

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
January 24 2021

Hi Friends,

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ. As we continue to work our way through the cold and gray days of winter, know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and that I miss you.

Church Council Officers elected for 2021 at our January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Lynn Shollenberger – president

Gary O'Brien – vice president

Cathy Meck – secretary

Officers appointed for 2021

John Wanner – treasurer

Dale Nelson – financial secretary

At the council meeting it was also decided that beginning Feb 7<sup>th</sup> we will have communion every week. Over the past three years, we have been gradually increasing the frequency of offering communion at our worship services with the end goal of having weekly communion in the spring of 2021.

If you have prayer request, please send them to me so that I can include them in my weekly newsletters.

May the joy, the peace and the love of God continue to warm your heart and enlighten your days throughout the year.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

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## Luke 5:1-11

A reading from the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke beginning at the first verse.

5<sup>1-3</sup> Once when he was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, the crowd was pushing in on him to better hear the Word of God. He noticed two boats tied up. The fishermen had just left them and were out scrubbing their nets.

He climbed into the boat that was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Sitting there, using the boat for a pulpit, he taught the crowd.

<sup>4</sup> When he finished teaching, he said to Simon, "Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch."

<sup>5-7</sup> Simon said, "Master, we've been fishing hard all night and haven't caught even a minnow. But if you say so, I'll let out the nets." It was no sooner said than done—a huge haul of fish, straining the nets past capacity. They waved to their partners in the other boat to come

help them. They filled both boats, nearly swamping them with the catch.

<sup>8-10</sup> Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell to his knees before Jesus.

"Master, leave. I'm a sinner and can't handle this holiness. Leave me to myself." When they pulled in that catch of fish, awe overwhelmed Simon and everyone with him. It was the same with James and John, Zebedee's sons, coworkers with Simon.

<sup>10-11</sup> Jesus said to Simon, "There is nothing to fear. From now on you'll be fishing for men and women." They pulled their boats up on the beach, left them, nets and all, and followed him.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

## Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus of fisher folk,  
You taught your disciples to cast a wide net – not for fish, but for people. Teach us the fishing craft. Make our fingers nimble so we may handle hearts and hands gently; make our minds quiet and patient while we wait for those who are not yet ready to receive you; and make our hearts hungry for your word, for the sake of the one who has captured our hearts already, Jesus Christ. Amen.

This morning we hear Luke's version of the calling of the disciples, which begins with Jesus on the sandy beach and the crowd pressing in on him. He sees the empty boats and decides that he will get into the boat and go a little way off the shore so that he can preach to the crowds. When he is finished preaching, he tells Simon and his fisherman buddies to go back out into the deep water where they will catch

many fish. Although reluctant because they have been fishing all night and have not caught any fish, they get back into their boats and head out, throw their nets into the water and shortly thereafter their nets become overloaded with fish. They even had to call for help from another boat of fishermen to get their catch back to the shore.

At some point on their way back to the shore Simon is overcome with the reality of what had just occurred and realized that this man Jesus was someone special, someone holy.

When Simon reaches the shore, he humbles himself before Jesus and asks that Jesus leave him for Simon believes he is not worthy to be in Jesus' presence for he is a sinner.

To which Jesus answers – have no fear, I have chosen you to come and follow me. But you will

no longer fish for fish, but you will become a fisher of people.

And although I have heard this story so very many times and the words from the Sunday School song I will make you fishers of men, fishers of men, fishers of men. I will make you fishers of men, if you follow me continues to go through my head as I prepare this message.

What struck me this time I read this text was that when Jesus first meets the fishermen after their long night of hard work, there are no fish anywhere in sight, their boats are empty, their nets are empty, and their carriers are empty.

The fishermen have been out on the water all night and they have nothing to show for their hard work. They had nothing to take home to feed their families. They had nothing to take to the local market to sell or to trade for other goods, which means not only will their families have no fish to eat today, but people of their village will have no fish to eat today. Their failure to haul

in a net full of fish would impact their entire village.

Empty Boats, Empty Nets, and Empty Carriers – Not their finest hour and yet who shows up in their emptiness and their despair - Jesus.

I am sure we have all had some Empty Boats, Empty Nets, Empty Carriers experiences in our lives. You know those times when we worked so hard doing what we thought were all the right things and we come up empty handed.

And what does God do in all the emptiness surrounding the fishermen. God's one and only son shows up. And then Jesus used one of the empty boats as a floating pulpit to preach the Good News. And when he was finished using their boat as a floating pulpit, Jesus encouraged them to get up and try again; this time going out even farther to the deep water.

And even though the fishermen were tired from working all night, they did as this man Jesus directed and they went out

again. And this time they were divinely blessed with fish too numerous to be hauled in without the help of the other fishermen.

The boats were empty, the nets were empty, and the carriers were empty when Jesus arrived on the scene. The fishermen were tired, frustrated, discouraged and probably even anxious about facing those who would be disappointed that there would be no fish for dinner tonight.

And what does Jesus do, Jesus shows them that there are new opportunities if they only risk going out again into the deep water. And he fills their emptiness and then calls them to a new life of discipleship where they will now cast their nets of good news in crowds of people instead of the deep water.

I am sure we have all had times in our lives when our boats, our nets, and our carriers were empty. We have all had times in our lives when we were tired, disillusioned and frustrated. We have all had times in our lives

when people want to tell us how to fix things in ways that we have already tried. And nothing seems to work until we recognize that Jesus is right there with us ready to change everything.

And when we acknowledge that the holy one is with us, his presence changes everything. Not with new fishing techniques, but with God's amazing grace. Grace which God showers on us not because we have earned it or even deserve it, but because God loves us.

And filled with God's grace; our eyes are opened; our hearts are softened and our hope for new life becomes a reality for tomorrow.

And when we recognize and acknowledge Jesus' presence in our lives, we like Simon will get to live a life of discipleship; where we will no longer be fishing for fish, but we will be Fishers of Men and Women and Children.

AMEN

***Blessing***

May  
The love of God,  
The light of Christ,  
And the joy of the Holy Spirit  
Abide with you on this day  
and forever more.

**AMEN**