

Good sunny Sunday morning from a hill in Rockport!

It's Father's Day! First a history lesson about the origins of this day honoring fathers..... From "wikipedia" we learn that "Father's Day is a holiday honoring fatherhood and paternal bonds, as well as the influence of fathers in society. In Catholic countries of Europe, it has been celebrated on March 19 as Saint Joseph's Day since the Middle Ages."

From another source, which I haven't been able to identify, "The first observance of Father's Day [in the United States] is believed to have been held on July 5, 1908 in a church located in [Fairmont, West Virginia](#), by Dr. Robert Webb of West Virginia at the Williams Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South of Fairmont. The church still exists under the name of Central United Methodist Church.

[Sonora Smart Dodd](#) of [Washington](#) thought independently of the holiday one Sunday in 1909 while listening to a Mother's Day sermon at the Central Methodist Episcopal Church at [Spokane](#), and she arranged a tribute for her father on June 19, 1910. She was the first to solicit the idea of having an official Father's Day observance to honor all fathers.

It took many years to make the holiday official. In spite of support from the [YWCA](#), the [YMCA](#) and churches, it ran the risk of disappearing from the calendar. Where Mother's Day was met with enthusiasm, Father's Day was met with laughter. The holiday was gathering attention slowly, but for the wrong reasons. It was the target of much satire, parody and derision, including jokes from the local newspaper [Spokesman-Review](#). Many people saw it as just the first step in filling the calendar with mindless promotions like "[Grandparents' Day](#)", "Professional [Secretaries' Day](#)", etc., all the way down to "National Clean Your Desk Day."

A bill was introduced in 1913, US President [Calvin Coolidge](#) supported the idea in 1924, and a national committee was formed in the 1930s by trade groups in order to legitimize the holiday. It was made a federal holiday when President Lyndon Johnson issued a proclamation in 1966.

In addition to Father's Day, [International Men's Day](#) is celebrated in many countries, most often on [November 19](#)."

Here's a few quotes about Father's Day:

"It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was." ~ Anne Sexton

"My dad's not here, but he's watching in heaven." ~ Bubba Watson

“A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.” ~ Billy Graham

What do you remember about your father? What did you learn from him? If you could describe your father in five words or less, what would they be? What influence has he had in your life?

Blessings to each one this Father’s Day, and especially to all our fathers.... Susan

p.s. I will be taking a week of vacation beginning tomorrow, June 21<sup>st</sup> and ending on Monday, June 28<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Bob Dorr will be leading worship and preaching next Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. I’m going to attempt to get some r-e-s-t this coming week.... and won’t be sending out any meditations.... Thanks for giving me the opportunity to recharge my internal batteries. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to continue to serve you as we move into hopefully more “normal” times in 2021!

**“just as he was”**  
**A Sermon for the Federated Church of Thomaston**  
**Thomaston, Maine**  
**Sunday, June 20, 2021**  
**Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet**  
**Scripture: Mark 4:35-41**

On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, **just as he was**. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who this is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Mark  
4:35-41

Will you pray with me. Storm calming God, you surprise us with your power and surround us with your wisdom in wondrous ways. Help us to hear the story of Jesus’ calming of the storm in the midst of his frightened disciples with eager ears this day. Amen.

One of the most amazing aspects of reading the Bible, to me, is how many themes and issues are addressed in almost any passage we read.

There may be *one major point* being made, but then there are all the smaller, or less obvious, points.

There may be *one major character* in the story, but then there are all the lesser characters who have rolls in the story we often miss entirely or take to have no particular importance at all.

There may be *one major “moral to the story,”* but then there are all the different ways to interpret the moral, depending on one’s personal experience or familiarity with reading the Bible.

I love reading the Bible. It offers the best story linking human and divine truths that I know of. And the fact that it was put together more than two thousand years ago makes its value to us now all the more amazing.

Today we read the story of Jesus’ calming of the storm while his disciples are scared out of their wits thinking they are all going to perish in the wind and rain as they bob around in the sea in their little boat. I have great empathy for them, knowing how scared I used to get when even one little extra ripple I didn’t expect affected the movement of my kayak in Norton Pond!

The story of Jesus’ calming of the storm appears in three of the four Gospels – and you know what that means – it is an important story! (Matt 8:23-27; Mk 4:36-41; Lk 8:22-25) We usually focus on the amazing power of Jesus to command the weather in the same way he commands demons to come out of people’s bodies. It’s another miracle story of Jesus in which the disciples are filled with great awe and fear and say to one another, “Who this is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mk 4:41)

But today, I want to focus on a different aspect of the story. It’s in the verse in Mark that does not appear in the tellings of the story in Matthew or Luke. Anybody know what it is? (get responses) Only Mark tells us, in verse thirty-six, “And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, **just as he was.**” (Mk 4:36)

“Just as he was” kept sticking in my head this week. I could find very little commentary about this verse in my study of our passage for today. One source, written seventy years ago, says of the entire verse, “This is just a bit of incidental detail in a narrative full of detail. But it has an arresting suggestiveness.”<sup>[1]</sup> Another more recently written commentary says, “The significance of *just as he was* is unclear.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Most translations give the verse this way, “And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.” One modern translation, the Contemporary English Version, leaves out “just as he was” completely. The King James Version says, “And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.”

