



May 21, 2020

Greetings, Lettered Streets Covenant Church!

I am writing this letter from Semiahmoo as I'm on my annual prayer and planning retreat. Each year I pull away to pray and listen, to read and study so that I can discern where the Lord is leading me and leading us in the months to come.

This morning I was meditating on Luke 8.22-25, the story of Jesus calming the sea when he and his friends are caught out in a storm. I just kept reading this passage over and over again and this phrase stuck out to me: *Where is your faith?*

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus sort of chastises the disciples and says, *Why were you afraid, you men of little faith?!* But not so in Luke. In Luke it is more of a rhetorical question.

Here are the facts from the plot. Jesus and his disciples get into a boat. Jesus says, *Let us go over to the other side of the lake.* Jesus falls asleep. A storm arises—literally, *a fierce gale descended on the lake and they began to be swamped and to be in danger.* Note that they were actually *in danger*, not just feeling like it was getting dangerous. So they wake up Jesus and he calms the storm and then he asks his question—*Where is* (in what, in whom) *your faith?*

In this teachable moment, Jesus asks a question to solidify their faith, not to berate them. The fact of the matter is, Jesus was in the boat. It was his idea to go to the other side. He was in the storm with them. He was in the very real danger with them. And brought them through it. He is trustworthy.

I couldn't help but thinking as I was praying this morning that Jesus got a boatful of people together just over 11 years ago and said, *Let's plant a church. Let's go to the Lettered Streets. Let's serve our community to fulfill the mission of being a blessing to the world. Let's grow deeper in trusting the Father and knowing the Son in the power of the Spirit. Let's train up our youth and reach out to others to join our community centered on me (Jesus).*

Lettered Streets Covenant Church

P.O. Box 5645 Bellingham, WA 98227

Phone 360.920.6712 • [info@letteredstreetscc.com](mailto:info@letteredstreetscc.com) • [www.letteredstreetscc.com](http://www.letteredstreetscc.com)

And I couldn't help thinking of how many storms we've been through. How Whatcom Middle School burned during our first year and Jesus led us toward helping those in need. How someone was shot and killed just a few houses down the street from us when we first moved into the neighborhood and Jesus led me to help the neighborhood through the grieving process. How, as a community we have battled cancers, deaths, and pressing into controversial topics and each time I have felt swamped and in danger and yet Jesus has been faithful.

Today we find ourselves in the uncharted territory of a global pandemic. We have been socially distanced for 10 weeks! We are feeling swamped and in danger. For some it is the stress of working in dangerous conditions and being susceptible to catching or spreading the virus. For others, it's the stress of not being able to work or socialize or be in physical community. For some sheltering in place is a horror all it's own with depression or domestic violence or deep loneliness or temptation from substance abuse.

Lord! Wake up! Speak a word and calm the storm that rages over our land and in our hearts. Lord, say the word! Jesus, you ask *Where is your faith?* It's all over the place! But in the power of the Spirit, help us to place our faith in you and you alone.

This I know—Jesus is faithful. He is in the boat. He has never failed us. He has seen us through many storms. And it is okay for us to see our boat being swamped and to experience the danger and to be afraid. Jesus will see us through. May we be able to say with increasing confidence—*My faith is in you, Jesus.*

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Chris