

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey**  
**Weekly Witness | December 15, 2017**

The authorities question John the Baptist in this week's gospel, asking him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

What *do* we say about ourselves? How do we as Christians answer this question when provoked by those with whom we interact? Are we as consistent as John in our humility, confessing that we are not the Messiah; but we are a voice in the wilderness.

Particularly when Christians highlighted on the news declare many hurtful and often harmful actions to be done in the name of Christianity, it may be difficult to articulate our own faith identity. The age of soundbites is for the brash, confident, and overzealous, yet as Christians we are called to follow the humility John the Baptist demonstrates in the gospel and Mary sings in her Magnificat. This is not a meek faith, however; contrarily, we are called to enthusiastically share the Good News of God's love and forgiveness for all the world through word and deed.

In fact, this emphasis on word and deed is central to the evangelicalism that carries over into our Lutheran and Episcopal traditions from the age of the revival preachers. However, as Thomas Kidd, professor and author, penned in [an essay](#), "In today's media, 'evangelical' has shifted from the historic definition to become more of a rough political and ethnic signifier." We hear these political "evangelicals" campaigning for their faith and often want to distance ourselves, because that manner of politics does not align with our understanding of the Gospel.

"The thing is, evangelical Christianity was founded to *combat* nominal Christianity, meaning a Christianity that is more a cultural label than a vital, active faith," explains Kidd. Our lives as evangelicals, in other words, should be counter-cultural and bold in that they center on a deep belief in Jesus the Christ and the call to prepare the way for the Lord so that all of God's people might live free of injustice.

In this season of Advent, we continue to reflect on how we are making the paths straight, in our hearts and in our communities, nation, and world; listen to how God is calling you to live your faith. Your Christian identity was confirmed at your baptism, you are God's own child. How is your advocacy rooted in the promises that were made to strive for justice and peace in all the earth during your baptism? For resources, visit our [website](#) and check out our [list of other resources](#) for acting in bold faith and radical love. Like us on Facebook at Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry NJ for daily information and opportunities.