

February 10, 2019
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
A Surprising Catch

Luke 5:1-11

World Marriage Day/Racial Justice Sunday / Science and Technology Sunday

Apparently, being the church is not all potlucks and Bible study, Christmas bazaars and picnics, preaching and marching for justice. Apparently, according to Luke's Gospel, it's also about deep sea fishing. That is, very specifically, deep water fishing. If you want to catch a lot of fish then you must put your nets out into deep water. Of course, the fish Luke is talking about are not mackerel and blue fin tuna, they are people. They are the people Luke envisions coming from all parts of the world to worship in Jerusalem and come to understand God through the person of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean in your community for your church to put its "nets" out unto deep waters? Our denomination is casting our evangelical nets more broadly and effectively through reorganization. The United Church of Christ is hoping that by combining some of its offices we will be able to spread the good news of the UCC in a way that will benefit the local church. We have launched a newly organized team called OPTIC.

OPTIC is the Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communication. We believe that combining our communications and marketing with philanthropy and technology will enable the casting of our nets into deeper waters. Our denomination believes that there are people out there waiting to see our vision, hear our voice and understand the wide-welcome and just-world creating church that is the UCC. Finding these audiences, developing them and welcoming them into our churches is what this new team is about.

One of the many initiatives of this new team is to work closely with those planning the next General Synod. The newly minted "Shine" logo is part of that work. There will be roll outs of innovative resources for local congregations and an attention to how we can put our collective nets into deeper waters. After all, the church is called to grow and to call disciples not simply to exist. Our passion for spreading the good news is as deep as our belief in a God who offers an extravagant welcome and longs for us to live in a Just World for All – where love of neighbor, love of children and love of creation are woven in the net cast for all of us in the UCC.

Look at ucc.org for word of what is happening with your OPTIC team and see the new logo for General Synod 2019.