

Jesus walked on water

John 6:16-21

Set up: someone to be Jesus

long blue fabric for lake

table on side for boat

(Written by Silvia Purdie, Cashmere Presbyterian Church Aug 2018)

The Bible is full of amazing stories about Jesus. One of the most amazing is this story; it was so amazing the disciples could hardly believe it themselves, even while it was happening. This story happens in the dead of night, in the darkest hour. This story happens on a lake. It is a dark, wet story.

So we need it to be night – can we turn out the lights?

we need a lake (only covering part of front of church)

and we need a boat

In the daytime, the day before, another amazing thing had happened. The disciples were with Jesus and crowds and crowds of people came to find Jesus, and everyone had listened to him talk for hours, absolutely fascinated by all he had to say. But then the sun sank lower over the lake and people realised how hungry they were. And Jesus had taken one little dinner, just a few small buns and 2 dried fish, and shared them and multiplied them until every single person had eaten their fill. But by then the sun was setting. Time to go home!

It wasn't that far to get home; just a few miles row around the lake.

Get Jesus forward

“Off you go” said Jesus to his disciples. “You row home. I’m staying here. See you later.”

So all 12 of Jesus’ disciples got into Peter’s boat,

kids get into boat

and they waved goodbye to Jesus and set off.

Jesus goes off to the side

Peter and his mates James and John had been sailing this lake since before they could walk, so they weren't too worried about going out in the dark. Good fishing at night. It wasn't that far to get home.

At first it was nice. The sunset filled the lake with gold, the boat glided through the water. It was quiet, such a relief after all those crowds and crowds of people.

They were about half way home when the sound changed. A gust of wind whished past, tugging at their hair, a small wave slapped the boat. By now it was dark. But they could see the lights of home, not too far.

Another gust of wind and Peter got worried. He grabbed an oar and pulled for all his might, shouting to the others to row harder. But for each pull of the oar the wind fought back. The waves got higher and higher, pushing them back, pushing them out into deeper water, away from home. The lights of home got further away and the wind got stronger and stronger, tipping the boat up and down and side to side. For hour after hour they fought with the wind and the waves until they had no idea where they were or which way to row.

Just when they thought it couldn't get any worse, John screamed! "Look" he yelled, pointing out into the dark, "What's that?"

Jesus steps out

They could all see a figure of a man, walking on the water, though they couldn't see much, through the dark and the waves.

"It's a ghost!" they cried. "We're going to die!"

But then they heard a voice, a voice they knew very very well. It was Jesus' voice.

"Don't be afraid. It's just me"

It was Jesus, walking on the water. He walked right up to the boat and climbed in. And suddenly the wind stopped with one last whoosh and the waves calmed with one last plop and before they knew it the boat slid up the sand onto a beach and they were home.

Lake recedes.

It all happened so fast. The disciples climbed out of the boat onto the beach and no one knew what to say.

Kids get out of the boat

They kept staring at Jesus. Did that just happen?

Did Jesus really just walk out to our boat in the middle of a raging storm in the middle of the night?

The Bible says "*They were completely astonished.*" How would you put it? Gobsmailed? Blown away? Freaked out?

They were also cold and wet and Jesus yelled out "Hey! We're home!" and they heard a shriek of delight and running feet and it was Peter's wife rushing up and throwing herself at Peter with a great big hug and then it was hot tea and toast and blankets around the fire. And in the morning they tried to explain how Jesus had walked out through the waves to the boat in the middle of the storm in the pitch dark and brought them safely home.