

Welcome to Bible Study.



The Back Story

The Miraculous Catch of Fish is unique to Luke. It puts the context for “being called” into community, and it strengthens the idea that The Twelve should (but won’t always) function as a team. In the story, Jesus begins calling his disciples, but they won’t be named and numbered until Chapter 6.

What is
happening
as the story
begins?



The people have gathered to hear Jesus preach and the crowd is getting large. So he commandeers a boat (one of two pulled ashore) so that he can preach from the lake toward the people. Better acoustics that way.

Whose boat does he use?

Peter's. Who also goes with Jesus because someone has to row while he preaches. When Jesus finishes speaking, what happens next?

Jesus tells Peter to fish in deeper water and he will have better luck.

But Peter hasn't asked him for advice. How does Jesus know they've been at it all night and no fish? Hmmmm . .

So helpful Peter fills us in:

“We fished all night (over and over in the same spots, although he doesn’t admit that) and we caught absolutely nothing. But if you say so, we’ll move to where there are probably no fish.”



Spoiler Alert: What those listening would have understood is that fishing was always done in shallow water, near shore. Where the fish usually were abundant, and easy to catch.

So Peter lowers the nets from the boat, as Jesus has told them and what happens?



So many, many fish that the gang in Peter's boat calls to the other boat for help.



When everyone is safely back on shore Peter (who gives voice to what others are thinking) falls on his knees and blurts out:

“OK Jesus, I’m sinful, we’re sinful, and we don’t feel we can handle this kind of fishing on a regular basis. Just too much expectation, too much excitement.” And Jesus calmly replies,

“Don’t be afraid.
From now on,
you’ll be catching people.”

So there are two “miracles” in the story, and actually the big catch of fish really isn’t one of them.

The first is that Peter and the others are willing to follow Jesus’ advice to try fishing where they least expected there to be fish. The second one is

If it weren't for the “partnering” of the two boats and their combined resources, the great catch of fish wouldn't have been brought to shore, their efforts wouldn't have succeeded – fish, boats and maybe the crew would all have been lost.

So to summarize this story in two sentences,
leaving the religious and theological teachings
aside for the moment:

What is the definition of
futility?

Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

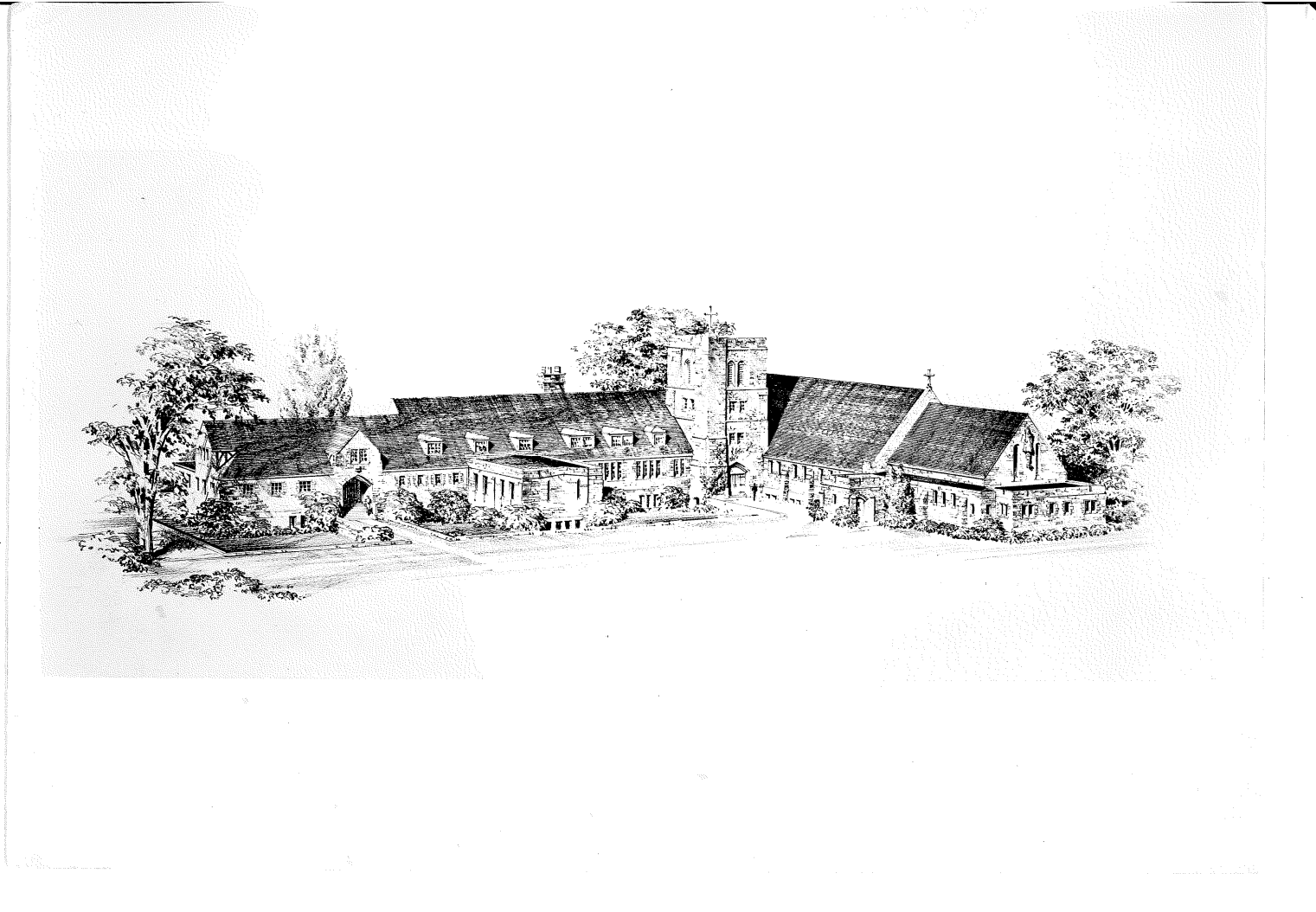
Now, the moment
you've all been waiting
for: How does the
Miraculous Catch of
Fish relate to St.
Michael's Episcopal
Church, Grosse Pointe
Woods?



