

PROCLAIMING THE POWER OF LOVE

I Corinthians 13: 1-13

Eugene Peterson's translation, *The Message*

If I speak with eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I am nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate....If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

*Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut,
doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others,
isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle,
doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
doesn't revel when others grovel,
takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
puts up with anything, trusts God always,
always looks for the best, never looks back,
but keeps going to the end. Love never dies....*

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing God directly just as God knows us.

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us to that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of these three is love.

PRAYING FOR OURSELVES, ONE ANOTHER, AND THE WORLD

REFLECTING SILENTLY UPON OUR LIVES

SHARING FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR LIVES

OPENING OURSELVES IN PRAYER

PRAYING AS JESUS PRAYED

(debts and debtors)

RECEIVING OUR CHOIR'S GIFT *How Firm a Foundation* arr. Hopsen

READING AND REFLECTING

READING FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 13: 24-30

REFLECTING

The first step to the knowledge of the wonder and mystery of life is in the recognition of the monstrous nature of the earthly human realm as well as its glory. Joseph Campbell

Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowering. Ben Okri

Life is untidy. When we reject this messiness—and in so doing reject life—we risk perceiving the world through the lens of our economics or our science. But if we celebrate life with all its contradictions, embrace it, experience it, and ultimately live with it, there is the chance for a spiritual life filled not only with pain and untidiness, but also with joy, community, and creativity. Derek Jensen

OFFERING OURSELVES THROUGH OUR GENEROSITY

OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS IN SERVICE TO GOD

Trio "Allegretto" from *Duo #1*

Beethoven

*PRAISING GOD

Tune: *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ, and Spirit One.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen

*DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND POSSESSIONS TO GOD

DEPARTING TO PRACTICE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

*SINGING A HYMN *Renew Your Church*

Black Hymnal 311

*TAKING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG *I Will Trust in the Lord*

Black Hymnal 416

*PARTING WITH A SONG *Forward Through the Ages*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In response to the rise of Islamophobia in our nation, our church is participating in the **Interfaith Action for Human Rights** banner project by hanging a banner that says, "We Stand With Our Muslim Neighbors."

The **rainbow stole** on the pulpit is in support of the struggle of all **LGBTQ** people for equity and justice, and for a life that is free from prejudice, intimidation and violence.

It's that time again! The **"Every Once in a While Talent Show at the Congregational Church of Austin"** is scheduled to take place **Friday, February 24th**, beginning with cups of soup at 6 pm. Nodie Murphy is still signing up acts for the show, reminding folks that the performances should be family-friendly and less than three minutes long. We will be raising money for a yet-to-be determined cause, so bring bills of various quantities to throw into the basket.

The **Season of Lent** begins in March. Tom invites you to join him after worship during the Sundays in Lent to reflect on **Anthony de Mello's "The Testament."** Copies are available in Fellowship Hall.

PARTICIPATING TODAY

Ushers Ruth Koenig and Jo Jensen
Fellowship Host The Deacons

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The **Adult Christian Education Group** meets Sundays at 10:00 am on the 2nd floor.

Middle School and High School Students remain in the service the first Sunday of each month; other Sundays their Sunday School begins after the Choral Anthem.

Elementary Sunday School is held during the 11:00 am service, immediately following "Time With Children." The children will be escorted from the Sanctuary to the 2nd floor Christian Education room, and can be picked up from there after the service.

Infant and Toddler Care is available throughout the service in the Nursery.

Children's bulletins and crayons are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, UCC

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Rev. Thomas J VandeStadt	Pastor
Nodie Murphy	Music Director
Rev. Van Herd	Adult Christian Education
Rev. Amelia Fulbright	Labyrinth Student Ministry
Jonathan Geer	Piano
Amy Harris	Violin
Tony Rogers	Cello
Amy Rivera	Sunday School Teacher
Lynne Lemley	Interim Office Administrator
Victor Cardenas	Custodian

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Coord Council, Sunday, Feb 26, after worship
Trustees, Wed, March 1, 7:15 pm, at Victoria Li's
Deacons, Tue, March 7, 7:15 pm, at Joy Penticuff's

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN

an Open and Affirming Church
of The United Church of Christ

February 12, 2017

The Sixth Sunday After Epiphany



GATHERING

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5: 9

WELCOMING ONE ANOTHER

SHARING OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACCEPTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Trio *Moderato*

Rocherolle

***GATHERING AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Christine Sines
Mustard Seed Associates

God, may we be instruments of your peace today.

*In a world divided by war and strife,
may we be your reconcilers.
In a world of hurt and pain,
may we be those who care for our enemies.
In a world that kills and maims,
may we be those who heal and restore.*

The blessing of God be upon you.

The blessing of the God of life.

The blessing of Christ be upon you.

The blessing of the Christ of love.

The blessing of the Spirit be upon you.

The blessing of the Spirit of peace.

***SINGING A HYMN** *The Church's One Foundation*

Red Hymnal 260