

**“DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDE, RIPPLES OF THE SPIRIT”**  
**“Ripples of New Beginnings”**

In times of fear and uncertainty, people tend to make their world smaller, to draw their circle smaller, draw lines in the sand and create rules and laws that make it clear who is in and who is out. Last week, we saw how Jesus offered grace to one who was considered a sinner. This grace resulted in generosity and a whole host of unexpected givers, women who helped finance and support Jesus ministry in the world. This week we will focus on the “Ripple of New Beginnings” that occurs when Jesus draws the circle wide. The new beginning for the man who had been broken in mind, body and spirit wasn’t easy, but the challenge was for him to draw a wide circle through the new life and hope he was offered. May we find new beginnings this week. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Ripples of New Beginnings”**

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**Daily prayer:** *When we feel compelled to push everything to its limits, especially you, it is enough, Holy One, that your grace can slow us down. When we are entangled in that legion of worries and fears which consume our lives, it is enough, Spirit of Silence, that you untie the knots and set us free. It is enough, God in Community, Holy in One that you are with us in all things. For we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

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This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

## Study Guide

### Monday, July 1, 2019 Luke 8: 26-29

Jesus and his disciples had a rough night. Well, his disciples did. A storm at sea, Jesus was asleep, the disciples were terrified. Jesus, calms the storm and then this story begins. As soon as they land, they are confronted by a man filled with storms. This man's life was driven by internal demons for so long he was an outcast from society, forced to live outside the city because of his illness. The demons within him recognized that Jesus changed everything. In Jesus the circle of healing was being drawn wide and his life would not be the same. *While not making light of this man's demon possession, do you identify with this story in any way? Have you known someone or have you yourself been so driven by inner demons that they (or you) are forced into the wilderness? How do you experience Jesus coming to you in that place? Where do you find hope for a new beginning?*

### Tuesday, July 2, 2019 Luke 8: 30-33

The demon's name is "Legion." This man was overwhelmed with a legion of demons driving him and possessing him and making his life a living "hell." I think we often overlook this encounter with Jesus because demon possession is acknowledged to be so many other things in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; mental illness, substance abuse and/or seizure illnesses. I do not want to make light or minimize those diseases, but the author of Luke found it important to share this story. The name of this man's demon was Legion, because there were "many." If we think about it, we are often driven by a "legion" of things that haunt us day and night. It is interesting this "legion" didn't want to go "back" into the abyss. Instead, they were destroyed anyway. Jesus has that power to bring this man back to wholeness. *Have you felt or experienced a "legion" of worry or anxiety and one bad experience after another? Draw a circle and put yourself and Christ on the inside and all your worries and anxieties on the outside. Ask God to give you peace in that inner circle and to help you deal with those anxieties in a new way.*

### Wednesday, July 3, 2019 Luke 8: 34-39

This event was frightening for many people; the owners of pigs (their livelihood destroyed), and the people of the city. There was awe (often translated as fear in the Bible) and fear and anxiety. What in the world was going on? Once the man had been healed there was no reason to keep him outside the city. What would they do with him? Understandably, he wanted to go with Jesus. Why stay where he had such bad memories and where he would always be treated with suspicion? Jesus had another idea. He was to stay and proclaim God's goodness, God's grace, God's power and God's willingness to draw the circle wide and offer new beginnings. *Where do you see God's hand at work in creating new beginnings and drawing the circle wide? Write down one or two things that you can be part of God's new beginnings.*

### Thursday, July 4, 2019 Galatians 3: 23-25

Today is Independence Day in the United States. It is a day we remember our forbearers who worked and fought for freedom. They imagined a new beginning, with freedom from monarchy, and a democracy with "freedom and justice for all." Now we know, that the understanding of freedom and justice for all begin for a small group. Women or persons of color were not included. They were considered property. White men without property were also not included. The idea however, began to draw a circle wide in a way it had not been drawn before. There ripples of new beginnings with this "revolution." Those early dreamers had no idea what they were doing, but they created a new larger circle that continues to expand to truly offer "freedom and justice for all." *However you celebrate today, draw a circle, look at those who may not yet be included, and erase the circle and draw wider and ask God to help you be part of drawing a circle that truly includes all.*

### Friday, July 5, 2019 Galatians 3:26-29

In this early Baptismal formula Paul shows how in Baptism, God in Christ is drawing the circle wide and offering new community and new beginnings for all who have faith. This community is not limited by male or female, slave or free, Jew nor Greek (the classifications of that early world.) this community had no limits, this community offered new beginnings for everyone who experienced the love and grace of Christ. These new beginnings drew the circle wide in wondrous ways. *Where do you see God drawing the circle wide today? In our church? In your family? In your neighborhood? How will you be part of this new beginning that God is doing?*