

**WOODMAR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ONLINE_AT HOME WORSHIP
August 9, 2020**

WELCOME/CALL TO WORSHIP

On behalf of Woodmar United Methodist Church, I welcome you to our online/at-home worship service in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Our Church Council met and due to the rise in positive coronavirus cases, we have decided to postpone opening our building for in-person worship until September 13th. We will meet again on September 3rd to review how our county is doing with coronavirus cases and determine for certain on that date if September 13th will be a "GO." We thank you for your prayers and your patience as we strive to do no harm and to truly take care of each other during these uncertain times.

Hear these words from the Psalmist as we prepare our hearts for worship:

LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory
in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants

you have established a stronghold against your enemies,

to silence the foe and the avenger.
³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
⁵ You have made them a little lower than the
angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your
hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
⁹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

HYMN No. 398 *Jesus Calls Us*

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth
Saying Christian follow me

As of old the apostles heard it
By the Galilean lake
Turned from home and toil and kindred

Leaving all for Jesus' sake

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store
From each idol that would keep us
Saying Christian love me more

In our joys and in our sorrows
Days of toil and hours of ease
Still He calls in cares and pleasures
Christian love me more than these

Jesus calls us by thy mercies
Savior make us hear thy call
Give our hearts to thine obedience
Serve and love thee best of all

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Leader: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE

A couple of weeks ago, we dove into another story about the disciples out in a boat...the story of the storm coming upon them while Jesus was fast asleep on a cushion...undisturbed by what was happening all around, until, of course, the disciples frantically woke him up asking, "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?"

Today's story is slightly different. Jesus was experiencing a metaphorical storm on the day of our text. Earlier in Chapter 14, he had learned that John the Baptist had been beheaded and he wanted to be alone, so he got into a boat to head off to a desolate place by himself. But the crowds followed him, and Jesus, being Jesus, had compassion on them and healed their sick. When evening rolled around, the disciples wanted to send the crowds away, but Jesus wouldn't let them until the 5,000 men plus women and children had been fed. This is where today's text picks up...at the tail end of the story of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000.

Matthew states that "Immediately (after the crowd was fed) Jesus made the disciples get into the boat, and go on ahead of him, while he dismissed the crowd." There are two important points in this statement that support that idea that Jesus needed to be alone with his Heavenly Father.

- 1.He sent the disciples ahead and
- 2.He dismissed the crowd.

Think for a moment about the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 and how INCREDIBLE that must have been. It would have been easy for most people to get caught up in the moment and receive the glory for that miracle...not Jesus...he did what he had to do to take care of the people for God's

glory, not his own, and now he needed to commune with his Father.

Jesus *made* the disciples get into the boat. The King James Version states, "Jesus *constrained* his disciples to get into a boat." The Message states, "Jesus *insisted* that the disciples get in the boat." Apparently, the disciples did not want to get into a boat and cross to the other side without Jesus.

This made me curious about the Sea of Galilee...what was so threatening on this Sea that the disciples, many of whom were fishermen, did not want to get into a boat and cross the Sea of Galilee without Jesus? I learned that the Sea of Galilee is approximately 700 feet below sea level and has a maximum depth of 150 feet. Due to the height of the surrounding hills, which were about 1200-1300 feet in altitude, abrupt temperature shifts occur, causing sudden and violent storms. The disciples knew what could happen to them out in the middle of the Sea, and after having already experienced a storm on the sea with Jesus on board, they were not too eager to put themselves in the same situation *without* him. But, they complied, and Jesus went up on the mountainside to be alone and pray.

While Jesus was up on the mountainside praying, the disciples were being tossed about in the boat. It doesn't say there's a storm, but it does say that the boat had gone a considerable distance

because of being buffeted by the waves. One can imagine that the disciples had been awake the entire time, bailing water out of the boat...

Jesus prayed long into the night. The disciples had traveled about 3 miles by the time they saw *someone* walking towards them. Matthew tells us "When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear.'" After all they had been through with Jesus, it didn't even register with them that this could possibly be him.

So, Jesus, who had received terrible news, had had to postpone his grieving and the communion that he longed for with his Heavenly Father, and had been up for probably 24 hours, showed compassion to his frightened disciples by *immediately* saying to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

Jesus' immediate response was to encourage them and to identify who he was. Jesus had made them get in the boat. The disciples had complied and found themselves once again in a scary situation. But Jesus came to them in the midst of their fears and made himself known.

Impetuous Peter was the first disciple to respond to Jesus, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." Peter addresses Jesus as "Lord," – *kyrios* in the Greek, which implied that

Peter was a believer, a true disciple, one who followed Jesus and recognized him as "Lord."

Notice that Peter didn't ask Jesus to calm down the wind before giving him permission to go to him. Jesus wasted no time in responding, "Come." And, Jesus didn't tell the wind, "Peace. Be still." Peter asked to meet Jesus in the swirling wind.

