“He makes me lie down in green pastures, 
he leads me beside still waters...he refreshes my soul.”
Psalm 23.3-4

Still Waters is the weekend edition of our weekday Green Pastures devotions. Well, sort of. Rather than reading (or hearing) a passage of Scripture followed by Pastor Mike’s reflections along with a question to ponder and a responsive prayer, you’re invited to take about a half hour or so, to dial down, to breathe, and to listen to Kim and Mike each read a weekly section from one of the Gospels and then listen to them talk about it – what they see, questions raised, thoughts explored, implications pondered. It’s a great way to end the week – or to start the new one: spending some time with the Gospels and some honest talk about the Greatest Story Ever Told.

Welcome to Still Waters...

This week’s reading from the Gospels:

When Jesus got word that John had been arrested, he returned to Galilee. He moved from his hometown, Nazareth, to the lakeside village Capernaum, nestled at the base of the Zebulun and Naphtali hills. This move completed Isaiah’s sermon:

Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,  
road to the sea, over Jordan,  
Galilee, crossroads for the nations.  
People sitting out their lives in the dark  
saw a huge light;  
Sitting in that dark, dark country of death,  
they watched the sun come up.

This Isaiah-prophesied sermon came to life in Galilee the moment Jesus started preaching. He picked up where John left off: “Change your life. God’s kingdom is here.”

Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, “Come with me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I’ll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass.” They didn’t ask questions, but simply dropped their nets and followed.

A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers, James and John, Zebedee’s sons. These two were sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their fishnets. Jesus made the same offer to them, and they were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.
From there he went all over Galilee. He used synagogues for meeting places and taught people the truth of God. God's kingdom was his theme—that beginning right now they were under God's government, a good government! He also healed people of their diseases and of the bad effects of their bad lives. Word got around the entire Roman province of Syria. People brought anybody with an ailment, whether mental, emotional, or physical. Jesus healed them, one and all. More and more people came, the momentum gathering. Besides those from Galilee, crowds came from the “Ten Towns” across the lake, others up from Jerusalem and Judea, still others from across the Jordan.

* Matthew 4:12-25 from the Message; each week we are following the reading path (the lectionary) embraced by much of Christendom across denominational lines; what you are hearing is what believers around the world are hearing together. You can find the weekly readings by visiting lectionary.com