

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [January 24 Worship Service Video](#)

- Join the **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** every Sunday at 10am for an hour of informal fellowship.
Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98193600858?pwd=K0lIOWM0ZWdsRmhUTkNWcmFvbkM5Zz09> Phone in: 1 204 272 7920 Meeting ID: 981 9360 0858 Passcode: 438120
- A new **Cool School video** lesson is available by clicking here: <https://youtu.be/GypX2IDMGYs>
- Do you play a musical instrument? Brendan Thompson wants to 'hear' from you. Details in *Life and Work* or email Brendan at brendandt@hotmail.com
- For news and events please have a look at the **Life & Work** insert:
<https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- You can **donate** to the ministry of Charleswood United Church by visiting:
www.charleswoodunited.org/donate Thank you for your generous support.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, January 24, 2021.

When I was fortunate enough to visit Israel and Palestine in 2019 for the first and only time, I was fascinated, inspired, and intrigued by a multitude of places. Jerusalem was endlessly interesting. Bethlehem was perplexing. And floating in the Dead Sea was a truly unique experience. But the place that touched my heart the most deeply was the Sea of Galilee.

Granted I was only there for one day but I soaked up as much of that Sea as I could. I was awed by how close the villages and other biblical settings were to one another, as though walking between them really was no big deal. Certainly not an overwhelming obstacle. I delighted in the beauty of it, the blue water and the not so distant hillsides framing it. It is an evocative place that invites you to see the bible stories unfolding in your imagination and before your eyes.

And true enough, it is an odd, touristy, historical, bible-y kind of place. The funniest experience I had there came at Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. The tour guide told us that we were going to visit the ruins of what might have been Peter's house. There, over the stones of an archeological site, a church had been constructed. It was a lovely, octagonal, floating, space age kind of building. When you went inside the pews were around the edges of the all glass walls, and the altar was at one end with Galilee behind it. But in the middle of the sanctuary was a large glass floor through which you could see what we were told might have been a first century fisherman's home. Peter's home.

After enjoying the visit very much I was waiting for the tour to resume and I could see another church along the shore. I asked my tour guide what it was and he said, "That's the other church built over the remains of Peter's house!" Sure enough, another denomination had made a claim that 2000 year old ruins were/might be the place where Peter lived.

When we read about the call of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark all it says is that Jesus was walking by the lake one day when he saw Andrew and Peter casting their nets into the water. Mark does say elsewhere that Andrew and Peter, and even Jesus for a time, lived in Capernaum so it is not outrageous to suggest that the ruins of a first century home could be akin to those esteemed premises.

But what is truly inspiring about the Sea of Galilee is not what might have been left behind from the days Jesus was there, but what remains, the water itself. This is the place where the first disciples fished. This is the deep where their nets might have been overwhelmed by a miraculous catch. This is the body that Jesus crossed to get away from the crowds. This is the shore to which he returned. These were the waves that were calmed. This was the surface on which he walked. You won't find any evidence that Jesus was by the Sea of Galilee but the place offers the feeling of truth.

The calling of the disciples is not a sensational story. Jesus called. They followed. That's about it. But it is a seminal story. It shows that from the very beginning an essential element of the mission of Jesus was forming a new community of those who hear his Word and follow on his path. Something began that day on the Sea of Galilee that continues to this day in the efforts of you and I. We are the same as Andrew and Peter in the sense that we are welcome to be a small part of the community where all are welcome, just as they are, and no one is turned away.

None of us know where this mission ends but we do know where it began.

Grace and peace,

Michael

P.S. An online Lenten Study is being planned for six Thursdays beginning February 18. More information:

<https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>

P.P.S. Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Mark 1:14-20](#)

P.P.P.S. Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is:

<https://youtu.be/CMY76jXk2LQ>