Peter was passionate about his Lord, and I imagine him jumping out of the boat to go to Jesus, full of joy and confidence in his Lord. Peter *was walking* on the water towards Jesus. Then, Peter began to notice the wind: it was a strong wind, a boisterous wind, a wind that churned the waves beneath Peter's feet, and he began to sing in the water. Peter got distracted by what was going on around him.

This begs the question of why would Jesus grant Peter's request to call him out on the water? Jesus knew Peter was going to sink. Matthew Henry, a Bible commentator, believed that Jesus did as Peter asked because he knew Peter's request came from a sincere heart and a desire to trust him. Jesus empowered Peter to walk on the water, because Peter didn't ask to walk on the water, he asked to come to his Lord. Peter's desire wasn't to glorify himself, Peter's purpose for walking on the water was to go to Jesus. Peter waited for Jesus' invitation and willingly took a risk by getting out of the boat. Henry also adds that

Jesus issued the invitation so that Peter might not only experience being empowered by Jesus to walk on the water, but also that in sinking, Peter might know his own weakness.

Peter took his eyes off of Jesus because he saw the strong wind and was afraid. Wasn't this same Peter on the boat back in chapter 8 when Jesus was sleeping and the disciples were terrified because of the storm? They thought they were going to die, so they woke Jesus up. Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, and it was still. The disciples asked, "Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?" Even with this experience under his belt, Peter was afraid of the strong wind. John Wesley made this comment about Peter's fear: "When grace begins to act, the natural courage and strength are withdrawn." Peter had to come to the end of himself to understand more fully who Jesus was.

To Peter's credit, as he began to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" It's as if sinking in the water woke him up to the realization that he could not save himself, only Jesus could save him, and Peter had *enough* faith to cry out to Jesus in his moment of need. His prayer, "Lord, save me!" had purpose and passion. Peter cried out not just to be saved from drowning in the water, but to be saved from the fears that distracted him from his Lord...to be

saved from whatever hindered his journey to Jesus.

Jesus, again, being Jesus, *immediately* reached out his hand and caught Peter. "You of little faith," Jesus said, "why did you doubt?" Just 2 chapters later, Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus responds to this man of little faith by saying, "¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." This man of little faith was chosen by Jesus to establish the foundation of the Christian church.

When Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, the wind died down and those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God." In the storm story from 2 weeks ago, after Jesus had calmed the storm, the disciples asked, "Who is this, that even the winds and the waves obey him?" But, now, they know that Jesus is the Son of God.

What lessons are we to glean from this story that we can apply to our lives today?

First and foremost, I believe this story teaches us that God is with us and for us. Therefore, we can live with courage and hope...taking chances...risking ourselves in relationship...seeking the welfare of the individuals and community around us...all the while remembering that even when we overlook God's

presence, God is always there, sometimes to encourage us to overcome our fears, sometimes sending us out ahead, and sometimes reaching out to grab hold of us in forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

Friends, we are living in tumultuous times on many different levels. Families with school aged children are struggling with how to navigate school virtually here in Hammond, and surrounding school systems are giving families the choice about attending school in-person or e-learning. The teachers and staff are fearful. The pandemic is controversial...I don't want to live in fear, but COVID-19 is real and can be fatal for some persons. I saw a sobering cartoon that I sent to Miguel, who is a music teacher in the Valpo schools (are going in person)...the teacher is lying in a hospital bed on a ventilator...surrounding her are her pastor, her husband, and her principal who is asking, "Could you ask her if she has sub plans? And, what are her class objectives for the week?" Not funny at all...but this is what teachers are afraid of. How may we live with courage and hope and take risks in doing good for the children and families in our city in these circumstances? Might we offer to them a space to be one of their safe zones? A space where a group of 10 children might come and be socially distanced as they do their e-learning?

During this time of the global pandemic, systemic racism has reared its ugly head more publicly than ever before. Sadly, it has always been present in our nation, and over the years civil rights activists have taken the lead in battling this evil. Friends, we cannot sit idly by while our brothers and sisters of color are suffering. For six weeks, 12 of us from Woodmar have been meeting to take on a Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge. We've been reading articles, watching videos and listening to podcasts that have begun to make us aware of what is happening around us and our own implicit biases that we hadn't noticed before. While we are learning and growing, we don't want our discussions to just be discussions. Our discussions are laying the groundwork for taking action to counter the systemic racism that is so rampant. We also hope that more of you will join our discussions...and will join us in living with courage and hope...taking chances and risking ourselves in relationship.

The coronavirus and systemic racism are howling winds that we are facing together with our families, our faith family, our neighborhoods, our nation and our world. Even as we make our way through these crises, we cannot forget or ignore the howling winds in our personal lives. They worry us. They frighten us. Your company had to downsize because of the pandemic and you got

laid off. Your doctor calls after running a battery of tests to share that the news is not good. Your mother has Alzheimer's and could no longer live on her own...she had to be moved to a nursing home for her own safety, then the coronavirus hit and the nursing homes locked down. Sheltering in place with your spouse has magnified how much you've grown apart...what will you do? You realize you're turning to alcohol or pills to dull the pain in your heart. In such moments we feel small, vulnerable, with not much to protect us. In those moments will we muster the little faith we have to cry out like Peter, "Lord, save us!"

