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*Christ Lutheran Church, Ferndale, WA*  
*Fourth Sunday after Pentecost*  
*June 20, 2021*  
*Job 38:1-11; Ps. 107:1-3, 23-32; 2 Cor. 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41*

My family spent this past week on a houseboat on Lake Shasta in California with Mike's siblings and their families. And on Monday, totally in keeping with the story from today's gospel, a huge windstorm came up, and we were being pushed and battered by waves like the disciples in the gospel. Thankfully the storm died down by evening, but there were a few times the gusts caused us panic, and we ended up re-mooring our boat in another arm of the lake so that we were heading into the wind instead of sideways to it so that the boat wouldn't sway so much.

I bet if you've been on a boat in a windstorm, you can also relate to the fear and panic of the disciples. Or maybe you've been caught in a terrible blizzard or tornado or flood or wildfire and can recall the fear that at the time pierced you. Or maybe you've experienced the deep divisions of race or politics, or food or economic insecurity, or violence or addictions that shake you to your core. Living in the midst of **chaos** can absolutely make you feel how the disciples did in that boat—like you are literally or figuratively perishing.

There is an interesting contrast between how chaos is described in this gospel story and elsewhere in the Bible. Remember, in Genesis it says that God created the world out of chaos, and after the chaos was calmed, God rested. Here, Jesus rested before the chaos began. And when he came out of his resting, he was able to bring calm to the chaos. And immediately Jesus invited the disciples to remember who they were in relationship to God and to one another—to have faith.

What both of these stories tell us is that God knows how to work with chaos, and the promise of scripture is that God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit will either calm the chaos, or calm you to have faith to manage the chaos.

In the passage we heard today from Job God questions Job after he has lost everything: "Tell me where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth and its cornerstone? Or who shut the sea with doors when it burst out of the womb or made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band?" Basically, God is communicating to Job, I am far more powerful than you are—I am able to create and tame the entire earth, and so why, Job, would you not trust me to calm you?

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I noticed something in today's gospel that I don't think I'd ever noticed before. It's at the end of verse 36 when the disciples have taken Jesus with them in their boat, and it says "other boats were with him." I've always pictured this Bible story with one solitary boat on the lake with Jesus and the disciples, but there were other boats that came alongside them, too. They surely experienced the windstorm, as well, but because Jesus was in the disciples' boat and calmed the storm for them, he calmed the storm for the other boats, as well.

It reminds me of the fact that when we allow Jesus to calm the chaos in us, it has a ripple affect on others around us, too. Surely windstorms and insecurity and violence and other challenges bring on fear. We want to shout at Jesus just like the disciples did, “don’t you care that we are perishing?”

But Jesus, who because he had just taken a nap was calm himself, speaks into the chaos: peace, be still. Can you hear Jesus speaking those words into the chaos of your life, into the chaos in your heart? Peace, be still. And when you are at peace, even in the midst of chaos, others around you will be more at peace, as well.

Again scripture reminds us: God knows how to work with chaos, and the promise is that God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit will either calm the chaos, or calm you to have faith to manage the chaos.

Next Sunday we will be installing our new seminary intern pastor from Luther Seminary, Jory Mickelson. As you know from the letter sent to your home a few weeks ago from his internship committee, Jory is gay and married to his husband Justin, his partner of 18 years. Even though the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the highest legislative body of our denomination, through prayer, scripture study and dialogue voted in 2009 to ordain openly LGBTQ+ pastors and deacons, and even though Luther Seminary requires every internship congregation to agree to accepting an LGBTQIA+ candidate before being granted any seminary intern, and even though our church council voted unanimously to accept Jory as our intern, I know for a few of you having a seminary intern who is gay feels like chaos. Perhaps you feel, like the disciples in the boat did, that we are perishing, that our church is perishing.

And so again I remind you, God knows how to work with chaos, and the promise of scripture is that God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit will either calm the chaos, or calm you to have faith to manage the chaos you feel.

There are a couple of church members who, to calm the chaos they felt due to our decision to accept Jory as our intern, chose to leave Christ Lutheran and attend another church. I listened to, prayed for, and supported them because I understood that their decision was how Jesus was working to calm the chaos they felt. Please know that I will listen to, pray for, and support you if that is how Jesus works to calm the chaos you feel, as well.

However, as your pastor, I invite you to be curious and open to what God is doing here, and remember that Jesus provides another way for you to manage any chaos you might feel. When the windstorm arose on the lake and the disciples felt like they were perishing, Jesus spoke into the chaos: “Peace! Be still!” and then Jesus spoke to the disciples “why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” Jesus doesn’t avoid situations that could make us feel chaos...remember, it was Jesus who told the disciples to cross the lake to go to the other side in the first place. Jesus invites us to cross into new territory, and when we do so, he promises to journey with us. And if, on that journey, we feel chaos, Jesus works to bring peace and reminds us that we do not need to fear.

I firmly believe the Holy Spirit has led Intern Pastor Jory to Christ Lutheran and that he will bring new life and joy to our congregation. I believe we will experience new life and joy in being his teachers. And I absolutely believe that Jesus will instill peace in our congregation, because no storm can shake our inmost calm when to Jesus we are clinging. Amen.