

From Our Conference Minister



That Sinking Feeling! (Matthew 14:22-33)

In a commentary about Matthew 14: 22-33, Fred Craddock writes, "On a dark night of fear and helplessness, Christ comes to his disciples." When Jesus realized the disciples were afraid of the storm raging around them, he quickly called out to them to ease their fears. While the other disciples remained stunned and silent, Peter sought more certainty and said to Jesus, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." (v.28) In taking one step out of the boat, Peter risked his faith to trust in Jesus. Subsequently, Peter defied the odds and walked on water.

After this commendable feat of faith, Peter lost his nerve and started second guessing himself. This is when he got **that sinking feeling**.

Jesus [He] said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" (v.29-30)

Peter began sinking into fear. He got the kind of sinking feeling you get when you decide to get out of your metaphorical boat to seek change. It can be a change of careers, the decision to end a troubled relationship or the fervor to pursue a dream deferred, but was too afraid.

Peter stepped out of the boat with an informed trust in Jesus, having just seen him miraculously feed about 10,000 people and cure the sick. In Matthew 8, Peter saw Jesus heal his mother-in-law and cast out demons with only a word. When Jesus spoke the word "come," Peter got out of the boat trusting that he could walk on water and that Jesus could save him. We can step out because we have a God who is mighty to save.

Ernest Campbell, former pastor at Riverside Church, asserts that "the reason that we seem to lack faith in our times is that we are not doing anything that requires it!" I am so pleased that several of our congregations have "stepped out of the boat" to use Facebook Live or other video recordings to make their Sunday worship services available to all. An increased number of our churches are using social media and technology to spread the gospel in other ways!

Peter's story reminds us that fear can lead to a deeper trust and faith in Jesus Christ. According to Will Willimon, we "prove God's promises through trusting God's promises, by risk and venture."

May we go and do likewise.

In Christ,

Monica

Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith
Conference Minister and President

p.s. We want to hear from you. Please take 1-2 minutes to complete this brief survey-
<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eefq9512j5vajj6/start>