

February 6, 2022
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Meditation: "Called"

Follow me.

Where are we going?

Ottawa.

Okay. Can my friends come too?

Sure!

We got us a convoy, aint she a beautiful sight.

Come on join our convoy, we'll give the guv a fright.

We're gonna go to Ottawa, and blow our horns all night.

Oh, we got us a convoy, aint she a beautiful sight.

Convoy!

And now we all know why I don't sing in the choir.

Follow me. That was the result of his preaching from the fishing boats. Or maybe it was that a skilled fisherman who knew better than to fish after daybreak, because that is not when the fish in Lake Genessaret were active, was one upped by a carpenter who told him to let down his nets and so many fish were caught that they threatened to sink two boats, and had nothing to do with the preaching at all. Who knows? Either way, Jesus was starting a convoy of his own, and it started with Rubber Ducky, Pigpen, and Sodbuster.... No, wait, that's not right. It started with Simon Peter, James and John. Only Jesus' convoy ran on sandal leather and not Bridgestones.

Jesus did not set out to create an institution. He set out to start a movement, a movement that demonstrated a different way of living than the way prescribed by the authorities...the way it had always been done, don't you know. Jesus set out to show that loving one's enemies was a more effective way to reconcile people than force or violence; that violence only begets more violence. Jesus set out to show that we are all the same, we all have problems and challenges, just different problems and challenges, and so we all need help of one sort or another. Jesus set out to show that we are all created by the same God, regardless of the colour of our eyes, or any other means by which we may differentiate ourselves. Jesus set out to show that the way for us to thrive as a species, is to make sure that each and every one of us has what is needed to thrive, and not just a select few. Jesus' convoy was bound to upset the religious and political elites, because his message threatened their privilege and position and authority.

What started as a protest on parliament hill is now in the early stages of becoming institutionalized. An offering has been taken up, first on GoFundMe, and then, when that didn't work out, on CloutHub, the same crowdfunding group that funded the January 6, 2021 attack on the US capitol. With money, comes facilities. Saunas and ice fishing huts are being set up so people have somewhere to keep warm in the winter weather. Eventually, rules of conduct and membership will form.

The same happened with Jesus' movement. It became institutionalized, with buildings, and dogma, and rules of governance. But that wasn't the original intent. And, now that we have an institution, we have to ask ourselves, what is the purpose of the institution? Is it self-preservation? Is that really what Jesus had in mind? Or, is it about making the Kingdom of God a reality, here and now, on earth as in heaven?

Today, for Union, and next week for Dorchester, we take a pause from looking out and looking forward, to look back on the past year and judge how well we did in fulfilling our purpose as an institution, whatever you think we are here to accomplish. It is a time to reflect on what it is that Jesus called us into, and to rate our response. Yes, because we have paid staff and physical structures, money to support those is a factor, but is that the most important thing to look at? Do we have people willing to serve – serve those in the wider community, and serve this branch of the global church? How many people did we catch? How many lives have we touched and transformed? And what are our plans for doing so in 2022?

So let's put down our nets for a moment, take a deep look at where we are, and then let's take up our nets once more and cast them into the world and see what we catch.