

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 9, 2021

Prelude

Christopher A. McCroskey

Centering Words:

God's Spirit is with us, embracing us with forgiveness and grace, abiding in us with the power of love for all.

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Call To Worship:

Jesus, Draw Me Close

Dan Greshel

Jesus, draw me close, closer, Lord, to you.

Let the world around me fade away.

Jesus, draw me close, closer, Lord, to you.

I desire to worship and obey.

From *The Faith We Sing* Copyright 2000 by Abingdon Press, 2159.

Opening Prayer:

O, Lord we pray:

For our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love...

For mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them...

For women, though without children of their own, who like mothers have nurtured and cared for us,,

For women who became mothers by adopting or fostering children...

For mothers, who have been unable to be a source of strength, who have not responded to their children and have not sustained their families...

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you watch over your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. Grant this through Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

Modified from *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Copyright 1992 The United Methodist Publishing House. 438.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word O Lord our rock and redeemer.

New Testament Reading Acts 10: 44-48

Psalm 98

Epistle Reading 1 John 5:1-6

Special Music

Christopher A. McCroskey

Gospel Reading John 15: 9-17

Sermon

The Tie That Binds.

John D. Jordan

Hymn:

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

1. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
2. Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
3. We share each other's woes, our mutual burdens bear;
and often for each other flows, the sympathizing tear.
4. When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal* Copyright 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House, 557.

Benediction:

Created by God, we go to love all creation. Blessed by love, we are bound by love. Chosen for love, we go now to love. Amen.

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Response:

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal* Copyright 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House, 673.

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: John D. Jordan
Choir Director: Christopher A. McCroskey
Church Musician: AV Assistant: K. C. Warble
Soloist: Dan Greshel
Time Together: Gale Frady; Ruth Frady

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...”

Tom Lloyd Patsy Shuler Dean Frye Lynn Martin Kathy Aiello George Taylor
Ted Frady Oren Edwards Latson Lewis Steve Aiello Steve White

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

Family and Friends: Mitch Kelly (*Dale Wells' nephew*); Lisa Baghdady (*a friend of Edwa Meek*); Chip Hooker (*Wayne Hooker's father*); Robert Bradley (*Business Associate of Simon Ross*); Dave Burrell (*Business Associate of Tommy Gleaton*); Gene Odom (*grandfather of Mark Branham*); Gary Becton (*friend of Mark Branham*); Audrey Cassady (*sister-in-law of Mary Louise Robinson*); Rusty Browning (*friend of Erin Derrick*); Monnie Tiller, Mrs. Miles (*friends of Chris Derrick*); Donna Walker (*coworker of Jack Stevens*); Paul Kidney (*son-in-law of Charles & Jackie McNeill*); Ruby Pennington (*friend of Laurie Knapp*); Rick Baldwin (*nephew of Tommy Johnson*); Judy Bauer (*cousin of Marty Johnson*); Iris Turlington (*aunt of John Zeigler*); Betty Jean Newton (*sister-in-law of Mary Kamaroff*); Linda Hargett (*stepmom of Christopher McCroskey*); Brenlee Carnes; Danielle Spotts (*co-worker of Kathy White*); Vickie Edwards (*neighbor of Kathy White*); George Duke, Brenda Grier (*friends of Lynn Martin*); Heather Stevens, Ty Moore, George Dorn (*friends of Kay Jordan*); Teddy Derrick (*uncle of Arvan Derrick*); Haidee Baehr (*friends of Ruth Frady*); Dianne Schmotzer (*sister-in-law of Gale Frady*); Denise Paul (*cousin of Gale Frady*); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (*friends of Gale Frady*); Ray Culbreth's Group House; Nellie Gantt (*mother of friend of Ray Culbreth*); Amelia Zinski (*great-niece of Linda Maloch*); Wayne Blair (*son of Dot Johnson*); Xavier Crane (*grandnephew of John Ballentine*); Janet Beck (*friend of Jo Ann Heiting*); Adam Lavender (*son of Phil Lavender*)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 05/02 Worship: 36

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 05/02 \$ \$ 6,545.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

TODAY Epworth Mother's Day Offering
Time Together in Honor of Mothers
5/10 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
5/13 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

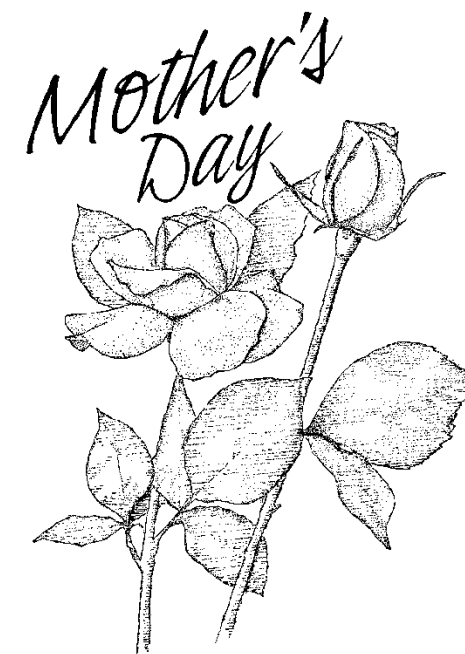


Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent

The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



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This word, love, must be really important, especially love that is translated from the Greek *agape*. *Agape* and its verb form, *agapeo*, is used nine times in the passage from the Gospel of John and four times in verses 1-3 in the passage from 1 John. It is used 41 times in the Gospel of John and 56 times total in all the Gospels. It is used 13 times in 1 John and 225 times in the New Testament. So love, agape, must be a very important word in Christian teaching.