Now you may think I’m pressing a little point too far here, but I’m struck by this phrase “just as he was.” What do you think it means? (get responses) It could mean, if you think of the King James translation, “they took him even as he was in the ship,” that he didn’t change his clothes before he got into the little ship. He went “just as he was dressed before he got in.” But the other translations mark off the phrase with a comma and a period. “And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.”

There *is* an “arresting suggestiveness” to the phrase “just as he was,” don’t you think? This is one of those phrases that makes me want to call up Mark, or whoever wrote this gospel story, and say, “Just exactly, what DID you mean by saying Jesus got into the boat, just as he was?”

You know early Greek writing had no punctuation marks. That’s what makes translating the earliest manuscripts so challenging. Choosing to put a comma or a period in one place or another can change the whole meaning of a passage. Keep that in mind when someone says to you, “THE BIBLE SAYS…” You might reply, “WHICH Bible? Which translation? Which interpretation of where the commas and periods ought to be?”

O.K., so what do *I* think the phrase “just as he was” means? I’ve brought another visual aid today to get across my understanding of this phrase. (put on life jacket) Now, if I’m getting into a boat, which hasn’t been all that frequently in my life, I will always have this “PFD,” as they are known now – “personal flotation device” – on my person! I much prefer the old language for this garment – “LIFE JACKET”! It seems so much more descriptive of its purpose – keeping me alive, no matter what, when I’m in the water.

As an aside, if you’ve ever Kate Braestrup talk about her chaplaincy work with the Maine Wardens Service, you’ve heard her say graphically, “It’s only people who do NOT wear life jackets the Maine Wardens pull out of the water dead.” Wearing a life jacket WILL save your life, even if you’re scared out of your wits, even if you panic and take in water when you shouldn’t. Whether you’re

big and strong or small and light and believing you're a strong swimmer, in a flight of panic and fear, only a life jacket will keep you afloat.

It seems to me, Jesus got into that boat "just as he was" with an invisible life jacket on that he wore all the time, his whole life. He got into that boat wrapped in God. He got into that boat with the assurance that no matter what, God would take care of him. God would keep him afloat, come hell, OR high water.

I believe the story of Jesus' calming the storm was constructed to instruct Mark's readers and hearers about the nature of Jesus' power. It was meant to give yet another interpretation of who Jesus was and what the nature of his authority amounted to. It pointed out that no matter how bad things might be, no matter how rocky the storms might make the sea of life, if you had faith in God, and Jesus' power as God's representative on earth, all would be well.

Yet, for me personally, I find the value of this story not in its proclamation of Jesus' power and authority over "even the wind and the sea," (Mk 4:41) but in Jesus' willingness to be with *me*, to be *my* "life jacket," even in the worst of times. I think it is very important to remember that nowhere in the Gospels do we hear Jesus say, "There, there now. There's nothing to be afraid of." Good Lord, there are lots of things to be afraid of! What Jesus tells us, I believe, is this, "No matter what happens, no matter how rocky your seas are, no matter how bad things seem to be, I will be with you."

Again, paraphrasing from Kate, and I believe she writes about it in her book *Here If You Need Me* – suffering has, does and will happen in our lives. Suffering is a fact of life. "When the storms of life are raging, stand by me" is much more than the opening verse of our closing hymn today. The storms of life *are* a fact of life. Buddhists say, "Life is suffering."

The difference between people of no faith and people of faith is the latter *know* they do not suffer alone while the former *always* believe they suffer alone. As people of the Christian faith, we try as best as we can, to keep in the back of our minds and hearts, Jesus' affirmation, "Do not be afraid. I am with you always."

But you know what, when it seems Jesus is nowhere to be found, that's when you and I come into the picture.

That's when we can say to a friend, or even an enemy, in need, "*Here, let me help you with your life jacket.*"

That's when we can help someone *hope for the best* rather than *expect the worst*.

That's when we can *strengthen our own faith* by working it out with someone else in need while Jesus is off tending to another person's suffering.

He got into the boat, "just as he was." How do you get into the boat? Let the people say, "Amen."

**Federated Church in Thomaston**

**United Church of Christ    United Methodist Church**

**All Are Welcome**

**Sunday, June 20, 2021 – Father's Day**

Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet, Pastor    Alice Billheimer, Organist/ Choir Director  
Lector: Alice Billheimer

*Please be respectfully silent once our worship service has begun.*

*An asterisk (\*) indicates where you are invited to stand.*

***Bold print** indicates that the people speak these responses & prayers.*

**GATHERING FOR WORSHIP**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude** Chorus of the Blesses Spirits -- by Christoph W. Von Gluck

**Call to Worship**

Leader: In a world that often causes us to be afraid....

