

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In October 2019, I had the opportunity to participate in a Reformation Tour to Europe. Part of the tour included a morning at the World Council of Churches near Geneva, Switzerland. Switzerland is a country known for its military neutrality. It is also the location of many international organizations, including the headquarters of the United Nations, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Health Organization (WHO), World Council of Churches (WCC), and many others.

I took the photo I am sharing with you today (See attached), at the World Council of Churches. It is a quilted wall hanging located on one of the walls in the chapel. You will note the connection between the wall hanging and our gospel passage for today! On the left side, is a boat with people [disciples and Jesus?] in it. To the left of the boat there appears to be a very large wave. Above the scene, is a dark sun and foreboding clouds.

But as we move to the right of the boat, we see cheerful hues! In the right upper corner, there is a circle representing the sun, and very bright colors. While I will not give you all the details of the wall hanging, it appears to move us from darkness [left] to light [right]. Is this not the message of our gospel passage for today?

Beyond this, I would like to highlight the symbol of the boat. If you have the opportunity to look at the logos of the World Council of Churches, National Council of Churches, and Wisconsin Council of Churches, you will see that each includes a depiction of a boat. As the bulletin note (printed in italics) before our gospel reading for today reminds us, "The boat on the sea is a symbol of the church and invites us to trust God amid life's turbulence." Let us place our trust in God now and always.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy