

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Walking Wet

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
*An Open-Spirited Community
of Faith and Action*

Luther said the way to live is to “walk wet.” He urged us to remember every day the promises God made at our baptism:

You are mine. You are my beloved. I claim you as my own.

Jameson is walking wet right now, in a manner of speaking. When he gets a little older and is walking and running will you remind him how precious he is in God’s eyes (and in our eyes, too)?

God says to him I was there to hear your “borning cry” and “God and we were there the day you were baptized...” and all of us together are walking wet in those dewdrops of mercy...

**With every baptism we renew our baptism
and we walk wet again, too.**

Today we are invited to see our lives through the story of Peter and Andrew and James and John. All are walking wet. I had the privilege of watching people in boats on Lake Galilee. Just as it was 2000 years ago, if you fish on that stormy lake, you get wet. They leave their nets. They walk wet – learning what it means to follow Jesus:

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹[Jesus] saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

They walk wet, learning what it means to follow Jesus. So do we.

We don’t have nets, boats or a family fishing business to leave behind. We do have to deal with a word that can be scary, though, in order to follow Jesus: the word “**disciple.**” You have probably noticed it keeps showing up everywhere in our church these days. Our bishops have heard that word resonating around Bible studies and local churches, and have asked us all to not settle for being “members” of a church, but to re-member that we are “disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Sometimes on campus the word “disciple” is used as bit of a put-down: “O that teacher is a *disciple* of Freud.” It is often used in the media to describe someone who follows blindly. Years ago, e.g., media people said followers compelled to do bad things by Charles Manson were “disciples.”

That’s were Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John can help us. They and all the people we know about in the early years of Christianity were not blind followers. They were not compelled or under a spell.

The word “disciple” comes from an ancient word for “learning”:
discere.

“Discernment” and “Desire” come from that same word.
The word “disciple” means “Co-learner.”

We may have a hard time thinking of ourselves as worthy to be called “Disciples,” but we surely can think of ourselves as “Co-learners!”

When we use the word “Disciple” it helps us keep focus on Jesus Christ. I think the reason our Bishops are using the word so often is to help us realize that if we think of ourselves as “just good people” or as merely “members of a church,” we can get distracted.

We live in an age where millions of people spend billions of dollars to distract us. The goal is to delude us into thinking “we are what we have,” **and to forget who we are and Whose we are.**

That’s why we have to **walk wet**. Like Jameson. Like Peter, Andrew, James, John; like Mary, and later Lydia, and Timothy, and many others, and yes, Paul who wrote some strong words that we heard today:

²⁹I mean, brothers and sisters,
the appointed time has grown short; from now on,
let even those who have wives be as though they had none,
(bad marriage counseling advice – Paul’s point is
times are challenging)

³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning,
and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing,
and those who buy as though they had no possessions,

³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

How shall we “walk wet?” When you splash water on your face every morning, take a moment to remember who you are and Whose you are.

Then remember what it means to walk wet– disciples are co-learners.

Every time we build community, we are doing what Jesus did. Every time we get people to notice each other, to figure out how to work together, we are disciples of the Light of the World, co-learners.

Walk wet – and run for the Light! The hotel meeting room was crowded with 800 pastors. Ceilings were low and lighting was dark. I wanted to start texting stuff that needed to happen while listening to the Bishop of Kansas preach. Instead I looked up. I saw the glow of cell phones all around me shining up on pastors’ faces. An active toddler, was restless and running in our tiny aisle. Three rows behind him a pastor took out his pen (also a tiny flashlight), and shined the light on the toddler’s chest. He was fascinated. Then the light shined on his feet. He stomped his feet wherever the light went. He smiled and laughed. He ran to the light. The pastor gave the flashlight to him. The boy ran to his mother and showed her. He shined the light on her feet, and on others’ feet in that same row.

Disciples walk wet. Disciples run for the Light. Disciples share the light. That is our story. This is how we follow Jesus Christ:

Every community-building act, every act of justice, every act of inclusion, every time we care for the sick, every time we meet someone at the point of their need we are walking wet in the Light of Christ.

**When we Walk Wet, we participate in Jesus’ baptism,
his life, his death, his resurrection,
and become Partakers of Divine Nature.** *II Peter 1:4*

The New Testament is full of stories of many ways, many paths of being Disciples. Those stories become our stories. We become part of The Story as co-learners and Disciples of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me, and while smiling, have spoken my name. Now my boat’s left on the shoreline behind me. By your side we will seek other seas.
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I CORINTHIANS 7:29-31

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the appointed time has grown short; from now on,
let even those who have wives be as though they had none,
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*GOSPEL MARK 1:14-20

Please turn to Pew Bible, New Testament, p. 35

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee,
proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying,
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe in the good news.”

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee,
he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—
for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them,
“Follow me and I will make you fish for people.”

¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰Immediately he called them;
and they left their father Zebedee in the boat
with the hired men, and followed him.

Disciple - a person who is a pupil or an adherent of another; follower:

i.e. a disciple of Freud.

[Old English *discipul*, from Latin *discipulus* pupil, from *discere* to learn]

Ruth Bell Graham's epitaph on her head stone reads:

"End of construction. Thank you for your patience."

She chose the words herself years before her death.

They come from a road construction sign she once commented on, saying,
"What a marvelous image for the Christian life – a work under construction."

*O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling, have spoken my name. Now my boat's left on
the shoreline behind me. By your side we will seek other seas.*