Many of us are anticipating a hard road ahead of us for the next four years. What will life be like? What decisions will be made by the administration in Washington, or the administration in Jefferson City, that will impact our day to day lives? What can we do that will make a difference? There are days when the temptation is real to ignore the news, ignore the world around us, and just focus on making it through the day.

But we heard a different call in our preaching text on January 19, the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, from the 4th chapter of Luke:

*“17When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:*

*18‘The Spirit of our God is upon me:*

*because the Most High has anointed me*

*to bring Good News to those who are poor.*

*God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive,*

*recovery of sight to those who are blind,*

*and release to those in prison—*

*19to proclaim the year of our God’s favor.’*

*20Rolling up the scroll, Jesus gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21Then he said to them, ‘Today, in your hearing, this scripture passage is fulfilled.’”*

Those of you who were present that Sunday morning had the opportunity to stay after worship and participate in a conversation with Jeff Fox, the editor of the Blue Springs Examiner, about homelessness in our community. For those of you who weren’t present, Gary live-streamed the conversation and it is available on your YouTube channel, which you can get to through our website, aslcbs.org.

This is a hard time of year for people who are chronically homeless and living on the streets, dealing with dangerously cold temperatures. As Mr. Fox shared with us, there are far too few shelter beds available in our area. This is a hard season for people who are houseless, living in their cars or in rent-by-the-week motel rooms, or couch surfing among the homes of generous family members and friends. Groceries and utilities are expensive; rent is expensive; it is almost impossible for someone in these circumstances to save enough to come up with first and last months’ rent.

The best thing that we can do is focus on our local communities. The best thing we can do is focus on the needs that we see around us – those who have the least, those who need the most. We are still collecting for the Souper Bowl of Caring. If you can, try to find cans with pop tops for people who are chronically homeless. If you can, try to support the Angel Fund, so that we can help bridge the gap for people in our community looking to find one more night of shelter. If you can, attend our midweek Lenten series and support Community Services League with your offering. If you can, find a way to help.