

Deep Water

September 11, 2022

Luke 5: 1-6

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,^[a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. **2** He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. **7**

I'm glad its September,
its wonderful to have the choir back, and our Sunday classes back
and Sunday School for kids back and you back in these pews.

When I was a child, September meant going with my grandmother to get a new dress for that first day of school.
I had such anticipation.

This is the first September in 3 years, when it feels like that again,
like we are finally if gradually emerging
from this long, difficult season of fear and death,
and uncertainty and separation wrought by COVID 19
when things are back to normal.

And yet, I am not sure I want them to be normal.
Aren't things supposed to be different, after you've come through such a time?
Aren't we meant to be different?

My parents were born during the Great Depression

so, I grew up with those stories and they gave me the sense
that everyone who'd lived through that time
learned something fundamental about life
what it was like to be hungry, or out of work,
to be compassionate to those who were,
to respect the hardship people face,
when asked: *Brother, can you spare a dime?*

We hope that we would learn similar lessons from the pandemic;
that we are emerging not just weary but wiser,
not just thankful we've survived while millions did not,
but more aware of life's gifts
of our miraculous lungs and medicine,
our families, and our places of worship.

the gift of shared meals, and seeing one another's faces,
and hugs and handshakes, and singing together.

And beyond what we had, perhaps we want something more.
we want all of that which we went through
to have widened our worldview, broadened our kinship,
made us aware of disparities between persons and nations
and yet our sameness as humans.
When are asked "Brother, Can you spare a dime?"

We had an appreciation of essential workers,
we realized that to be essential has nothing to do with wages or status.
Will that revelation last?

We hope so.

We hope we have grown, that we have taken this trauma
and allowed it to change us.

Change is the first thing Jesus of Nazareth talked about, and did.

In Mark, and early in Matthew he says, *Metanoete! The Kingdom of God is here.
Believe this good news.*

(μετανοείτε) from *Metanoia*, a Greek word meaning
to change one's mind or worldview.

So he is saying, Change your mind! The Kingdom of God is here. Believe it!

And in the Gospel of John his first action is to attend a wedding
and change a barrel of water into wine,
Changes the everyday gift of water into a celebration.

And in our story today in Luke,
he boards Simon Peter's boat and tells him to change course
Put out into the deep waters, he says, set your nets down there.
and the fish that had evaded them flood in.

and Peter and the others are startled and when they reach land
they set down their nets and follow him.

Brother John of Taizé describes that moment this way:

*Simon Peter realizes suddenly that Jesus has revealed
the difference between the life he's been leading
and the unsuspected depths within him.*

And he and James and John
seem to understand that the meaning of their lives
the meaning of *their existence upon this earth*
are not to be found in what they already know
and have attained but in allowing themselves
to be led to new lands.

The last several months have been ones of great awakening to me.
I have been led, by study, by listening,
into new depths of understanding,
great changes in my thinking, in my

So much has opened up
I feel like I am just beginning to comprehend who Jesus is,
What Christ means,
and to sense the intimate connection
that we have with all that is created
to the loving heart of the universe
in whom we live and move and have our being.

So, starting in May, I rounded up a crew of people
and we spent a couple months discerning
what it would mean for us to go into the deep waters
of being formed as Christians here

in this moment in the world, in the church,
for those who are new to the faith or this place,
for those who've felt traumatized by the church or life,
for those who've lost a sense of connection to the divine story
for those who've kept it but want more.

One person said: *I don't want to go recover my faith*
I want to keep discovering it

So, we've come up with a new season of study, including a Core Curriculum
that will take place in three sessions over the course of a year.

That begins with leading us through a time of focusing on the person of Jesus,
considering who Jesus was to us, perhaps as children
and all the different ways we've thought or been taught to think of him,
and who he actually is for us now.

And then a course in comprehending the nature of Christ
through whom we are all made, according to John
in whom we can live, according to Paul,
We will take in that enormous, holy mystery
and seek to see the Christ all around us, even within us.

And then in the third part to take time to consider our own selves
our own lives of great love and great suffering
our own journeys of meaning and truth-seeking.
and to go deeper yet.

This core course is joined by many other opportunities:
Sunday morning study and conversation beginning today
The Kitchen class is looking at *The Great Spiritual Migration* –The
description of their book reads:

The Christian story, from Genesis until now, is fundamentally about people on the move—outgrowing old, broken religious systems and embracing new, more redemptive ways of life. It's time to move again.

I expect there will be similar transformative conversations in the Exploring Progressive Christianity Class with Eric Smoot as they spend the next year Living the Questions

There will be Deep dives into the scriptures of the day with Duane and Cliff in *Word Among us*

We will soon start an informal Sunday worshipful conversation in the parlor And starting today, Xema and Nicole are inviting parents of children to consider the spirituality of parenting and the changes that brings to life and faith.

There are Topical classes, like the course on White Christian Nationalism that begins tomorrow, led by Charles and David.

Ongoing Monday Bible study with Cathy, as they *Make the Road by Walking*, and Scripture study with Dick Igo on Friday afternoons. and folks are invited to Walking and Talking the faith through Whetstone Park every week.

All these, and worship this season are an invitation to move into the deep waters to let down our nets there and see what comes

perhaps to share what these past years have wrought in us and around us, and to see what questions lie below the surface what revelations might be found within and in community of faithful people. as we enter into of this new season of our lives together.

Metanoia, says Jesus of Nazareth,
to each of us, wherever we are, whomever we are,
be open - to the deeps around us, the deeps within,
for the Kingdom of God is among us.
Believe it.

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