

**And when they had brought their  
ships to land, they forsook all, and  
followed Him.**

**Luke 5:11**



February 10, 2019  
FUMC Portsmouth, NH





*We Gather for Worship*

**Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light**

**Celebrations**

**\*Call to Worship**

L: The buzz of the world interrupts our lives and fills our ears.

**P: Call us into your way of life, O God.**

L: The complaints of others settle in our mind and cloud our vision.

**P: Lead us into your vision of life, O God.**

L: The cries of the poor, the oppressed and the outcast pierce our hearts.

**P: Guide us in your example of living for others, O God.**

L: Fill our hearts, fill our eyes, fill our ears with your love, O God.

**P: Let us be your hands and feet in the world, O God. Let us worship you together.**

**\*Hymn:**

"Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore," vv. 1,2,4

UMH #344

**A Time for the Child in all of Us**

**Prayer (unison)**

**You challenge us to follow you; not by staying as we are but by stepping out in faith, casting our net into deeper water as with Simon Peter, the fisherman. You challenge us to trust you and be prepared for all eventualities, even when the load is heavy and we struggle to succeed. But with your challenge comes blessing. Flimsy nets are filled, broken lives made whole. From emptiness to abundance. Thank you for your challenge. Grant us courage to follow. Amen.**

**Sung Response**

"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

TFWS #2193

**Ministry of Music**

*We Proclaim the Word*

**Reading the Word: Luke 5:1-11**

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

**Message: "Leave It Behind"**

Rev. Deb Hanson

**\*Hymn: "Two Fishermen"**

TFWS #2101

**Concerns and Joys**

**Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Gratitude Moment**

John VanReenen

**Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings**

**\*Doxology:** *(Please join in singing the following:)*

UMH #94

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

**\*Prayer of Dedication** (unison)

**We offer our gifts to you, Lord, with grateful, cheerful hearts. Thank you that you meet our needs on the journey, providing what we need when we need it. Trusting you, we can share what we have with others, and we do this joyfully, together, today, in Jesus` name, Amen.**

We Go Forth to Serve

**\*Hymn: "Jesus Calls Us"**

UMH #398

**\*Choral Benediction** *(Congregation encircles the Sanctuary)*

**May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant your peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and seek His face, and His grace forever. May the Lord, mighty God bless and keep you forever.**

**\*Pastor's Charge**

**Postlude**

*\*Please stand as you are comfortable*

*Large print bulletins are available from the greeters*



## Welcome!

Whether you are joining us for worship for the first time or after many years of attending here at First UMC, we want you to know that you are welcome!

We are an inclusive community that invites everyone to be part of our church fellowship. Thank you for being here, and we hope that you have had a meaningful experience of worshiping our God so you leave this place feeling that you have been blessed to be a blessing. Please join us again!

Rev. Deb Hanson



**Today** please join us after the worship service for coffee hour...it's a great time to meet everyone and to catch up with each other.

**February 19th** Church Council meeting @ 6pm at the church

**Month of February** Celebrate and learn about Black History throughout the month of February at the Discover Portsmouth Center located at 10 Middle St. in downtown Portsmouth. There are several enriching programs offered for our collective benefit.

**March 10th** SPRC meeting after worship.



### Sunday Worship Team

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor's Assistant - David Richards

