



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
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Message from the Interim Pastor:

Discipleship

Jesus said, "Follow me..." Matthew 4:19

The call to "***discipleship***" is at the very heart of Jesus' ministry and teachings. In all four of the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly called people to "follow him" and imitate his ways of living and loving. Jesus did not seek people to simply admire him or cater to him. He called a group of people to embrace a radically new way of life. The words and actions of Jesus reveal the profound cost, the transformative power, and the enduring purpose of faithful discipleship.

The Gospel readings over the coming weeks emphasize that call of Jesus. The questions we will have before us these next Sundays are these:

- + What was Jesus asking of the men and women whom he called to follow him as he sent them to go out and about in his name and on his behalf and to tell others about him and the kingdom of God?
- + What happened to those who answered the call to be a follower and a disciple of Jesus?
- + What does Jesus' call to discipleship mean for us today, two thousand years later in a world that is so different in many ways, and much the same in other ways?

In each of the four Sundays during this month of September, we will hear and read biblical passages that speak about "***discipleship***," and each week we will explore a different understanding of what it means to hear the call and answer the call of Jesus to "follow me."

Week One – we will hear Jesus' very high expectations for those whom he has called to be his disciples, and in so doing to "choose life."

Week Two – we hear about the power of the cross and how the One who foretold his own crucifixion told his followers they too will "take up their own crosses" and follow him.

Week Three – we will hear Jesus inviting his followers to be creative followers and "children of the light," rejecting the lifestyle of those who "walk in the darkness."

Week Four – In one of his most profound parables, Jesus reminded his disciples about the plight of the poorest of the poor and how his followers are called to faithfully respond to those whose lives have been severely marginalized, neglected, and made virtually invisible.

Like Simon and Andrew, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Suzanna, James and John, we too have been called to follow Jesus. In this month of September, let us gather week after week to hear his call and contemplate the meaning and the privilege of Christian discipleship.

May the joys and promises of God be with you these September days!

+Pastor Murray D. Finck

The Rev Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus