“The disciples gathered around Jesus...”

They are returning from an amazing journey where they have been busy telling others about Jesus.

They are exhausted – and more than likely, exhilarated.

Think of the stories they have to tell;

The healings and teachings they have done on their own. Imagine the thrill of seeing God work through you.

When you do this kind of work, when you tend to the needs of others, it can be draining as well as rewarding.

Every time you give a little bit of yourself, you are sharing the love of Jesus, but you are also depleting yourself.

And so like the disciples you come back to Him to be recharged...You need encouragement and more of His loving attentiveness.

You need to keep learning, you need be reaffirmed in your beliefs.

And Jesus’ response to our beckoning is “let me take you away to a deserted place so that you can be alone to rest for a while.”

...we live and love midst a crazy world, where sometimes “people are relentless

Searching ...needing ...wanting...and

...they will continue to flock around you like lost sheep” –

So many are looking for something to enrich their lives...have meaning...

And you will get caught up in their desperation...

You hardly have time for yourself

... the gospel reading ended the same

With hustle and bustle as “people rushed about...carrying their sick on mats...wherever he went...villages, cities, farms....”

We live in the same energetic, purpose seeking world...

As Jesus’ faithful followers we are asked to do His work wherever the demand –and the demand is great.

There is so much to do.

It can be overwhelming.

Jesus - the great shepherd tends to his flock. He guides us, offers us renewed strength and new vibrant energy to go out and do it all over again.

(Quickly)

When we gather here in this place, to recall the comings and goings of our past week, the things we’ve done, the people we have met...

 we gather around Jesus.

... for reflection ... wondering how we have spread God’s love through our hands, feet, and voice.

Did we offer comfort, encouragement? Did we do enough, go far enough to help a friend or stranger in need?

We come here looking for solace; a time to get away from the busyness.

And hopefully, **more** than that.

We come for refueling.

We come in hopes of hearing what God has planned for the upcoming week.

For a seed to be planted.

 We seek tools for the journey already ordained, by God, for each of us.

The prayer found in the bulletin each week is meant to help you on your way after you leave this place...and go out into the world.

Now the gathering space in which we come together to worship God, to refuel and to find peace can be...just as it is,

the way it has always been...at least in our lifetime.

And it can take place outdoors, similar to where we worship on the last Sunday of every month during the summer months...

**but** “Church” can be found in other places.

... new places, nuanced to the degree we may not even recognize it.

We cannot expect “Church” to be only where we have always known it to be.

places that may not even look like or feel like worship...to some of us...

but wherever we are gathered together... there Jesus will be also.

Whenever we share His love...we have created a holy space...

a place to offer peace and safety and new life... a holy place where God’s peace, grace and mercy resides.

When we share the fact that God loves us all no matter who we are or what we have done...

we bring the Holy Spirit of God into our midst so that others may find that same kind of amazing love.

Church can be...and actually ***has*** to be... more than the way we *know* church to be.

Jesus needs to be made a reality everywhere we go....

And in the places where we **seldom** go, or do **not** want to venture...

the poorest – the saddest – the most downtrodden neighborhoods in the country...and the world for that matter.

We have to start looking for ways to bring Jesus to the communities.

Just as we have to find better ways to be a welcoming open and safe place for strangers...right here in Colebrook.

We have to open our tight circles and reach out to someone we do not know, or haven’t spoken to in a while.

Find out their needs, their joys, their concerns...many are suffering silently.

WE ought to always be thinking of and discussing ways to further God’s kingdom every day of our lives...

It should be the first thing on our agenda...

How can I, on this day, step up and do something for Christ.

I came across this article the other day

Called Green Space...

There is a place - in Washington, D.C. called Girard Children's Community Garden.

 It “was created *on a vacant lot* and is now a thriving community space for neighborhood kids, many of whom are from low-income communities of color. (Pearl Mak/NPR)

According to a study NPR reports there are other similar garden(s) which offer "respite" from the neighborhood of high crime in many cities, like Philadelphia where there are supposedly thousands of empty buildings and vacant lots.

One young woman, who benefited from the Girard garden experience, started a local nonprofit called [City Blossoms](http://cityblossoms.org/who-we-are/).”

This, 39 yr old’s dream was to give back and through this non profit, she has

“created about **15** children-focused community green spaces across Washington, D.C.

Research shows that

...green spaces are associated with better mental health.

... can reduce symptoms of depression..., especially in low-income neighborhoods.”

Lemos-Otero says “Kids love the gardens...It gives them a way to briefly forget their worries.”

"Having access to a bit of nature, having a tree to read under, or, having a safe space like one of the gardens, ... makes a huge difference on their stress levels.”

She says "The feedback that they’ve gotten from a lot of young people is that it makes them feel a little lighter."

This is the kind of world live in!

This is the kind of world we *need* to be part of.

Helping others feel “a little lighter,” from all the burdens they carry.

What kind of safe space can we offer? What will bring seekers here to find respite?

And where can we make an impact?

“We ALL are sheep requiring God’s care.

We are all one of those who yearn to touch the fringe of his cloak for healing

When we come here...

When we gather around Jesus Himself.

We tell Him what we have done in His name and ask what we can do in the upcoming weeks.

And through His healing ...we are made to feel lighter from...anxiety, our worries, pain and sorrow.

Because we know that Jesus responds with compassion and invites us to rest and rejuvenate.

Jesus does these things...NOT us.

 Paul said...”For in Him the world is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;

in whom we also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place...a holy place ...for God. Amen.