Liturgist - Dave Atkinson

Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Acolyte - Kaya Sarosiek

Greeters - Joyce Blanchard & Marilyn Stebbins

Ushers - Ken & Jenya Westbrook & Ken Young

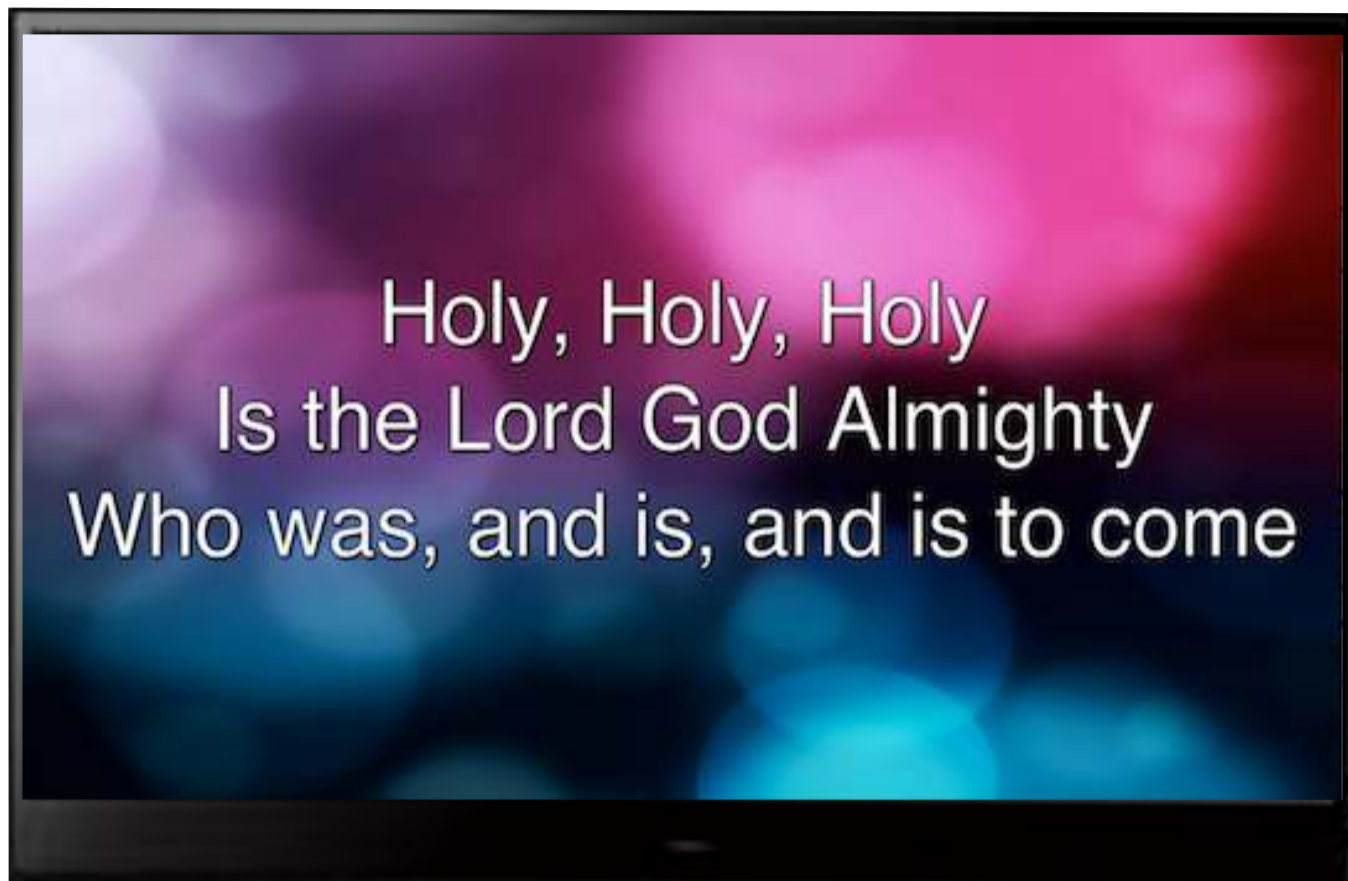
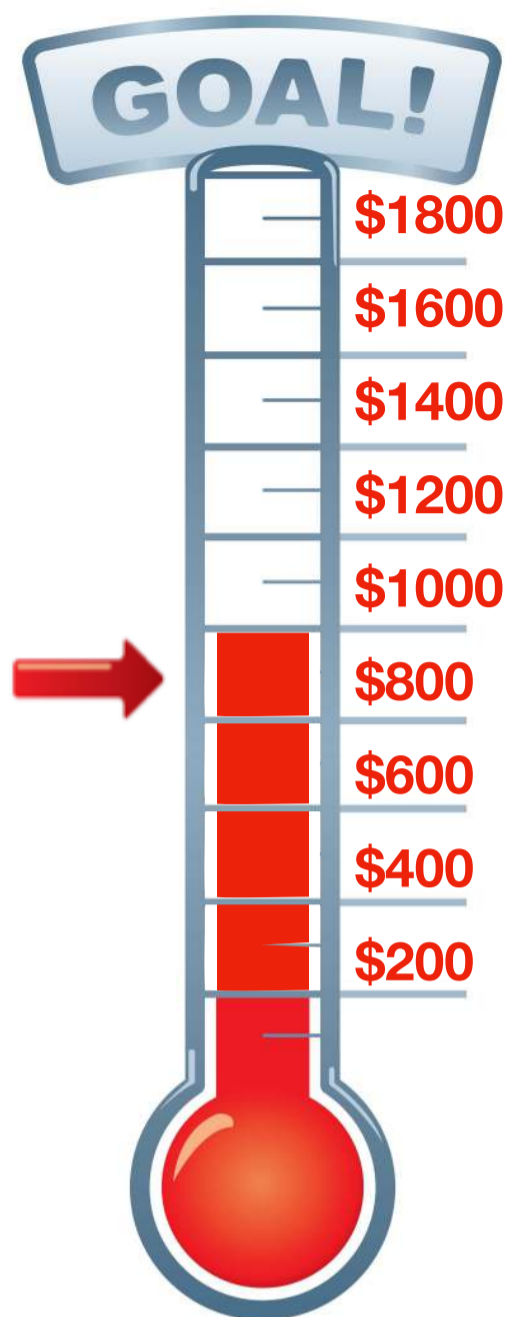
Sunday School - Aerial Silanpaa & Kaya Sarosiek

