

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

**February 9-10**

**“Into the Deep”**

**By Rev. Keith Herron**

## What Is This?

This brief guide is intended for use individually, or in small groups. It's your chance to dive deeper into the issues raised in the weekend sermon and to connect a Biblical story with your daily life.

**Revisit the Text:** Luke 5:1-11

## Big Ideas Raised

This year's season of Epiphany began in early January and the texts we've built worship around all have a sense of epiphany about them. Imagine how epiphany works: It's as if the light comes on and shines on a particular truth. It's the light of God revealing some deep mystery about God that might have gone unnoticed until the light is turned on.

This vignette about Jesus is built around the moment when Peter realizes that being with Jesus is experienced as though Jesus' divinity was revealed to him. “Out of the ordinary, the extraordinary shines through.” That's a function of epiphany.

There's a comic sense of humor in this vignette about the futility of fishing. One of my frequent thoughts is, “I don't enjoy fishing so much. It's catching I like.” There's the time casting one lure after another and not getting even a nibble. How many times do you cast a line before you give up and go home? Simon and his friends had fished through the night and were going home empty-handed until Jesus and the crowd showed up.

This fish story is so outrageous, it qualifies as a comic fish tale. Peter half-heartedly agreed to do what Jesus told him to do. The story is epiphanic in its outcome: “The fishing was so good, they were jumping into Peter's net, so eager were they to get caught.” Ever heard a fish tale this over the top? “One net was not enough as it was bulging so much it was tearing, so the other fishermen wanted to take advantage of this good fortune. Several boats, several nets, all so full they had to drag the nets onshore.” I wouldn't believe a story like that, would you?

Epiphany in this story acts like a divine joke. It's as if Jesus was teasing, “Want to see me do something *really* extraordinary?” BTW: It's not hard to make the correlation between the crowds on the shore and the fish in the nets. It's almost as if Jesus is having some fun with Simon in making his point!

## Questions Meant to Dig Deeper

- We don't always put God in the position where everything, good or bad, is a sign God is making specific events happen. So how do we know when God is present and at work or merely alongside us as an ever-present friend as life happens?
- Epiphany stories are meant to teach us how to recognize the Divine in our everyday lives. Have you had an occasion where you thought God was extraordinarily present in some ordinary moment?

## Revisit the Sermon

For a recording or a manuscript of this weekend's sermon, please visit: <https://www.stlucasucc.org/sermons-resources>