (St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa), [the congregation's motto hung above the doors](#) into the sanctuary: "Come and see! All are welcome! Go and tell!"

Since my time there, a talented seamstress in the congregation has crafted these words into fabric panels reminiscent of stained glass. They are lovely, and they still hang over the doors, a beautiful proclamation for all who enter. Every week, people gather for worship and are encouraged that all are welcome to come and see, and then go and tell.

When Jesus meets Andrew, he is already a disciple of John—but he and a friend follow Jesus. The interaction between Jesus and Andrew seems like it's about lodging. They ask Jesus where he's staying, he says "come and see," and so they do. But neither the question nor the response is really about whether Jesus is bunking with family or at the local hotel.

Instead this simple phrase is invitation and vision. John has testified already in these short verses that he saw Jesus: the Lamb of God, the Son of God. And John implores his own disciples, "Look!" Take a few minutes and mark all of the words about *seeing* in this passage; it's remarkable.

This repetition suggests questions for us to consider. What do we see in our places of ministry? What do we see in our communities? On our way to work, to school? Are we inviting others to come and see? Do we feel like children, tugging on the hand of a guest —come and see my room, my new toy, my baby brother? Are there places we need an invitation to see?

And what do we not see? What do we overlook, intentionally or not? What are we excited to showcase, and what do we tuck away, hoping no one will notice? Do we ask others to come and see?

Questions like these can shape our reflection on scripture, whether or not we actually preach about them. One of the gifts of any internship is the expectation of learning and questions. At my internship church, few people expected me to be knowledgeable; instead they invited me to see what ministry could be and where Jesus was in their midst. We're at the beginning of a calendar year. Perhaps this is a good time to reflect on the opportunity to create a new vision in our spaces. Do you know where Jesus is staying? Is it nearby?