**People: during a time in history that too often seems uncertain....**

**All: we gather in the promise of God's peace. We come to be renewed by Christ's love. We open ourselves to the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship God!**

**\*Opening Hymn** "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above" (see insert) (#126, Blue Hymnal)

**An Invocation....**

**Responsive Reading** – Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32 (see insert)

**A Moment of Silence**

**SERVICE OF THE WORD**

**Scripture Reading** Mark 4:35-41

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Message** “...just as he was....” Rev. Dr. Susan Stonestreet

**\*Hymn of Meditation** “Give to the Winds Thy Fears” (see insert) (#129, Blue Hymnal)

**RESPONDING IN FAITH**

**Sharing Our Joys and Concerns with God and Each Other**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord’s Prayer.....**

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.**

**Offertory** Shall We Gather at the River? -- Tune by Robert Lowry, arranged by Hugh Livingston Jr.  
(Offering plates are placed in the back of the sanctuary. Thank you!)

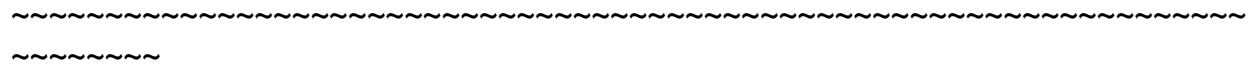
**\*Doxology** No. 95 Blue

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Closing Hymn** “When the Storms of Life Are Raging” (see insert) (#512, Blue Hymnal)

**Benediction**

**Postlude** Ye Servants of God -- based on hymn tune "Hanover" by William Croft.



**Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, June 27, 2021**

**Guest Preacher: Rev. Bob Dorr**

**Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15, 2:23-24; Psalm 30; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43**

**PRAYER LIST**

**Hold** in your prayers all those affected by the corona virus and the families of those who have died from the virus.... **And** all those families affected by the use of addictive drugs and alcohol among their members.... **And** all those dealing with the ravages of cancer near and far..... **And** add a prayer for Tammy Whirty, a friend of Margie’s, dealing with cancer challenges, and, from Blair, prayers for her friend Judith on the passing of her daughter, Lani, 42, from brain cancer, from Jackie a

request for prayers for Kyle Cloudier, **and** continued deep prayers for Hank and Lucy as Hank endures his cancer journey with the help of Hospice, **and** continued prayers for Ursula recovering...and for “Cody,” who doesn’t live locally but needs prayers for guidance; Kristin Parker O’Neal, Jo Ann Parker’s daughter, who will be having brain surgery; Enid, Ann Foster, Carol Moss, Fred Bagnall, Harriet Williams, Julie Pollitt, Zeke Bryant, Sally Harjula Elliot, Trish Perry, Helmut Steger, John Flaherty, Doug and BJ Thomson, Heather Van Buskirk, and Michael and Gail in southern Maine  
***Please feel free to contact Susan by phone (207)322-1948 or by email [freerangepastor@gmail.com](mailto:freerangepastor@gmail.com) to add or drop the names from the prayer list AND to let her know if you would like for her to stop by for a visit sometime. She’s always glad to have a chat with you!***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sunday-6/20/21.....10:30 am: Coffee  
 Time...Please come join us Tuesday-  
 6/22/21.....5:00-7:00 pm: Weight  
 Watchers .....  
 ...7:00-9:00 pm: Music Jam Saturday-6/26/21.....3:00-5:00  
 pm: Finnish Cooking by the Finnish Heritage House Sunday-  
 6/27/21.....9:30  
 am: Worship Service  
 Suggested Food Pantry  
 Donation.....Tuna Fish

The flowers this week are given by Corinne Ervin with love to all her children, grand children, great grand children and great-great grand children.

Reminders for next Sunday,  
 6/27/21

Greeter/Usher: Frances  
 Hernandez  
 Coffee Host

Lector: Doug Schroeder  
 Flowers: Janet Dwelley

Collection Total for Sunday, June 13, 2021:

Pledges -	\$170.00
Loose -	\$ 85.00
Total -	\$255.00



The 2021 weekly budgeted operating cost for the Church and parsonage is \$1623.00 per week.

**Federated Church of Thomaston  
United Church of Christ  
&  
United Methodist Church  
Together Since 1929**

*Sunday, June 20, 2021*

**8 Hyler Street, Thomaston, Maine 04861 (207) 354-6105**  
FCT email is [thomfedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:thomfedchurch@gmail.com)  
WiFi password is #1Church

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<sup>[1]</sup>Halford E. Luccock, *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII, New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1951, p. 709.

<sup>[2]</sup>*The New Interpreter's Study Bible*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003, p. 1816.