The only direct command that Jesus gives, in fact, is to love one another. We obey God's commands because we love God. Those that do not obey God's commands do not love God. We dwell, stay, and abide in God's love as the branches to the vine as we obey God's commandment to love.

What does it mean to love one another? Does it mean that I am supposed to love each one of you, my brothers and sisters, in the same way I love ice cream or chocolate?

No, *agape* goes a little bit further than loving the way I love ice cream or chocolate. As much as I love ice cream and chocolate, I can live without them, and sometimes I need to live without them. *Agape* is love that we as Christians cannot live without. We cannot call ourselves Christians and not love.

Agape is the expression of the deep constant love of a perfect Being, God, toward an unworthy object, humans. It is the perfect love of God given to us imperfect beings. It is love that produces love in the imperfect being toward the perfect Being. It is the love of God toward us that produces love in us.

This love (at this point I will use the word love to mean *agape*) is love that cannot be earned. No matter what we may do, even if we are Pope Francis, Mother Theresa, Billy Graham or Bishop Holston, we are not worthy of this love. This is a love that God freely gives to us from his love for us, as unworthy as we may be. It is love that is given to us so that we can love God and neighbor. It is love that is given to us so we can work for the well being of others, which is the fruit of this love.

Love is not emotional. It is not sitting around the campfire singing *We Are One in the Spirit*. It is not an emotional love that depends on "good" feelings. "When I am around you, I feel good so therefore I love you." But what about when I don't feel good about you? What about when you make me angry, frustrated, sad, or guilty? Does that mean I no longer love you because I don't feel good about you?

This love is an act of the will. It is an act of will that overrides our emotions and impulses so we can work for the well being of others. Most of us who are parents, if we are completely honest, have had moments when we thought of killing our child. It may have been when they hit you over the head with a hammer. It may have been when they drew all over the freshly painted walls in the living room. It may have been when they stayed out all night and didn't let you know where they were. It may have been when they used the credit card you got for them when they went to college on party supplies instead of text books. The feelings of anger and impulse to kill our children were overridden by our love for our children.

Love is an act of will that overrides our need to understand the other. Love is not contingent on our being able to understand the other person. I recently did a funeral for a man we had gotten to know when I was serving St. John, who had a son who was gay. I said during the sermon that the man loved his son even though

he may not have understood him. The son later wrote thanking me for saying that, for it helped him understand his relationship with his father. The father could not understand the son being gay, but he loved him. Love is not contingent on understanding.

Love is an act of will that overcomes our need to feel that the other person deserves our love or that we like the other person. Jesus does not tell the disciples to love only those in the upper room that evening but to love all brothers and sisters. Since by baptism we are adopted into God's family, then all God's children are our brothers and sisters. All are children of God even though their beliefs may be different. The reality is that if love is deserved, it is not love. We do not deserve God's love but God gives it to us freely so we may love.

We may love others - those we don't like, those we don't understand, and those that make us mad - because God loves us. We can begin to love as we work for the well being of those who we don't understand, like or who make us mad. When we behave as if we love someone, we find that we do begin to love them. If we work for the benefit of those we do not understand, we may come to understand them and love them more. If we work for the benefit of those we do not like, we may come to like them. If we work for the benefit of those who we feel do not deserve our love, we may find ourselves loving them unconditionally. We find that love overrides our emotions, misunderstandings and sense of worthiness.

This love is the tie that binds all relationships. Relationships that are bound by love are relationships where each party seeks the well-being of the other. These are relationships that last through thick and thin. Relationships that are not bound by this love do not last and are not true relationships in the Christian sense.

This love is what binds a mother to her children. It is this love that makes a woman truly a mother, not biology or even keeping a child. A mother works for the well-being of their child. Some good mothers have given up their child, sometimes temporarily and sometimes permanently, because their circumstances cause them to be unable to provide for their child. Many women have become mothers by adoption, loving a child even though it is not their biological child. Some women have birthed children but were not mothers. It is the love that makes a woman a mother, not the biology.

This love is what binds families together. Each member of the family, parents and siblings, work for the well being of each other. Even though my older brothers often persecuted me, if anyone else bothered me they had my back. This love binds families together in whatever form the family may take. It is not the form of the family- nuclear, extended, blended, single parent, or any other form- that makes a family but that the members of the family are bound by love.

This love is what binds the church together. What binds us together as a church is not that we all think exactly alike on doctrinal issues, on social issues, or even what we think is the mission of the church, but that we love each other. From the beginning there were conflicts in the church, but it was the love that held the church together. Jesus' command to the disciples was to love, not to agree on doctrinal or social issues, for it was love that would bind the church together. It is love that binds the church together today. Wesley viewed schisms in the church as a failure of the church to love and the important issue in the church was not that we all think alike but that we love alike.

This love could bind our society together. This love that comes from God for all God's creatures could bind all people together as one in spite of our many differences. This is the love that we are to spread as Christians to all people.

I noticed the sign at Rush's on 378 for a couple of weeks said, "Sprinkle kindness like salt on fries." I like that but we should take it a step further. God does not sprinkle love on us, God pours love on us. The love God pours on us we should pour out on others. We should pour out love on those in our family. We should pour out love on those in our church. We should pour out love on those we do not like. We should pour out love on those we do not understand. We should pour out love to those we may feel do not deserve our love.

As we pour out love we will come to love, and we can build relationships, families, churches, societies and nations that love and strive to serve the interest of all members. We can bind all people together in love. We will then bring about God's kingdom of love and light.