



# PARADE STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*James A. Cannistraci, Pastor*

## REV. JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS- MAY 2017

Dear Friends,

Can you remember your favorite childhood toy? Mine was a fishing game. My little sister Jeannie and I played with it with our dear friend Theresa Barnick. She was our 75-year-old neighbor and "third Grandma".

The game pieces were simple. There were 10 or 12 small wooden fish with each a tiny eye hook on top of each and 2 wooden fishing rods that each had string connected to a small hook. The goal was to "catch" fish by getting the hook into the eyehook on top of the fish. There were no rules, we never kept score and there were no winners or losers. Jeannie and I sat on the floor, at Theresa's feet, and laughed and played and "caught" fish as we talked with Theresa. Thinking back...I'm convinced we were all winners as we celebrated the gift of our love and friendship.

Recently I found one of my little fish while doing "spring cleaning." I went to the hardware store and bought a thin piece of wood, tied a Christmas tree ornament hook to it and made a fishing rod! As I sat and tried to "catch" the fish, my mind and heart were filled with wonderful memories of the time spent with my sister Jeannie and Theresa. Theresa and Jeannie are two of the most important people in my life. They always loved me, cared for me, and wanted the best for me. Theresa is in heaven, but Jeannie is only a phone call or text away.

While I was praying this morning, I thanked God for loving me, caring for me and wanting the best for me. As I was thanking God for His gift of my sister Jeannie and Theresa, I found myself picking up the little wooden fish. As I held it in my hands, I was reminded of the Bible story of Jesus calling his first helpers in his new ministry.

"As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people. And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

– Mark 1:16-18 (New Revised Standard Version)

The story of Jesus inviting Simon and Andrew to follow Him and "fish for people" reminds me how much God wants to be our friend and Savior. God loves us so much that He sent His son Jesus to earth to remind us that we are created in His image and that God loves us. Even when people rejected God's love, His son died on a cross and paid the price for the forgiveness of all our sins so that we can all live eternally in heaven. All God wants is for us to love Him and invite Jesus into our hearts. Then we will be guided by the life of Jesus and live a joyous life of caring for God's people.

Love and Prayers, Pastor Jim



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

**The people of the United Methodist Church**