

Dear Church Family, for the week of February 10th

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Dedication of the Sunshine Bags
Sunday morning worship is at 10:00 a.m.

Pastoral Concerns: Pastor Jeff Long-Middleton 978-273-6399

pastorjeffuccbradford@gmail.com

Emergency Assistance: Care Coordinator Carole Taylor 802-222-4590

Pastor Jeff says: Read Luke 5:1-11. Once you've done that, read on.

Sometimes life's direction may seem unclear. Indeed, choices are often made not between two stark options but between various shades of gray. That's why decisions are often difficult to make. If the correct choice were clearly set before us, the path would be clear. Yet it is also true that to move forward in life, selecting a course of action is required. So we are often confronted with the necessity of making choices when the virtue of our options is murky at best. For some, this moral ambiguity can lead to the "paralysis of analysis." We spend all our time debating the merits of our choices and fail to take action.

I think Simon and his fishing partners were tired. They had been fishing all night, the text tells us, and were in the process of cleaning their nets and heading home. Simon could have been forgiven if he had told Jesus that he was too tired to row yet again out onto the lake, too tired to listen to Jesus as He instructed the crowd gathered on the shore. Indeed, when Jesus asks Simon to cast his net, Simon, a man who made his living catching fish, believes the effort will prove fruitless. But Simon obeys.

Modern men and women don't care much for the word "obedience." It smacks of a loss of independence bordering on subservience. Yet it is in obedience that Simon comes to discipleship. Casting his net into a fished out region of the lake was a choice Simon would not have made. It was Simon's obedience to Jesus' instruction that led to Simon's conversion and commitment. This, I believe, is the lesson that awaits our discovery.

Organist John Atwood says that as the Lenten season approaches he will have more to tell us. Meanwhile he says the introit this Sunday is "joyous" and the anthem "more reverent."

Lectionary readings for this coming week: (Year C) February 10-16

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13) ("Here am I; send me!")

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (Christ died for our sins)

Luke 5:1-11 (you will be fishers of men)

Psalm 138

theme hymn: *Here I Am, Lord*

Pastor Jeff's office hours

Sunday afternoons and all day Mondays

978-273-6399 is his recommended number to use at any time;

calls to 802-222-4610 are only answered when he is in the parsonage, but you may leave a message

Volunteers are needed to host the Fellowship Time following the worship service. The sign-up sheet is displayed in the vestry. Please find the Sunday(s) you will help!