

**Trinitarian Congregational Church**  
**TakeOut**  
**May 15, 2022**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

Bob Scott

Leader: Come, worship God all you faithful people!

Come, God welcomes you and will be with you.

**People: Praise God, who is sovereign over all creation.**

**Praise God, who is as near as our next breath.**

Leader: Mountain and hills, sun and moon and stars praise God.

Let all living things on earth rejoice in God's goodness.

**People: We exalt God, who creates all things by a word.**

**We worship God who graciously cares for all beings.**

Leader: Kings and princes, men, women and youth, extol God.

God has lifted up a ruler for his own people!

**People: God is glorified in Christ, and Christ in him.**

**We shall live for his glory, loving as He loves us.**

**\*Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

NCH 4

**Gathering Prayer**

Bob Scott

**We praise you, O God, and celebrate your presence with us. Your glory fills all heaven and earth, all times and space. Your glory is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Your glory is offered as a gift to your people. We ask that you would meet us here with a clarity that opens our eyes to your wonders, and moves our hearts to respond to your grace. Touch our lives in this hour with the love that claims us and forms us as your disciples, so that we may grow in loving one another and bear genuine witness to you. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

## Scripture

Psalm 148

Bob Scott

This reading is the third in a group of five Hallelujah psalms that conclude the book of Psalms. The psalm repeatedly calls all of creation to ‘praise the Lord’. We may read it as poetic license since sun, moon, mountains, etc. cannot literally answer that call. But to do so would miss the theological implications behind the joyful invitation. All the things that God has created (including humanity) render their praise by their very being and doing, by existing and fulfilling their assigned work. In other words, winds ‘praise God’ by blowing over the earth, the sun ‘praises God’ by shedding light and warmth on the world. And humanity ‘praises God’ when they fulfill their role as stewards of his creation, and as God’s priests and servants. They are the one creature who alone can speak of God’s goodness, truth and care, and embody that compassion in their action.

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.

<sup>6</sup> He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds,  
which cannot be passed.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike, old and young together!

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the LORD!

John 13:31-35

Rosemary Dawson

This passage is taken from a much longer, more complex and richly significant telling of Jesus' last supper with his followers. The first verse of John 13 sets the context: “Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart

from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” It is within this context that Jesus uses his final hours to tell those closest to him what will happen in the future, bestow his blessings, and explain what they must do in his absence in order to carry on his legacy. That legacy is nothing less than the glory of God, now made known through the love of his disciples.

<sup>31</sup> When he (Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

## **Sermon**

### To Sum It All Up

One of the highlights of my seminary years was actually the thing students dread the most – the oral exams. And yes, I went into it with fear and trepidation. It turned out to be a great, collegial conversation with my professors. After an opening prayer Professor Lawhead (my favorite) said- “Rosemary, we know you have been an excellent student, and that you know your Bible, so we have only one question for you. Throughout the ages theologians have tried to understand what is the center of God’s Word, what is its foundation and its heart. So now we want you to tell us -what is its Center? How would you sum it all up? That’s all I had to answer to graduate seminary – sum it all up. As you can tell, I passed.

So, my friends, you have been followers of Christ for a very long time, longer than most seminarians have been alive. What about you, how do you sum it all up? What at the center of this thing we call faith? Here is the Bible, two testaments, 66 books, 1189 chapters, spanning 5000 years of tangled history and theology. And you can read it in less than 100 hours. But what is its heart and soul, its foundation, its theme, its center? I want you to sum it all up. And give me your reply in one simple sentence, please. So, what is your answer? Any of you want to brave a response?

Fortunately for you all, today in Scripture we hear the answer from Jesus. It is a pivotal moment in his life, far more intense than oral exams, or much else you could imagine. Here in John 13, Jesus is facing the end of his life. It is the evening before his arrest, trial and crucifixion, and Jesus is sitting with his disciples at the last supper. He knows fully that his time has come. And so, he feels deeply compelled to offer

them his final words, his last act of guidance and encouragement. Jesus takes the threads of his understanding of God, his ministry to the world, and his commitment to his disciples and he concludes: “Love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus summed it all up with just one simple sentence.