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek

Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott

Photographer - Dave Atkinson





**The Finance Trustees are looking for donations to replace the outdated screen and projector being used each Sunday with a large LED monitor.**

**Please see John VanReenen for details.**

*come, follow me.*  
~JESUS





# BEA

# Prayer WARRIOR

**WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER**

*Luke 21:36*

**Barbara & Jim Slater**

**Barbara Sylvester**

**Pauline Boynton**

**Barbara Millar**

**Irene Derosier**

**Barbara Clement**

**Malia Broe**

**Trudy Parkhurst**

**Joette MacKenzie**

**Rev. Bill Gardei**

**Gayle Gardei**

**Marion Collishaw**

**Sue Goodhue**

**Hunter Pinkley**

**Sylvia Bartlett**

**Brian Thompson**

**Bobbie Noble**

**Gil Stebbins**

**Woodie Lange**

**Roseanne**

**Rev. David Kerr**

**Jim New**

**Kim Hishop**

**Pastor Sue Ellery**

**Nancy Chesser's family**

**Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]**

**Erika Guerino**

**Today's altar flowers are given  
in celebration of our loving  
congregation.**

**FUMC PORTSMOUTH  
A RECONCILING CONGREGATION**

**We, the congregation of the First  
United Methodist Church of Portsmouth,**



**New Hampshire, are dedicated to worshiping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors" We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.**



**New England Annual Conference  
Tri-State District**

The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop

The Rev. James McPhee, District Superintendent

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801

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Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

[call to ensure availability]

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at [www.fumcportsmouth.com](http://www.fumcportsmouth.com)

Like and Follow Us On:





SERMON GIVEN 2/3/19 BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON



“Leave It Behind” – 2/10/19  
First UMC – Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:1-11

THEME: Jesus calls us to follow him.

They were a motley crew, these fishermen. If we stood close enough to them, we might see skin toughened by the sun, developed muscles from pulling in fishing nets, dirt under their fingers, and smell the sea and the pungent fish odor that was inevitably on their hands and arms. We might hear some tough, rather colorful language, barking orders that carried across the boats on the breeze that gently blew on shore. The work of fishing with nets was grueling work that required long hours, much of it at night when the catching was better. The nets that were designated for night were made of linen because during the day the fish could see them, but at night they could not. Every morning the nets were washed so they would be ready for the next night’s fishing trip.

