For the fifty days of Easter we celebrate that in Jesus’ resurrection we are called to live. For the rest of Mondays this school year we’re going to lean on the word “called” in that sentence. In every Gospel story of the resurrection, first the announcement is that Jesus is alive. And then there is a call for people to participate in this life. People are called to tell, to forgive sins and today to go fishing.

The word we use for calling is vocation. There are tons of things that can and will be said by your teachers and me about being called. I want to start with what I consider one of the most glorious gifts. God does not call us alone. Always we are called together, to live and work together in serving life. This is challenge, of course, but it is also huge gift. And I hope and pray the example I’ve chosen to illustrate this does not offend you.

We have very dear pastor friends with whom we exchange the tacky religious gifts people sometimes give pastors. So one time we got and then gave them a pulpit music box. When you wound it up, it played Amazing Grace or Jesus Loves Me or something like that and a little mouse ran around the Bible on top. If your confirmation class gave one of these to your pastor, I duly apologize. We gave ours away—vocation is nothing if not sharing gifts.

Our friends returned a bronze statue of David beheading Goliath. Just what you always wanted for the mantle. It had an inscription on it from Isaiah. I said to Dave, “David and Goliath aren’t in Isaiah.” “What’s your point?” he asked. You understand why we never leave our car unlocked when we’re at their house.

Several times we exchanged a geodesic dome made out of disposable communion cups. The artist glued them together, punched holes in the bottom and then put Christmas lights in each cup. You could plug it in and it glowed.

Our all-time favorite exchange was a ceramic tomb. It was in a beautifully painted garden, the stone rolled away of course. You could also plug this one in—there was little light to see it empty except for a few grave clothes. And then when you flipped the switch, Jesus came flying out.

I want to ask not merely if that is how you see Easter. More significantly when you hear the accounts in the Bible, like the one I just read from John 21, is this how you picture it? Jesus flips a switch and voile, the net is full of fish. This is important because our images of God shape
how we see the world—and when it comes to vocation I think we often are waiting for someone to flip a switch. We vision calling as a magic power to help us soar.

I’m glad for a story of resurrection that offers a great deal more detail, nuance, and complexity to our callings. Some day after Easter, Peter announces that he’s going fishing and his friends go with him. How do you feel about the disciples going back to the same thing they were doing before they ever met Jesus? I suppose it could be read like the whole journey with Jesus was for naught, came to nothing, made no difference. That fear is palpable. Put everything you’ve got into a college degree and you’ll end up serving coffee at the same place you did in high school.

I appreciate the disciples going fishing... for the way it speaks to new life and vocation starting where we are. We all believe that God is creator, but sometimes we act like God isn’t doing anything until we start thinking about God. Jesus shows a God involved in fishing, planting and walking long before we are conscious of it.

Scott Chalmers from LSTC shares this insight from Moses: lots of people who talk about calling start with chapter 3, when the burning bush appears to Moses. He asserts people should start with chapter 2 when Moses is defending an Israelite being beaten by an Egyptian and helping Zipporah and her sisters when shepherds were chasing them from the well. Clearly Moses had stirrings to help the oppressed long before God turned on the burning bush switch.

I’m thrilled that in the next few weeks colleagues from biology, government, education and English will talk about calling and faith. I have every confidence they’ll help us hear God at work in stirrings and fascination and curiosity—just in case none of us ever see a burning bush or discover a magic switch!

In this account the resurrection gets even more down to earth. The disciples fish all night and catch nothing. I’m not trying to put words into her mouth, but I have to believe that in doing her cancer research, Dr. Gubbels faces days, weeks, perhaps even month when the experiments feels like it’s netting nothing! There is something wonderfully credible in this detail. Believing in God making life new, trusting one is called, does NOT mean they aren’t times of emptiness or feelings of futility. Isn’t it more powerful to have a resurrected Savior who meets discouragement, honors disappointment by being part of it, than one that flies with a switch?

Jesus says simply, “Put the net on the other side.” What if resurrection is imagination just this subtle? I’m told that fishing after daybreak is preposterous. And I do find it hard to figure that the width of the boat would make a tremendous difference in fish populations. What if the faithful step toward your calling is to try something little? If what you’re doing isn’t working, to try the opposite? This strikes me as a very real approach to newness. Dr Johnson, whatever else you may say about callings in politics, I’m very curious how many new political ideas were
considered preposterous when they were proposed. I can’t imagine I’m the only one in the room who sees a desperate need for new steps, new imagination in politics, in ecology or economy or for that matter religion.

More amazing to me than all 153 fish is a God who persists with the disciples to participate in making life new and full and good.

