

Dear United Church Members and Friends,

This Sunday's sermon could also be titled, "Stranger Things" (or something like that). I have always found our reading this Sunday to be a strange passage. The only other time I preached on it, I told myself, "Never again." Well, never say "never", right? I'm not going to list all the reasons as to why this passage is usual but the sermon title, "The Other Side", more than suggests one reason. It is a direct quote from the opening verse about Jesus leaving Israel and Galilee and heading into Gentile territory. Jesus' ministry seemed to take on a different tone in territories outside of Israel. The tension between his mission-priority to the Jewish people and non-Jewish people seemed to arise. Even he acknowledged his priority to Israel in his conversation with the Syrophenician mother whose daughter was ill. And even though Jesus healed two men in our reading, nothing more is said about their wellbeing, and the healing event is beyond strange!

Nevertheless, whenever Jesus ministered to non-Jewish people outside of Israel, the shift in priorities, focus and specifics can bring greater attention to parts of his mission and ministry we might not always see. Parts that are not inconsistent to his overall message, but more universal, if you will. That adds to the breadth and width to his ministry and the gospel message! And that adds to the relevancy of his message to us today. This Sunday's reading points out, yet again, that no border or cultural, religious or political difference can hinder the power of God or the work and mercy of Christ. The same way that God's love and invitation, work of mercy and care still extend to places and people... and still work in ways, as strange and unexpected as it may sometimes seem—are/is nothing less than the good news of God's greatness and love!

Join us for worship this Sunday, June 14 at 9:30am in the Sanctuary or online at Unitedchurchla.org.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 8:28-34

Sermon: "The Other Side"

New members to be welcomed!

The Outdoor Worship service will be next Sunday, June 21 on the church lawn. The sign-up sheet to bring side dishes or desserts is in the Fellowship Hall.

Thank you to everyone who signed up for Monday Night @ the Pitt. We still have several slots for "helpers".

Rose Street Worship will be on Thursday, June 25 at 5:15pm for dinner and 6pm for worship (Graves Hall).

Grace and peace,
David