

Third Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Text: Mark 4:35-41
Related Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-13
Date Preached: June 21, 2009
Preached at Father's day service

I have to say that this sermon seemed to write itself this week. Wednesday evening on the hill in Trauger, forty children and helpers gathered for Vacation Bible School. Our lesson was Matthew's version of the Gospel reading I just read.

Just before 8:00 p.m. we ushered our children downstairs as some of us observed a funnel cloud trying to form over Pleasant Unity.

PEACE! BE STILL!

These are the words Jesus speaks to anxious hearts. Throughout her history, the church has lived in anxious times to varying degrees. In her history the church has endured persecutions, unjust imprisonments, afflictions, hardships of every kind and calamities both natural and manmade.

In the world today we find ourselves living in anxious times. The clouds of a struggling economy have many wondering if the company they work for will be the next to be struck with the lightning of layoffs, downsizing and plant closures. Today's aches and pains we feel in our body may simply be

the rolling thunder that gets louder and louder until we hear the big boom of a life threatening diagnosis.

Our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is certainly living in anxious times. Many of our congregations are already facing declining membership and giving; such decreases may accelerate pending votes later this summer at our ELCA churchwide assembly on the ordination and consecration of individuals in same-sex, life-long, monogamous relationships.

So with all the chaos that storms bring to the world, to our personal lives and to the church, is it any wonder that there are some who doubt the church has anything relevant to say. Indeed, the church has a lot to say.

In the midst of the storm we yearn for security. We yearn for something that can hold us fast, a place of sure footing. That sure footing is the rock upon which our lives rest. That foundation is Christ. It is upon this solid foundation that the church is built and from which the church speaks.

For all of our worries and anxieties, for all our fears of the unknown or what we think is already a done

deal, Jesus has this to say to the church and the world. PEACE! BE STILL!

These words ring true today for many of us find ourselves stressed in these anxious days. We are like the disciples who are fearful, not just that we are perishing, but that we are not in control. Most fathers (parents) are used to being in control of our circumstances and of our emotions.

This makes Jesus question to us all the more poignant.

Have you no faith? Jesus doesn't ask this question because we are without faith. Faith is a gift. Faith works. The gift of faith works not because of us. The gift of faith works because we are not outside the presence of Christ, who is with us in the storms.

Christ is with the screaming child scared because of the darkness, thunder and lightning, speaking through the voice of a father saying, Peace. Be still! I am with you. To proclaim that peace in the midst of the storm is faith.

Faith is at work in us because with the help of the Holy Spirit, that great wind of God powerful enough to uproot trees and yet soft enough to provide a

needed gentle breeze, reminds us that there is nothing beyond the control of God.

In our fears, in our anxieties, when all the forces of evil seem to descend directly upon us, and everything is beyond our control, Jesus says, “PEACE! BE STILL!”

Jesus experienced our human vulnerability. Jesus was vulnerable to the storms of betrayal, physical pains, injustice, mocking, and death. In being vulnerable Jesus is raised on the third day to say every more powerfully and gently, “Peace be with you.”

In the waters of your baptism Jesus joined us to his death and resurrection, a joining of peace and stillness. Peace, be still; you are forgiven.

Peace, be still; I am with you. Take and eat, this is my body given for you in the face of whatever storm you are experiencing. Take, drink, this is my blood shed for you.

For no storm can take from you the identity of whom you are; you are a child of God. “PEACE! BE STILL!”