St. Michael's was gathered when the waters around it teemed with fish. So it was easy to catch fish. They swam in happily and plentifully.



The fish-catchers called churches were all eager to build big nets. So they did. Once you have built it, you've got to take care of it.



Then things changed. The number of fish declined. The number of different kinds of fish catchers increased. The fish could spend their time doing lots things, Sundays included.



So churches began struggling to fill their old nets with fewer fish and keep the buildings up and going. Which continued to become older and therefore more expensive to maintain. Something had to give, and that something was usually the building.



But one day, at its Annual Meeting, the folks at St. Michael's heard the story of the Miraculous Catch of Fish. Suddenly people thought:

Maybe we should be fishing in deeper waters instead of the same water we've always fished in?

Maybe we should find new fish, invite them in to get to know us, and a chance for us to know them?

Maybe we need to partner with other kinds of fish catchers to partner and work together?

Especially those fish catchers who are meeting needs we can't meet and yet need help with their fishing.

With new partners we could together make new nets, and at the same time repair our nets.

It would be like the boats coming together in that story of the Miraculous Catch of Fish.

You'll hear more about the finances a little later. For right now, contemplate these figures:

Projected 2022 Pledge Income:	\$215,000
Cost of buildings and grounds:	\$102,000
Compensation for the rector:	<u>\$103,543</u>
	\$ 9,457

With those figures in mind, and with today's Gospel message, the net-mending that we must do, sooner rather than later, is to reduce the cost of the building and grounds. This is a stewardship crisis: too many dollars are spent on bricks and mortar, too little on program and ministry. We have two general areas to consider:

Redevelop, Reconfigure, Re-Imagine

Redevelop the property and partner with another non-profit or for-profit entity for a mixed-use campus. St. Michael's continues to operate in the church wing of the building at the same time as the other use(s) operate in their areas. This would probably involve a rebuilding of most of the present structure. The new construction would meet the present needs of St. Michael's.

Redevelop, Reconfigure, Re-Imagine

Demolish all or some of the present building and rebuild onsite. We gain an energy-efficient structure, less costly to maintain, along with green landscaping. Incorporate salvageable details of the building: windows, organ, limestone trim, etc.

St. Michael's –Original Construction



Redevelop, Reconfigure, Re-Imagine

Merge another congregation into St. Michael's – This solution might increase financial resources but doesn't solve the building/lot issues.

Relocate

Close, sell the property, and merge with another congregation.

Close, sell the property, use the proceeds to construct a new building or rehab a suitable existing church or building.

There is a third option, difficult to accept but also the path of least resistance:

Run out the clock

Move to a priest-in-charge arrangement for clergy (part-time, year-by-year contract). Continue funding deficits with cash reserves, then draw on unrestricted funds. This might last ten years or so. Probably St. Michael's would run out of people before it runs out of money.

For the next year, a strong focus on:

Mission Engagement:

Continue development of the

Lunch, Laugh and Learn programs;

Build a relationship with Parcels Middle School:
pizza lunch; afterschool event, senior mentors

Vision 75 Team:

Expanded membership with the task of
researching and evaluating all options.

Remember: Jesus inspired the fish-catchers, he didn't do the fishing for them. That's the hard part – it's up to you to do the work if St. Michael's is going to survive – and thrive.



What is God calling us to do?
What would Jesus tell us to do?
Is the answer in Luke, Chapter 4?

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