

Dear United Church Congregation,

I hope that you have fun plans for Independence Day next Wednesday (who needs fireworks to have a good time?). During our worship services this Sunday, we will recognize the Fourth of July in a couple of our hymns, organ music, and prayer. While the scripture reading doesn't seem to have much to do with this national holiday, it does promote a way of living that both our faith and our country recognize as essential: trust in God. As you know, the United States motto is "In God we trust". This is printed on our currency. There are people who argue that this contradicts the separation of church and state. But the majority of citizens recognize that we need God's guidance, provision, and wisdom throughout our lives and our nation's life, and that there is a difference between trusting in God and keeping church (and other religious communities) and state out of each other's business.

In our reading this Sunday, Jesus gets quite perturbed with his disciples because they backslide in their faith. Although Mark doesn't present the disciples as people with great faith, Jesus expected them to have a full measure of faith in all times. One of those times was when they were all on a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was asleep in the boat while the disciples were frantically bailing water out that was threatening to sink them during a windstorm. After Jesus restored order to the situation (to put it mildly), he chides them for not having more faith... for not trusting God's presence and work through him in all times of their lives.

That's easier said than done when your boat's sinking, isn't it? And, no, trust doesn't do away with the need for human action and a little elbow grease during such times. But here's the thing: if Jesus wanted his disciples to live by faith and trust during the more desperate times in life, then I think we can hear him asking us to also trust him during all the other times.

May our trust in God be on the forefront of our minds and celebrations this coming week, as people of faith and people of this country.

Join us for worship this Sunday at 8:00 and 9:30 a.m.

Communion will be celebrated.

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:35-41

Sermon: "In God We Trust"

I will be on vacation for the next couple of Sundays (July 8 & 15). The next Weekly Word will be sent July 19th or 20th.

Happy 4th and safe travels!

Grace and peace,
David