It seems all so simple, doesn't it? So why is it so very, very hard? We know, or should know, that that has been the central theme, not just for Jesus, but for all the Scripture. We all remember Jesus' answer to the question, ‘what is the greatest commandment’. He quotes Moses saying - ‘You shall love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself’. (Mark 12:30-31) So it should not really be a surprise that on his last evening his last word to his followers would be “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

It's a command, but really, it is not all that new, now is it. There is only one thing ‘new’ in Jesus words. It is not just simply love, or faithfully love, or compassionately love; it is “love one another, *as I have loved you.*” That is the hallmark, or the summation of it all. “As I have loved you.” That is the standard, that is the goal. So then, all we need to ask is “how has Christ loved you, me, and the world”? What was his finest moment, when the love of God shown through most clearly? I think that most people would answer-when he died on the cross. And that is indeed the epitome of love - “Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) And, in fact, Paul reminds us that “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) John even goes so far as to call it the Glory. “Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him...I will be with you only a little while.”

That is indeed the fullest and deepest express of Christ's love. And yet there is so much more that Christ did in his love for us – smaller things, simpler things, that can open us to the greatest gift of love. Things like feeding the hungry and healing the sick – because Jesus had compassion on them. Things like forgiving the wayward and welcoming the outcast - because Jesus valued them. Warning the self-righteous and reproving the arrogant, again, simply because he truly cared about them.

All these too, fit under the category ‘love on another as I have loved you.’ And that is good; because sometimes we need, not the grand, glorious, almost unreachable standards of love, but the everyday examples that will touch our souls and transform our lives. Sometimes in our grandiose, adult world we just can't seem to grasp what this love is all about; sometimes only a child can teach us. One little girl, named Amanda, explained it to her mother this way... “I love you more than myself”. Isn't that the essence of true love? Isn't that the highest form of love? To love others with

a love that goes beyond yourself, that gives of yourself, that gives up yourself, that gives your self. That is the love God has for us. It is the love Jesus showed his disciples. And it is the love he commands “Love one another as I have loved you”.

Well, that about sums it up, now all we need to do it live it. Amen.

**\*Hymn**

Help Us Accept Each Other

NCH 388

## **Joys and Concerns**

### **Prayers of the People**

We praise you, O God, for all you are - the God of majesty and power, glory and holiness; and above it all you are the God of love. We thank you that in Jesus Christ you have made your love fully known to us, and through your Spirit we are embraced and empowered as children of your love. It is with joy that we can come to you, to receive and share your love with the world.

And so, we pray for your church and for this congregation. May your love be the center of our life together. May we experience your presence and compassion in our lives, and live out that love in tangible ways, among all our neighbors, near and far.

We pray as well for our world and all its leaders. May be refreshed by the knowledge of your love, and pursue the power of that love in bringing your peace and justice to the world.

We pray too for all who are suffering today. May your true love and grace be known to them, that they may be strengthened and encouraged in all things. May the ill know your healing touch, the mourning your comforting presence, and the needy gain your generous aid. We especially lift up... and we thank you for....

We praise you, Wondrous God, for the riches of your love toward us, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Choral Response**

Remember Me

## Offering

God's love is made known in the love of Christ. God calls us to a discipleship of loving service; not simply in great acts of courage, but also in small acts of compassion. Let us give with a love that reflects Christ's own.

Thank you, gracious God, for loving us so fully and freely. We offer ourselves and our gifts to your glory and the welfare of the world Christ came to save. May your love be reflected in all our thoughts, words and deeds. Amen.

## Offertory Music

**Doxology** (choose the one that is best for your faith)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,  
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God for all that Love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen

\* **Hymn** They'll Know We Are Christians insert

## \*Common Commission

**Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

## \* Benediction

Go now into the world

And may God make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all people, and thus establish your hearts unblameable in holiness in the sight of God.  
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 adj.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

## Postlude