

#### April 20, 2023 Pastoral Reflection: Jesus in the Mix

I'm thinking today about another resurrection story in the Gospel of John. The one where Jesus appears to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

I'm thinking of how each of those disciples who were there that day might have been feeling.

Simon Peter still full of guilt for denying Jesus just like he said he would. Thomas still trying to take in the reality of putting his fingers in Jesus' wounds. Perhaps some of them are confused and afraid for what might be next. And perhaps others who are still just overwhelmed by grief.

I'm thinking about these disciples deciding to get in the boat to go fishing, but with no success. Their nets are empty.

And then, I'm thinking about this stranger on the beach calling



out to them to put their nets on the other side and their astonishment when the nets begin to fill. I'm thinking of how, as they came in from shore this stranger invites them to breakfast.

And how, in the act of eating they recognize that it is Jesus.

The text doesn't tell us what they talked about over breakfast, but I would guess it had something to do with I'm sorry, and I miss you, and it's okay. I can imagine the tears and the deep breaths. The unraveling of knots in stomachs and weights lifting from shoulders. I can imagine this encounter reminded them why they said yes to Jesus in the first place: in him was Life and the life was the light of all people.

This is a story that reminds us of how much becomes possible with Jesus in the mix.

What is scarce becomes abundant.

What is full of guilt and shame becomes full of dignity and grace.

What is heavy becomes light.

I am thinking we could all use an encounter like this one.

One where Jesus meets us wherever we may find ourselves, and offers us a meal that satisfies in the places too deep for words.

I am thinking that there is a high probability I miss just such encounters simply because I forget that he will most likely show up in people I would not expect or know or recognize.

In the midst of seeking to fill our empty nets, may we remember to keep our eye on the horizon, anticipating even, that Jesus will meet us in our searching, helping us discover a third way when we

thought there only and either/or way, calling us again, and again, to join him in embodying the love and life of God. So much becomes possible when Jesus in the mix. With peace,

Rev. Erin Gilmore

# **Conference Events and News**

49th Annual Celebration

Registration is open and can be found HERE. Deadline to register is 6/12/2023. Hotel reservations can be made directly by use the Online Group Booking Codes if you plan to book your room online click HERE otherwise booking over the phone 970-241-8888, be sure to ask for the Rocky Mountain Conference UCC rate when making your reservation. Make your reservation by May 24, to receive our special rate of \$129.95. Business meeting information as well as other details about the gathering will be posted <u>HERE</u> or scan this QR code, so please check back often.



#### Daring Greatly

Rev. Dr. Diane Weible will be conducting a book study that will meet every Tuesday via Zoom starting from May 2nd to May 23rd, covering two chapters each week. The timing of the study is 12-1 p.m., and participants can bring their lunch along. If anyone is interested in joining the study group, they can get a copy of the book and start reading. There is no need to sign up beforehand, and all are welcome to join. It's a great opportunity to have a one-hour conversation about the book's content and to gain insights into Brown's research on vulnerability, courage, and shame.

"Daring Greatly" is a book by Brene Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston who has spent the last two decades studying vulnerability, courage, authenticity, and shame. In the book, Brown explores how the courage to be vulnerable is the key to living a wholehearted and fulfilling life. Zoom Link

## From the National Setting



The theme for the first ever UCC Earth Day Summit is "What's Possible? Earth Day Stories of Hope." This two-and-a-half-hour event on Saturday, April 22nd at 11 am ET will feature stories that lift our spirits as we answer our first calling in the Bible: the care of UCC Webinar on Police Violence and Environmental Justice

# STOP COP CITY A MORAL CALL

Webinar Featuring Faith Leaders

Wednesday, May 10th at 1 pm ET

God's creation. In this denomination-wide gathering, the <u>Rev. Jim Antal</u> will speak from his experience as a trailblazing climate leader. Grassroots organizers will share inspiring highlights and victories from their work. The Dollie Burwell Prophetic Action Award will showcase prophetic ministry at its best. A new video will present the uplifting story of Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis. Finally, we will celebrate the Climate Justice Fellows, Creation Justice Churches, and green teams across the country that have been making a difference during this past year.

#### Register now to be part of this experience!

This event will give us momentum as the UCC launches a campaign to collect written postcards in calling for government action that will save lives and put our country on the path for clean electricity by 2035. Learn more about this effort and our upcoming launch event.

The UCC Earth Day Summit is cohosted by the National Setting of the United Church of Christ, the United Church of Christ's Council for Climate Justice, Mayflower United Church of Christ, and the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Mayflower United Church of Christ invites attendees of the Summit to also join them later in the day for a Readers' Theatre presentation entitled "Stories of Hope from the Front Lines!" From 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm CDT, one can watch via this <u>YouTube</u> <u>livestream link</u>.

In Atlanta, faith leaders have been involved in a struggle to confront violence in multiple forms as they seek to prevent the destruction of the Weelaunee Forest for the building of a police training facility in a predominantly Black community. Through their actions for a just world, these faith leaders have additionally sought to honor Manuel "Tortuguita" Terán who was killed by the Georgia State Police while protecting the forest. This webinar will feature faith leaders from Atlanta as they share with us about this cause of justice. Even if you cannot make the webinar at its scheduled time, still sign-up, and we will send you a link to a recording of it. <u>Register now!</u>



On April 29th, the UCC will be launching an effort to collect as many petition postcards as possible to seek government action for cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Such action could both save lives and put our nation on track to meet climate goals. <u>Sign-up</u> to get updates on the Climate Hope Cards campaign and this launch event.

## **Upcoming Events and Important Links**

April 22: Earth Day April 27: RMC Board of Directors Meeting May 2, 9, 16 and 23 : Daring Greatly Book study Zoom link <u>https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3296187641?pwd=MU4yRGpMb3pEQ0MwbFFrUVFzalppZz09</u> June 15-17: Annual Celebration Learn more. Register.

Previous versions of the Together Newsletter can be found here.