

## Carol's reflection – January 24

Here it is, almost the end of January 2021 and we mostly tucked away in our homes, reading words and prayers in print or on the computer, or watching videos of hymns and reflections. It is quite a time.

I have heard more than one person say that they long for getting out, for seeing people up close and personal. Some say that it seems so hard to feel that they are living their faith, for they are not sure that they are actually 'doing' anything.

In this week, when the Gospel reading points us to the story of Jesus' calling disciples, there is much to consider.

Our friends at Illustrated Ministry in Minnesota suggest that we start thinking about following Jesus by going on a 'Jesus journey' – travelling around our own living spaces. They have paired a Bible verse – words of Jesus – to ponder as we move space to space, knowing that some of these places might be the same place.

In our favourite place, "Abide in me as I abide in you." (John 15:4)

In the place where we work or learn, "Every day he was teaching in the temple." (Luke 21:37)

In the place where we eat, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)

In the place where we pray, "While it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." (Mark 1:35)

In the place where we rest, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

A Jesus Journey, here in our living spaces.

The Gospel today has Jesus finding Simon, Andrew, James and John at their fishing nets. Their boats, their beach, their nets were a big part of their living spaces. Jesus says 'Follow me' and they leave their nets and their people, -- they leave their living spaces and they follow. At this moment, they are called, they are on a mission, they are starting their own Jesus Journey, and they are willing.

What adventure they might expect – Jesus promises to make them fishers of people – they will share Good News, they will help others to follow, they will free all people from oppression. What a time they will have!

We know that for the disciples to follow Jesus was not such an easy thing. Throughout the Gospel we will be told, time and time again, that these once enthusiastic followers struggled to 'get it'.

Their Jesus Journey took them to physical places, and they met real people. They were called to share in the healing of the sick, and in turning the world upside down by living love and acceptance for all.

Even how this all started was upside down. Jesus called disciples. Only in the Book of Proverbs does Wisdom call followers, every place else leaders are followed by willing disciples who come without being called. We see this when John the Baptizer calls out in the wilderness and disciples come and follow him. Jesus does things differently, he is the one who calls people to follow.

Without a doubt, for many people, following Jesus, being called by Jesus, has involved hands on ministry. We have visited the sick, the lonely, and the imprisoned. We have fed the hungry, and worked to share food with others. We have made and we will make a difference in our community and in our world.

But this is January 2021, and so much of that ministry is complicated by COVID. Our Jesus Journey has to be different. There is a need for people to stay home, and yet there is a need for others to be out – living as the hands and feet of Christ in the world. We need the ministry of 1Just City to be present for people. We need the work of the Mission and Service Fund. We need Gifts of Grace and the Main Street Project. We need Mount Carmel Clinic and Rossbrook House. We need the North Point Douglas Women's Centre and the Northend Women's Centre. We need the Transcona Council for Seniors. And the parent support programs. We need AA and Al-anon. We need places and programs for people to be safe. And not one of them, just as not one of us, can do it all. To be a community, a real community, we need to have the means and the motive to care for those in need and we need to know that there are others who are sharing ministry with us.

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer says that we need the churches, and those of us in ministry, to be a part of the solution, the healing of this pandemic. We need to speak about the importance of staying home, of wearing masks, and keeping our distance. We need to wait our turns and then roll up our sleeves for the vaccine. We need to let our care for others and the community be our motive.

Essentially, we need to follow Jesus around our own homes, sharing the resources that we can, reaching out to others who need those connections. Our 2021 Jesus Journey invites us to drop someone a note, make a phone call, send an email, or a text. Reach out to the staff at the hospitals, care homes, outreach ministries and centres that are living this care for others that so many of us cannot do right now.

Let's live a thank you as a part of our share of Christ's ministry. Let us live with grace for others. Let us live with care. And let us follow Jesus in all we say and do.