I don’t know what to make of Peter putting his clothes on to swim to shore. It seems to me that if he could fish naked he could just as well have swum to shore naked, too. Let me be clear, I have no need for you to make me a ceramic statue of this!

I wonder if there’s something here about the way vocation, new life, is an odd combination of exposure and being covered. My daughter is at a job fair in Minneapolis right now. Besides teaching full time, she is working 4 – 5 hours a day preparing applications, folders, portfolios and now she needs to put it on the line. She is wearing her very best clothes, but I have a hunch she feels totally naked. There is so much in a mechanical, electric, plastic resurrection that wants to shield us from vulnerability. . . when the whole point of our calling is to participate in God’s vulnerability.

And then they have breakfast—fish and toast. There is a sense that our vocations are more than putting food on the table. Then again, there is a sense in which they are exactly that. I was raised on this—My dad said often, “If you want to eat, you need to work.” It is its own echo of Genesis when we are called to till and keep. The irony known by any gardener is that the harder we work for our food, the more we know the creator’s generosity in giving it.

The magic of resurrection becomes very down to earth. Jesus does not disrupt these rhythms of creation and work, Jesus participates in them.

And their nets are full beyond capacity but they do not break. Now Dr. Hicks, is that not a poetic phrase? The question that really grips me is whether they see Jesus because they see all these fish? Or do they see fullness because they recognize Jesus?

Is it that if our nets were full we’d see God? Or is it that in seeing God at work in fishing, long empty hungry nights, in risking a little imagination and a lot of vulnerability, and finally celebrating the feast of a simple breakfast, we see that life is FULL.

And if we trust that God and resurrection are everywhere, we are genuinely free to serve and be wowed by the magic of the ordinary.
I think you should listen to your teachers these next weeks. Whether or not we ever do so professionally, there is a profound way we are all called to be citizens, to be checking out new solutions to age old problems, to be teachers, and to be prayers who grope for language to recognize God making us new and alive in all of this.
MORNING WORSHIP
Monday, April 15, 2013

Prelude
“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”
J.S. Bach
Joel Johnson, violin - Marilyn Schempp, organ

Welcome/announcements

Invocation

Hymn
“Here I am, Lord”
ELW #574

Prayer
ALL: God, you call your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untried, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn
“Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am”
ELW #814

Scripture
John 21: 1-14

Hymn
“Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am”
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Sermon
“Called to Live, and other fishy stories”
Pastor Paul

Hymn
“Let us Talents and Tongues Employ”
ELW #674

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Blessing

Postlude
“Moderato”
G.F. Tellemann
Joel Johnson, violin

FILM SHOWING - On April 18, at 10:00 am in the Back Alley, the Chapel, the Augustana Art Department, and the Sioux Empire Homeless Coalition are joining together to show Inocente, the 2013 Academy Award winning documentary. The film follows Inocente, a fifteen-year-old girl who uses art to cope through her experiences of homelessness and family struggles.

RECEPTION - On Monday, April 22 from 3-5 pm you are invited to thank Carol LaCroix and bid her well at a party in the chapel narthex. Carol is retiring after 15 years in the chapel and more than 20 years of service to Augustana. Everyone--students, staff, alums, friends--are welcome!

TAIZE AT PINE RIDGE, May 24-27. Any students interested in going to the Taize International meeting at Pine Ridge in May are encouraged to meet with Pr. Paul. We want to spread the word widely about this rare and exciting weekend of solidarity with our Native neighbors! Sign up sheet is on the Narthex table. Students interested in attending the May 24-27 Taize weekend at Red Shirt Table please sign up in the narthex., or speak to Pr. Paul.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD’S National Gathering will be held June 8-11, 2013, in Washington DC. In addition to inspiring workshops and advocacy training, there is an opportunity to meet with our South Dakota congressional delegation to personally discuss hunger issues locally and globally. BFW-SD would cover transportation, registration fees, and lodging. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested, please contact Nancy Olson, 605-332-4350, s10andyw@sio.midco.net for further information and to request an application before April 15, 2013. You can also find information about the event at www.bread.org

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

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Fri., 4-19 Morning Worship, 10 am - Brooke Walker, Sr. Spkr.
Sun., 4-21 Morning Worship, 11 am - Pr. Ann

MONDAYS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEMESTER will focus on vocation in an Easter series we are calling, “Called to Live. Professors Julie Ashworth - 4/22, Joel Johnson - 4/29, Jenny Gubbels - 5/6, and Patrick Hicks - 5-13 will reflect on their faith, disciplines, callings, , service of neighbor and community

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