The Good News is that Jesus is Emmanuel... "God with us." The saving presence of God through Jesus Christ does not mean that no storms appear, but that one experiences God's saving presence *in* the midst of the storms.

Friends, hear the Good News! We CAN live with courage and hope...taking chances...risking ourselves in relationship to seek the good of our neighbors BECAUSE God is always with us...cheering us on, encouraging us, sending us ahead, and sometimes reaching out to grab hold of us in forgiveness, mercy, and grace. Thanks be to God! Amen.

CALL TO PRAYER *Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)*

You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail

And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep my faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior

I will call upon Your name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in Your embrace
I am Yours and You are mine

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please join me as we bow our hearts before the throne of grace. O Loving God, hear us as together we offer up to you our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. (I invite you to offer up your prayers of praise and thanksgiving.)

Leader: Lord, in your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Hear us, O Lord, as together we pray for the people of our congregation. For healing, we lift up to you:

Ellen Johnson	Becky Craig
Jayne Love & her daughter, Lynn	
Bill Austin	Karen Wisotsky
Judy (friend of Jim & Shirley)	
Betty Barnhart	Peyton
Jackie O'Dea	Geoff Stratton
Geraldine Speakman	Phyllis Ferrini
George Frankland	Brian Frankland
Don Stratton	Dan Cirullo
Theresa Hellems	Joe Shea
Nikki Farley	Becky Craig's sister, Bonnie
Baby Benjamin & his mama, Jenn	
A friend who has serious health concerns	
Anita	Shirlee
Jeanette Smith	Joseph Patrick

We pray for peace for Joseph and Jackson.

We pray for those who are mourning:
Pete & Fran Vukovich and family as they mourn for
Pete's brother, Mark.

Rich & Shanan Brambert and family as they mourn
for Rich's dad, Dick.

Jeff & Rebecca Orange and family as they mourn
for Josh and Jeff's uncle.

Keith & Evelyn Lorentzen as they mourn for Keith's
son, Michael.

I invite you to lift up those the Lord brings to your
heart and mind.

Leader: Lord, in your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Hear us, O Lord, as together we pray for the
concerns of our hearts, our local communities, our
nation, and our world...

Those related to our church family who are on
the front lines caring for people during this
pandemic:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| - Rebecca & Jeff Orange | Jenna Orange |
| - Sandi Arendt | Lori Jones |
| - Debbie Pirtle | Shanan Brambert |
| - Grecia Gonzalez | Jennifer Link |

- Beverly S.
- Brett, Holly, Sarah, & Becky Bach
- Jordan Delgadillo (Joan Link's niece)
- Kathy & Chet Kasper
- Tracy Anderson
Anderson
- Sarah Guistalisi
- Ramah's nieces: Ashley, Jessica & Amy
- Ramah's neighbor: Nurse Jamie Cheryl
- Danielle Romero
- Brea Mangerson Monte Hoover
- Dan Shambaugh Bailly Smith
- Daniel Moore Lauren Roach
- Sarah Faught Claudia Craig
- Camille Jancosek
Washburn Rachel
- Kara Stilwell Peggy Iler
- Jo Ellen Klut Emma
- Mark Baranko
(firefighter & EMT in Indy; son-in-law of Bob
& Lynn)

The city of Beirut...we pray for the families who lost loved ones, for the 5,000+ who were injured, and for the 300,000 people who were displaced from their homes.

Leader: Lord, in your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we thank you that you hear the prayers that we speak out loud and the prayers that we quietly hold in our hearts. Help us to trust you and to lean into you and to lean into each other during these troubling times. We are thankful, God, that you call us your own, that we are your beloved children. Hear us now, as we your children, pray the prayer of Jesus' heart:
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CLOSING SONG *Who Am I*

Who am I that the Lord of all the earth
Would care to know my name
Would care to feel my hurt
Who am I that the Bright and Morning Star
Would choose to light the way
For my ever wandering heart

Not because of who I am
But because of what You've done
Not because of what I've done
But because of who You are

I am a flower quickly fading
Here today and gone tomorrow
A wave tossed in the ocean
A vapor in the wind
Still You hear me when I'm calling
Lord You catch me when I'm falling
And You've told me who I am
I am Yours

Who am I that the eyes that see my sin
Would look on me with love
And watch me rise again
Who am I that the voice that calmed the sea
Would call out through the rain
And calm the storm in me

Not because of who I am
But because of what You've done
Not because of what I've done
But because of who You are

I am a flower quickly fading
Here today and gone tomorrow
A wave tossed in the ocean
A vapor in the wind
Still You hear me when I'm calling
Lord You catch me when I'm falling
And You've told me who I am
I am Yours

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BENEDICTION

Woodmar, who are you? I am a beloved child of God, called and sent to make a difference in the world. Yes! That is who we are! As beloved children of God, we CAN live with courage and hope...taking chances...risking ourselves in relationship to seek the good of our neighbors BECAUSE God is always with us...thanks be to God! May the blessing of Almighty God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with us all today and remain with us forever. Amen.