



Main Street Congregational Church

145 Main Street, Amesbury MA 01913

July 13, 2025 - Set Apart

(Psalm 8; Mark 15:16)

The mystery and miracle of Mira. The community celebrating her and declaring she is uniquely and wonderfully made in the image of God. Joy. Life. Hope. This is what God initiates and supports and with baptism we affirm her place in the body of Christ. She has a part to play in making the awe of God and the justice of Jesus real in this world.

Peter: -oh Jesus I think you are being grandiose- Mira is an infant, she's a kid, she isn't walking around using those fancy religious words like you.

Jesus: No she's not

Peter: So I think you are kind of crazy with your ideas and words

Jesus: Mira has been baptized - we have recognized that she is created in the image of God and we have prayed for that to matter and shape her life.

Peter: ahh, hmm. Err... Jesus...

Jesus: yes, Peter...?

Peter: That makes me want to ask you a personal question - is that ok?

Jesus: I haven't got a penny on me, Peter

Peter: No, it's not about money

Jesus: Then what is it about

Peter: It's just... Well... It's just... Well... Are you... You know... Are you ordained?

Jesus: Am I... You know... Ordained? What do you mean?

Peter: Well, have you had hands laid on you?

Jesus: My mother used to clip my ear when I was a kid. Does that count?

Peter: No! I mean, have you been "set apart"?

Jesus: Oh, yes, regularly. The Pharisees do it every time I go near them.

Peter: Jesus, do you know what I'm talking about?

Jesus: Yes. Yes, I do know what you're talking about. But why are you asking me the question?

Peter: Just because everybody who is special in God's eyes seems to have been ordained.

Jesus: Like who?

Peter: Well like Abraham.

Jesus: Peter, Abraham wasn't ordained. He just stopped enjoying his retirement and started traveling.

Peter: What about his wife?

Jesus: You mean, Sarah? She became pregnant. That's not the same thing as being ordained.

Peter: What about David? Did he not get ordained?

Jesus: No, he got crowned and that's not the same

Peter: ...Just like getting pregnant

Jesus: No. A pregnancy and a coronation are entirely different.

Peter: Jesus, I know that. My mother had four children she'd rather have had a coronation any day.

Jesus: Never mind your mother. Who else do you think with ordained?

Peter: Daniel

Jesus: No. He was a diplomat who was good with dangerous animals.

Peter: What about Amos?

Jesus: No. He was a shepherd, who was good with words.

Peter: Well Jeremiah

Jesus: No. He was an eccentric who was good for an argument.

Peter: Jesus, surely some famous folk got ordained?

Jesus: Oh yes. Some did. They've always been priests ordained and set apart to attend to the mysteries of the faith. But there also have been prophets and pioneers, many unordained, whose job it has been to demonstrate the will of God in places where the priests made no impact

Peter: So it isn't important to be ordained?

Jesus: Peter, the day will come when, because you're neither a priest, nor a prophet, you will be sneered at. People will look at you and the others who follow me. And they will kill you for being "untrained lay people". You will then wish you were a priest or prophet, set apart and able to hide behind your special office. But what really matters is not to be known as special, but to be known as faithful to the one who has chosen you,

Peter: So you don't want me to become a rabbi or a father or a reverend?

Jesus: Peter, I want you to be my disciple. I want you know you are beloved. I want you to be the baptized person you are, recognizing you are created in the image of God, recognizing that God made you special and you have unique gifts that are needed in this world. Anything else is second place. Anything less is second best.

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*Note: This manuscript was prepared for oral delivery only.
The dialogue is adapted from Jesus and Peter - off the cuff conversations by John Bell
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