There’s something special about being called by your name. Being identified, being known, being called into a new situation or a new phase of life that is just for you, because you were called by yourname. In today’s Gospel passage, Jesus has called 12 men to give them their marching orders if you will, to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons. He has summoned them to embark on the next steps of their lives, their ministry.

Admittedly, he is asking them to do things that seemed impossible, things that they surely thought were only in his power to accomplish. But there’s something deeper here that extends beyond being just a moment when Jesus waved them over to himself and said, “Okay, guys. Here’s what you need to do.” The 12 are specifically identified in this passage, and I think that’s significant because Jesus undoubtedly called each one of them by name.

We are all known to Jesus. He has known our names since the beginning of time, he knows us at our desks, in our gardens, or tending to our farm animals, setting up coffee hour or preparing the altar, helping friends with errands or caring for family. In every experience we have, in every task we perform, in all we do, Jesus is there. In our joy and in our sorrow, he is walking beside us. In our waking and in our sleeping, he is watching over us

He is calling our names. He is calling us to the same work as his disciples.

And he is asking us to call to others. But more than calling, we are challenged by this passage to consider what the church’s larger response should be to the troubles in the world. What do we do in answer to the calls for help we are getting? In a word, it is mission. And it is not a mission that we can send ourselves on, as one writer has said, “The Lord of the harvestsends us out on a mission.” And what is the mission God has for us?

Well it’s to being living examples of the nearness of the kingdom of God, the face of a loving God presented to those who may never have seen or experienced him in their lives. This is a mission to which this parish has taken on, readily and enthusiastically. God’s call has come to us. We have heard our names and we can call to those on the margins of society and bring them into community. We can find ways of addressing in new ways the needs of our neighbors and expanding the church’s reach into the world.

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers, to send us into his harvest.”