On this particular day according to our Gospel lesson, the noises on the shore must have been louder because a large crowd followed an itinerant rabbi who had come to Lake Gennesaret, otherwise known as the Sea of Galilee. This rabbi’s name was Jesus, and he taught with authority and knowledge about God and God’s love all people. Jesus, born in poverty, raised in Nazareth, which was often viewed with scorn because of the many different ethnic groups who lived there and who passed through, and who surely must have tainted the residents who lived there. When Jesus began his ministry, he was near Jerusalem, which was considered the center of Jewish religion. He made his way to a lesser known place farther north in Israel, a place called Galilee.

Jesus’ mission was to share the message that everyone was part of the family of God; it was not just for the elite in Jerusalem. He was the Word – the living Word of God to people, ministering to people, most who lived in poverty and were longing to find healing, wholeness, hope, and assurance that God loved them, in spite of their conditions. Yet, instead of calling the educated religious leaders, Jesus called a group of who fished, and asked them to leave their nets and follow him. He chose ordinary, down-to-earth –EARTHY– people to help him in his mission and ministry. These folks were probably mostly uneducated, illiterate, and rough people who knew callouses, hard work, and the frustration of not knowing whether or not they would catch enough to make a living. These would be the least likely to be chosen to carry on the work of Jesus in the world. People would wonder why he picked these unlikely people who didn’t even LOOK like they should follow Jesus.

We do that, too. When we discover that someone is a regular church attender and a professing Christian, we have a sort of expectation of how they will look and act. One pastor, named John, shared a story about going on vacation in South Dakota about the time of the bikers’ rally in Sturgis, South Dakota. It is an annual, week-long event that attracts bikers from all over the world. Sturgis is filled to overflowing, and the businesses are booming, especially, the restaurants.

John and his wife decided to go to the Ponderosa Steak House for lunch, and, when they arrived, they discovered that the line went out the door and down the sidewalk. They also noticed that a number of people left the front of the line and moved to the back, which they thought was rather curious. After a short time, they found themselves near the front of the line and discovered the reason for those who moved out of the front to the back. A biker couple stood ready to enter the building. John said they

were dressed totally in leather, full of tattoos, displaying chains, and piercings, and they looked and smelled as if they hadn't had a shower in a very long time.

The couple went through the line to pay, and John lost track of them for a few moments while he and his wife paid for their meals, and moved through the buffet line. It turned out that they sat down in a booth across from the biker couple, and just as they were about to start their meal, the bikers held hands, bowed their heads, and said grace. It was far from what they had expected and reminded them that God steps into the most unlikely places and called the most unlikely people to be witnesses.

Simon Peter was certainly an unlikely person to be called as a disciple. We can only imagine his reaction to Jesus who sort of commandeered his boat, preached from it, and then asked them to move out into deeper water and throw out their nets. What we don't read in the scripture might be Simon's language as he reacted to such a "ridiculous" request. We don't have a description of his facial expressions or his indignation at having his boat taken over by someone who obviously did not fish for a living – or so he thought. Yet, there must also have been something about Jesus that led him to follow the request, and Jesus did, after all heal Simon's mother-in-law from some disease. When he and the other fishermen hauled in a huge catch of fish, Simon realizes that this is no ordinary person. He falls on his knees and asks Jesus' to leave him because he was sinful.

I suspect that many of us have had a moment somewhere along the line in our faith journeys when we recognized the love of God in our lives and our own unworthiness. But it is often in those moments when we hear the call of Jesus saying, "Follow me, and I will help you fish for people." There was something that pushed or tugged at Simon Peter as well as the others who were there to witness Jesus' teachings, and Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." And they left everything to follow him. Remarkable.

It is often here at the end of reading this story that we might start to ask, "How could they have just left everything?" When Jesus calls, does it mean that we have to leave everything to follow him? Deb has mentioned before that it took her over 20 years to accept her call to ministry. Some of us fight it for a long time, and not all of us really are called to the pastorate – aren't you glad of that! Over the years, as she served, there were times when she became discouraged and the enthusiasm waned a little.

