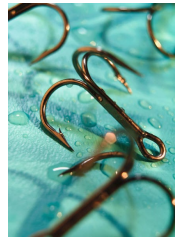


fish on their own. They came back having been trolling and Paul had caught a Northern Pike and Philip a sixteen inch Largemouth Bass. Were they excited! So the next day I climbed into the boat ready to catch fish! Wrong again. We trolled and trolled. We still-fished. My dear sons said after awhile, "Let's throw Jonah over," meaning mom. They weren't catching any fish and I got blamed. You may recall that Jonah was blamed for the storm. He didn't want to do what God asked and so he was running away and hiding in the boat. Now I don't believe that I was running away from God nor was I hiding. But my sons attached the label "Jonah" to me to place blame somewhere for lack of catching fish. Maybe they thought they would catch a really big fish if mom got swallowed up! This was all in fun of course...I think.



Anyway, the point of this story is to consider on whom we place blame when things go wrong. A number of things went awry that week, as you just read. It was coming down to the end of our vacation and the fish catch was coming to a standstill. Who was to blame? Was anyone? Or was it that we were not where the fish were? We were in the wrong spot? We were using the wrong bait? We were fishing at the wrong time? We didn't know what we were doing? It could have been any of those things or none of them.

What about fishing for people? When the fishing seems to dry up, whom do we blame? The pastor? The programs or lack of? Our own participation or lack of? Our lack of committedness? Our lack of numbers? Our fear of the word evangelism? Our fear of new persons changing the scope of the church? Not knowing what to do?

Notice in my fishing experience, the label of Jonah was all in fun. But in Jonah's story, he was indeed running away from God. Take your own spiritual temperature. Ponder whether there are areas in your life that you are running away from...afraid to face...afraid to act upon...afraid to surrender to God, because you don't want to do it. Jonah thought he was running away from God, but God was still there. God was in the boat searching for him. God was with him in the belly of the whale. The more Jonah ran way, the more God searched and used the circumstances to get Jonah's attention...to let Jonah know that he had a responsibility. God uses us to reach people for God. It might be as simple as offering a meal or a listening ear, or taking time out of our busy schedule to be available to persons in need. Do we love God enough that we want to share that love? Are we willing to learn new ways...accept new ways? Accept new people in the family of God? Are we ready to go fishing? If not, why not? And as you reflect, see if you have a Jonah inside you. Or see if you are calling **other people** Jonah. Want to try going fishing and see what we catch? Let's always remember in our fishing that *Salvation comes from the Lord* (Jonah 2:9)

Bountiful blessings,
Pastor Carol M. Pfeiffer

Board Retreat



Saturday, August 7, Dr. Gary Newton will meet with the Board at Bethany Seminary to talk about discipleship. All board members are highly encouraged to attend. We have invited our sister churches to participate with us. Dr. Newton is an energetic presenter who teaches at Huntington College. You will not want to miss this time of learning together!

Dr. Gary Newton to Speak August 8

Dr. Gary Newton will be speaking on **Sunday, August 8 at 10:00 a.m.** His message will be "**Growing a Fruitful Church.**" Dr. Newton will honor us with music on his violin as well as speaking. A **carry-in lunch** will follow worship service. Stay to eat and fellowship afterwards.

Pastor Parish

Pastor Parish will meet **Thursday, August 12** without the pastor to do a pastor evaluation at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Parish members mark the date.

People who don't know whether they are coming or going are usually in the biggest hurry to get there.