

PRESQUE ISLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ

January 30, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

"If you love or have ever loved, you will never walk in darkness"

Plato

Gathering Music

*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*¹

Greeting

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Introit

Love One Another²

Opening Prayer (In Unison)

Gracious God, we come to you with day, seeking your guidance and strength. You have called us to ministries for which we feel inadequate. Help us to understand that it is your love that will support and sustain our efforts. Give us the courage to place our trust in your abiding presence. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen³

Opening Hymn

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*⁴

FAPC

Prayer of Confession (In Unison)

Gracious and living God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives—that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful. We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do. We love with condition. We judge and condemn. We cast the first stone and keep the logs in our own eyes. We do not turn to You as the source of our healing. Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sins and empower us to be the imitation of Christ in love and service. Amen⁵

Words of Assurance

Scripture Readings

Passages from *The Living Bible*

Naomi Rice

Jeremiah 1: 4-10

The Lord said to me, "I knew you before you were formed within your mother's womb; before you were born, I sanctified you and appointed you as my spokesman to the world." "O Lord God," I said, "I can't do that! I'm far too young! I'm only a youth!" "Don't say that," He replied, "for you will go wherever I send you and speak whatever I tell you to. And don't be afraid of the people, for I, the Lord, will be with you and see you through. Then He touched my mouth and said, "See, I have put my words in your mouth! Today your work begins, to warn the nations and the kingdoms of the world. In accordance with my words spoken through your mouth I will tear down some and destroy them, and plant others and nurture them and make them strong and great."

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² Permission to stream visual liturgy obtained via subscription to The Work of the People.

³ Nancy Townley, Worship Connections, *Ministry Matters*, Fourth Sunday After Epiphany, 2022.

⁴ The FAPC Virtual Choir with Patrick Kreeger, Organ; Directed and Edited by Ryan Jackson, The William S. Perper Director of Music and Fine Arts Ministries. With permission. Permission to print/podcast/stream this music is obtained from One License.Net via One License #A-72665. All rights reserved.

⁵ The Pastor's Workshop resources at thepastorsworkshop.com

I Corinthians 13: 1-30

If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages without learning them, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making noise. If I had the gift of prophecy and knew all about what is going to happen in the future, knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would it do? Even if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, I would still be worth nothing at all without love. If I gave everything I have to poor people, and if I were burned alive for preaching the Gospel but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatsoever. Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices, whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to them no matter what the cost. You will always believe in them, always expect the best of them, and always stand your ground in defending them. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever. Someday prophecy, and speaking in unknown languages, and special knowledge—these gifts will disappear. Now we know so little, even with our special gifts, and the preaching of those most gifted is still so poor. But when we have been made perfect and complete, the need for these inadequate special gifts will come to an end, and they will disappear. It's like this: when I was a child I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child does. But when I became an adult my thoughts grew far beyond those of my childhood, and now I have put away the childish things. In the same way, we can see and understand only a little about God now, as if we were peering at His reflection in a poor mirror; but someday we are going to see Him in His completeness, face to face. Now all that I know is hazy and blurred, but then I will see everything clearly, just as clearly as God sees into my heart into my heart right now. There are three things that remain---faith, hope, and love---and the greatest of these is love.

John 15:9-17

"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Live within my love. When you obey me you are living in my love, just as I obey my Father and live in his love. I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your cup of joy will overflow! I demand that you love each other as much as I love you. And here is how to measure it—the greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends; and you are my friends if you obey me. I no longer call you slaves, for a master doesn't confide in his slaves; now you are my friends, proved by the fact that I have told you everything the Father told me.

"You didn't choose me! I chose you! I appointed you to go and produce lovely fruit always, so that no matter what you ask for from the Father, using my name, he will give it to you. I demand that you love each other.

Hymn

*Love One Another*⁶

Chris Brunelle

Proclamation

Love Is a Verb

Christine Standefer

Prayers of the People ⁷and the Lord's Prayer

(Forgive us our sins, . . .)

Hymn

*Blest Be The Tie That Binds*⁸

Benediction⁹

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⁷ Modified from Prayers of the People, Liturgy, stephenmfearing.com.

⁸ *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* was recorded by choir members, worship band members, and congregation members of First United Methodist Church, Chula Vista, CA. Tune: John G. Nägeli Text: John Fawcett; Public Domain.

⁹ *Love Is*, a poem by Dave Hopwood. ©Dave Hopwood/engageworship.org