She has heard that over and over again from new pastors who go into their first churches with great excitement to serve God in their new role. They say that they were disillusioned because it wasn't what they expected. When it gets down to the nitty gritty of being the designated leader of a congregation, they discover that it's a lot of hard work and not what they expected. They often get blamed for whatever goes wrong; and there is an expectation of miracles are placed on them. In Deb's ordination examination, someone asked her how she would get more men into the church. There are a lot of issues with that question, and she sat trying to sort through how she would answer it. She must have sat long for quite a while until one clergywoman on the examining team said, "Well, when you figure it out, let us know!"

Pastors have a unique calling, but they aren't alone in being called to follow Jesus. Some are called to serve as lay servants who work in the church in various capacities, using the gifts God has given them. Other people are called to a profession that helps people, such as teaching, the medical field, social



work, and a large variety of other jobs. Everyone is called to serve in whatever capacity they can, wherever they live, and doing whatever they do best to glorify God to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. It doesn't matter what our educational, economic, cultural, or ethnic background is – everyone can serve in some way, and we do it together in the context of being a church, the Body of Christ. What does it mean to fish for people?

Professor Sarah Dylan Breuer poses some thought filled questions for us to consider:

*-What would my life look like if I always looked with joy upon others' accomplishments?*

*-What would my household budget look like if it was guided more by a concern for others' immediate needs to sustain life than by a worry of what would happen to me if my car broke down, I got sick with something that would leave me with bills I couldn't pay, or I didn't have money for tuition?*

*-What would church politics look like if the basis for our every plan was the certain knowledge that God is providing what we need for our participation in God's mission, and therefore there is no need to grasp at what others have?*

*-What would the world look like if those of us who seek to follow Jesus let him transform our lives around the central question, "How will we gather enough people to share God's abundance?"*

(Dylan's Lectionary Blog, Sarah Dylan Breuer, found at Text This Week under commentaries for today's scripture lesson.)

What would it look like if following Jesus was the driving force underneath all the decisions we made not only in the church but in our lives, at work, with our families, or wherever we are in our communities and our world? Jesus started his fishing expedition by preaching – sharing the word of God with everyone, and certainly Simon Peter and the others who were there in the boats heard the teachings. But it wasn't enough for Jesus to just preach near the shore, he asked Peter to push out into deeper water, to go deeper, and to throw out the nets. The abundance of fish they caught was so great, that they had to call the other fishermen to help them haul it in.

Simon Peter was called to go deeper. We are regular, ordinary people called to go deeper, to leave behind the things that block us from following Jesus, and to follow him with trust and conviction. God calls even us. We may be the least likely person to be called, but God knows us, and God calls us to do whatever we can to further the kingdom of God. So, where do we drop our nets? We can probably name a whole bunch of places where we as a church are making a difference in our community and the world. The generosity that comes from this congregation shows – such as the \$300 in gift card donations to help Coast Guard families, and the giving for mission projects and support of people who need our help. Where else do we drop our nets? There are also many examples of love and support for those in the congregation, as well as neighbors and friends who need prayers and acts of kindness to help them through a tough time. The compassion and caring for someone who is struggling shines through.

What do we need to cast aside – leave behind – so we can throw out our nets for Christ? Our work is always changing, always calling us to keep following Jesus faithfully, always joining together to discern that call, and working together to make a difference in the world. If we think that we aren't good enough, important enough, educated enough, or whatever might hold us back, it's helpful to remember again that Jesus didn't call the temple leaders in Jerusalem to follow him; he called the motley fishing crew by the Sea of Galilee – an unlikely group of people. They were called to carry on his work in the world, and so are we.

We need not fear; we can trust Jesus' call in our lives. How will we follow and walk with Jesus? How will we continue to answer his call in our lives? In our church? In our world?

Let us pray:

**O God, just as the disciples of old felt the challenge and heard Jesus' call to follow, open our eyes to see the possibilities ahead of us and have the courage to take those first steps. Amen.**

*(adapted from Day 1, The Rev. Dr. B. Wiley Stephens is senior minister of Dunwoody United Methodist Church in Dunwoody, GA and found under the sermon section at Text This Week)*