Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

This time after Epiphany is a time for us to “come and see” who is the one born in a manger and what they will become, and to contemplate what his birth to an obedient young woman might mean for us and for the world. We “come and see” and our baptismal promise after we “come and see” is to then “go and tell” what we see in the life of Jesus. The word I would use to describe what God has done for us is love. Jesus tells us we are to love one another as Jesus has loved us. What greater love can you have than giving your life for someone else. Fortunately, there is little necessity for that to happen to us. The identity of the baby is clearly and succinctly stated when John the Baptist. tells his disciples, who in turn share with others, when he states that Jesus is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” and is “the Son of God.”John supported this by telling how this was revealed to him during Jesus baptism when the Spirt descended upon Jesus from heaven and remained with him.

What does it mean to be the Lamb of God? Lambs were one of the animals used in Old Testament sacrifices as instructed in Leviticus. Animal sacrifices are shown to be a substitute which is provided by God himself. and the symbolism is a concrete expression of God's justice and grace. It reminded the Israelites of the serious nature of sin and the consequences for the individuals and the community. When an animal was killed, this animal bore God’s judgment in the sinner’s place. This was a means to restore and maintain the relationship between a holy God and a sinful people. You know, people like us. This is how God dealt with sin and rebellion. Animal sacrifices however, were not the final solution in and of itself. They foreshadowed the final ultimate sacrifice: the atoning death of the Son of God. Isaiah 53:5 (NRSV) foretells this by saying “But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.”

1 Timothy 2:5-6 (NRSV) “5For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

Jesus was the last sacrifice who died in our place, and bears God’s judgment over our sins. Jesus was the perfect scape goat. The ultimate sacrificial substitute. He was tried and executed although he had done nothing wrong. That is why we don’t need any scape goats in our lives in Christ. We need to be gracious as we love and forgive others, even though it might seem contrary to our human nature. Proof? How many revenge movies are box office hits? (no pun intended).

When two of John’s disciples heard John say Look, here is the lamb of God.” Then they followed Jesus (which John was trying to accomplish) and Jesus asked them what they were looking for. A very astute question. Jesus knew they were looking for something more in their lives. When they asked Jesus where he was staying he invited them to “come and see” and he remained with him that day. Then Andrew who was one of the two disciples went and told his brother Simon Peter and told him they had found the Messiah. Imagine how excited he was to share this good news that he had a life-changing event in his encounter with Jesus. When Jesus saw his brother, he told him he was Simon, son of John and from now on he would be called Cephas which translates to Peter. This name is important because it translates to rock. Peter, who can be impetuous and sometimes faltered I his faith, is the rock on which the church is built because of Peter’s faith.This encounter with Christ that has such an impact on both brothers lives that they cannot help but tell others about it

Today, we are invited to “come and see.” This is the invitation we share inviting all to see Jesus all around us in our everyday lives. Come and see Jesus and what God has does for us when he sacrifices his only begotten Son - the Lamb of God- as a proclamation that God’s forgiveness and love proclaimed in Jesus Christ is good news for us and for all people. As we encounter Christ, our lives are changed as we in turn want to love others and our lives are changed forever.

In our first reading today from Isiah, the second Servant Song develops further the meaning of Jesus Christ and the significance of baptism for the Christians. The church has seen in the Servant Songs descriptions of Jesus Christ, who himself is the light of the nations, and has applied this passage also to baptism. God calls the baptized to be servants to bring light to the world. When we share the light of Christ we help others to see the Lamb of God who died for our sins. History throughout the Bible has sown left to our own devices we, like our ancestors will have a fractured relationship with our Creator. That is why God gave his only Son to die for our sins. We all fall short to the glory of God so we need to be rescued by our Savior. It isn’t we who claim Christ, it is Christ who claims us. Our belief in Christ opens up to God’s unconditional love and grace so we will be held righteous and will have eternal life. This is what, after we come and see we go and tell others, offering all people hope, even those who feel hopeless. When Paul dealt with the early church in Corinth, he dealt with a church that was having difficulty so he calls them to lives of love and live the lives of saints to call upon the name of Jesus. Paul’s words are meant to strengthen the community and faith community like ours while awaiting the imminent return of Christ and are valid to us as people who interact as a faith community in the meantime.

So, we “come and see” Christ is the sacrificial lamb, the teacher from God, and the one anointed to save the world. We humbly love one another and serve others as an act of love with “God’s work, Our Hands” as we witness and we go and tell others about our encounter with Christ. If we will not love others, who will? Amen.