

## NETWORKERS WANTED Mark 1:16-20

### Jesus Calls Simon and Andrew

<sup>16</sup> Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee. He saw Simon and his brother Andrew **putting a net into the sea**. They were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to them, “Follow Me. I will make you fish for men!” <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed Him.

### Jesus Calls James and John

<sup>19</sup> Jesus went on a little farther. He saw James and his brother John who were sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat **mending their nets**. <sup>20</sup> Jesus called them and they left their father Zebedee. He was in the boat with men who were working for him.

Jesus had time to contemplate the mission and the ministry he was to begin. For 40 days he was in the wilderness and totally attentive to the father. One thing he became sure of was that he would need a team. He desired a group representing many different gifts, skills, and a significant sampling of different trades and social strata. The first question was “where to draw them from first?” “Who will be the correct types to anchor my NETWORK?”

Of course the place to find these was in the area where fishing was the thing. Yes, along the sea was where NET-WORKERS would be at the task. Working the nets came down to two things. If you had a small catch the previous night, you would likely cast your net in the water the next day. If you had a bountiful catch the previous night, your net probably suffered damage, and the next day would be devoted to REPAIRING or mending the net.

**To follow this metaphor, we need to consider how we work our nets to catch more disciples. As the church we are truly “net workers.” Of course we need to “cast” our nets into the best “fishing spots.” As United Methodist Women we are about mission. We listen and we focus on goals in mission. The order by Jesus; to “make (new) disciples” is clearly found in the phrase Jesus used as he called these fishermen. “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of (people)“**

**The “catch” of people can be great because we look to cast our net in a deep place where the “people” are “plentiful” and “ready” to be brought in. If we cast the nets carelessly and they get caught on something they are not meant to be tangled with, they can be torn and become useless. Of course our “net” is our organized effort to “fill the boat” simply put, to bring gain to the Kingdom.” We need to avoid getting “caught up” with the trifles because if focus is lost we can see too late that the catch escaped through the torn section(s) of the net.**

**We need to “cast” carefully, and we need to “mend” carefully. To mend the network is to be diligent in keeping it in the best working order possible. Sometimes after a good catch strains the net to the limit, we are so taken with the successful catch that we cast it back right away and we never look to fortify.**

**Responsible “mending” means that we must avoid both of these temptations. We need to avoid the placing of a “body” to a position or function without training them and/or checking that they are both willing and qualified. The other extreme is also a concern for which we need to be diligent in our efforts. In our work as United Methodist Women, we need to avoid burning people out. This is when we will keep the same people at the same tasks too long because they are supposedly the most gifted.**

**A last caution to stay aware of. We must fight the temptation to “play favorites.” This is a sometimes subtle “net- weakening” practice. We must remember that God made enough “fiber” to allow us to re-work the net and keep it strong. To be responsible to our mission is to not lose sight of this.**

**As the network we must be happy to be whatever tool is needed at any given time, so that when Jesus passes by and Shouts “Come follow me and I will make you fishers of people to stock the Kingdom” we will be fully mended and ready to be cast for that most glorious haul.**