

Ready or not...

A message shared with the congregation of St. Andrew's United Church

February 18, 2024

by Rev. Dave Le Grand

My message title invites our minds to wander back to that childhood phrase – ready or not when playing “Hide and Seek.” Ready or not, here I come.

In childhood, the adventure is exciting. In adulthood, with the journey of the Spirit, it is not always a welcome surprise when Christ seeks us out.

This Lent we are veering away from Lectionary, choosing instead to follow the trials and tribulations of Simon Peter – or we most often know him as “Peter”, the friend of Jesus who often does not get it right.

This is the account of Jesus finding Peter out on the boat, doing what fishers do after a long night of fishing, washing their nets. Jesus, not a career fisher, gives some advice. Throw the net in one more time.

When the haul of fish is greater than he expected, Peter has to cry out for help from his colleagues. His response to Jesus is intriguing and really worth our deep spiritual reflection: I’m not worthy!

I’m not prepared. I’m not capable. I’m not deserving. I’m not faithful enough. I’m not smart enough. I’m not the type you’re looking for.¹

I think that we who experience some sort of grief, some loss, experiencing the trials and tribulations of everyday life, can relate somehow to Peter’s knee jerk reactivity, his sense of inadequacy.

The truth, according to the Gospel writers and their stories of Jesus, is that Jesus is not calling whole, together people who are at the top of their game, successful by the world’s standards. Jesus is calling normal people. Authentic people, like poor overwhelmed Peter, and you and me.

We are not the church, the community of faith that we used to be, here at St. Andrew’s. We are facing challenges that might make be those people who see a half-filled glass of water and we may see it as half empty. That is grief talking.

But this story about Peter invites us to look with fresh eyes at encountering Jesus, and his call to abundance. What is abundance, spiritually – not from the perspective of social media or television or movies. Instead, from the standpoint of being children of God, loved unconditionally, flaws, brokenness, quirks, our frailty, and all. Jesus seeks us not for what we “think” he wants us for, but he wants us just for who we are. Wonderfully and fearfully made, to quote from Psalm 139 again.

Amen.

¹ The concept behind this short reflection thanks to Biblical commentary by Dr. Terence Lester. Sanctified Art LLC, “Wandering Heart” for Lent 1, 2024.