

**Minnesota Valley Church**

**Date: Sunday, January 18, 2026**

**Church Year Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Prelude: Carol Gustafson

Singers: Fuglebergs

CALL TO WORSHIP: from *Psalm 40*

*PASTOR: I waited patiently for the LORD;*

*ALL: He turned to me and heard my cry.*

*PASTOR: He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;*

*ALL: He set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.*

*PASTOR: He put a new song in my mouth,*

*ALL: A hymn of praise to our God.*

*PASTOR: Many will see and fear*

*ALL: And put their trust in the LORD.*

Hymn #456 “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”

**Confession of Sin: *I lay my sins on Jesus, The spotless Lamb of God; He bears them all and frees us, From the accursed load. I bring my guilt to Jesus, To wash my crimson stains, White in His blood most precious, ‘Till not a spot remains. Amen***

Children’s Sermon:

Reader: Jacob O’Flanagan

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Isaiah 49:5-7 And now the LORD says--he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength-- 6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant*

*to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." 7 This is what the LORD says--the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."*

EPISTLE LESSON: *1 Corinthians 1:1-9 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-their Lord and ours: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way-in all your speaking and in all your knowledge- 6 because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. 7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

**READER: Here ends the reading of God’s Word.**

**CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** *Apostles’ Creed- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the*

*Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

Gloria Patri: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

Announcements and Prayer Concerns

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Chosen by Carol

**SERMON: JESUS GETS HIS TEAM**, John 1:29-42 Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

GRAHAM: The Evangelist Billy Graham had an accountability team from the beginning of his ministry. I would attribute his success and sterling reputation to the fact he had a team of men around him to ask him the hard questions.

YANCEY: The best-selling Christian writer of “Where is God When it Hurts” and “What’s So Amazing about Grace,” and writer for “Christianity Today” magazine, Philip Yancey just left the ministry after he was exposed as having an eight-year long immoral affair with a married woman. He was in the full-time ministry at the same time. He is trying to rebuild his marriage. Philip Yancey was a loner and didn’t have a team to keep him accountable.

NEED: Do you have a team or are you a loner? We all need accountability. Our success in life will be related to having a team. One Thursday morning I met with Pastor Mark Antal to share joys and sorrows in our ministries and pray together. Having an experienced pastor to meet with is so very important to me. I need accountability.

Today’s message is this: “JESUS GETS A TEAM” from John 1:29-42. Let’s talk about it.

## **I. JOHN THE BAPTIST POINTS HIS DISCIPLES TO CHRIST**

***John 1:29-39*** *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." 35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.*

JOHN: This a heart-rending passage of Scripture where John the Baptist points his disciples to Jesus. John lets them go. It kind of reminds me of letting your daughter go and leave your home and be given away to a man in marriage. That is very hard to do. And it was very hard for John to give up his best helpers to let them go to Jesus’s team.

JESUS: Notice what John the Baptist says about Jesus:

VERSE 29: Jesus is ***“the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”*** The work of Jesus that only God in human flesh could do is to take away sin. No one else can do that. The scope of that mission is “the world.” It is not just Israel. John announces here that the Messiah is for Israel and for all the Gentiles in the entire world. That is why you and I are able to be saved.

VERSE 30: John also says that Jesus is the one ***“who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”*** It is not enough to join a church or improve our lives. We need to possess the Holy Spirit. I was a member of a church as a teen-ager, but I didn’t have a clue how to get to heaven. What Jesus did on the cross for me is something I didn’t begin to comprehend.

HOPE-SO: I have found that many church people have this “I hope I have been good enough” idea of going to heaven. They have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is living in us, He gives us a real faith in Jesus and trust in the finished work of the cross.

EVIDENCE: John the disciple wrote the book of 1 John and gives us many evidences we are born of the Spirit. This is a good self-test to see if we really are saved. Let me list some of them:

1. WALK IN THE LIGHT: ***1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”***
2. CONFESS OUR SINS: ***1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***
3. OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS: ***1 John 2:3 “We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.”***

4. NOT WORLDLY: ***1 John 2:15 “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”***
5. CONFESS CHRIST WITH OUR MOUTHS: ***1 John 2:23 “...whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”***
6. TURN AWAY FROM SIN: ***1 John 3:9 “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”***
7. LOVE FELLOW BELIEVERS: ***1 John 3:14 “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.”***

SPIRIT: Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. That results in a changed life. This is the kind of team that Jesus had, not perfect, but people of faith with a new life of the Spirit.

VERSE 34: John says that Jesus is ***“the Son of God.”*** John thereby releases his disciples to follow Jesus because He is the Messiah they have been waiting for. He is God in human flesh.

POINTING: John the Baptist POINTED HIS DISCIPLES TO JESUS. That is our job. We are not to follow a preacher, or a religious denomination, or even an exciting church with lots of neat programs or a fancy building. When John lifted up Jesus as the Messiah, some of his disciples followed Jesus from that time on. Our first and foremost job is to point people to Jesus, even if it means that they will be less available for us

ANTAL: Pastor Mark Antal’s father was a civil engineer that designed tunnels through mountains. He died of a heart attack in his early 50’s. Mark said his dad had an important client in his office to sign a multi-million-dollar contract. After the contract was signed, Mark’s father cleared away the papers from his desk

and told the business man who signed the contract, “Now we must discuss something much more important.” He took out his Bible, shared the gospel and led that man to the Lord. He, like John, pointed his client to Jesus.

## II. JOHN’S DISCIPLES INVITED THEIR PEERS TO CHRIST

*John 1:40-42 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).*

FIRST: Andrew was one of the men who left John the Baptist to follow Jesus. The **“first thing”** he did was go to his brother Simon and invited him to follow Jesus. He told him, **“we have found the Messiah.”** The Greek work for Messiah is “Christ” meaning “the anointed one.” That is why we call Him Jesus Christ or Jesus the Anointed One. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove.

BROUGHT: Notice in verse 42 that Andrew **“brought him to Jesus.”** That is an important point. We bring people to Jesus. We draw them with our life and our words. We share the gospel with them from the Bible. We pray for them. We invite them to church. We sit by them. We introduce them to people. We get them under the hearing of the Word of God. It is like carrying a baby for nine months. Quality evangelism is a deep commitment.

ENDERLEIN: Pastor Mark Antal’s father also led a man named Gene Enderlein to the Lord. Gene and his wife became missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Later they attended the Free Lutheran seminary that I attended and Gene became a pastor. He became our director of World Missions and he has been helping out and even preaching at Hope Lutheran Church in North

Minneapolis now for years, well into His 80’s. His wife, Beverly, started two Christian schools, one of which is the large Heritage Christian Academy in Maple Grove.

TEAM: Now Gene Enderlein and Bev are like Andrew, bringing many people to the Lord. They are a part of the team Jesus is putting together around the whole world. I could make a list of how that team has grown since Mr. Antal led the Enderleins to Christ.

ROUGHNECKS: Jesus started with some very basic and crude disciples in His team. Truly no one “special.” They were rough necks like Peter and the radicals called the “sons of thunder” James and John. He renamed Simon as Peter, meaning “Rocky.” James and John were practically terroristic zealots, like the Minneapolis rebellious protesters, who became deep gentle disciples of love. It would be like going down to Lake Street in Minneapolis to recruit church members from the roughest characters we could find. Jesus can transform them and make them His loving disciples. I know a pastor in Eagan who is doing this in South Minneapolis.

Jesus had many disciples, a smaller group of 12 and a yet smaller core of three, Peter, James and John. He did what Billy Graham said he would do, take 12 men and pour His life into them. These twelve men reached the entire Roman empire with the gospel in some 30 years.

INVITATION: As we surrender our lives to Christ and offer to go deeper and be on His team, we can reach our communities for Christ. It begins with John the Baptist, FASTING, PRAYER AND REPENTANCE OF SINS. It comes alive with Jesus as we invite Him into our heart and lives to save us and fill us with the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER: For Jesus is started with 40 days of prayer and fasting. I want to dedicate the mornings of the third Saturday of each month to serious prayer for revival...no coffee and donuts, just serious

prayer. We need a move of God in our church to launch us off into a new season of spiritual life and power. We need to be on the Jesus team. We need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. I remember Dr. Monseth at the seminary saying that “we have one baptism of the Holy Spirit but we need many fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit.” I know I need it.

QUESTION: Can we agree together to seek the Lord and be a vibrant part of His team? *Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

Hymn #458 “Rise Up, O Men of God”

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Closing Song: Chosen by Carol

Postlude: Carol Gustafson