

PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Crossing #23

July 5th 2015

Peace is certainly what one feels while sitting in the back of the church as the stained glass windows filter in a bluish hue. One hears “social justice” and “embracing all” fill the air as the pastor emphasizes the church’s accepting stance of the LGBT community. The congregation then recites the *Prayer of Self-Dedication*, committing themselves to their church and their community, following Christ’s example of mindfulness of the needy, the outcast.

As with most Christian services, the Lord’s Prayer is shared. This particular Sunday worship features more modern songs of worship, even classic contemporary with a Christian flare. The pianist and vocalist offer up heartfelt praise.

The recent Fourth of July celebration is the focus of the Children’s Message. While reminding the youth of our country’s struggle for independence and equality, they are reminded that even to this day many are not treated fairly. The Muslim observer in the audience can certainly relate.

Mark 6:1-13 (1-8 highlighted below)

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of faith.

The congregation was then encouraged to face one another during the reading of the above Gospel passage. Often standing side-by-side and looking forward leaves little opportunity to connect with others. Thus, they are united by their shared belief in the scripture.

The sermon that follows proves to be one of the most honest and poignant addresses yet encountered on *Bridges*. The pastor reflects on the recent Supreme Court ruling of the legal recognition of same-sex marriages. The Gospel of Mark states how those who lacked faith tried to put Jesus in his place. The terrorist in Charleston tried to put African Americans in their place. Likewise, there are those

who attempt to put the LGBT community in their place.

As the pastor states, face-to-face conversations are crucial in these times. To step out, reach out to those who have misconceptions and even hatred because of who you are. Again, the observer understands.

“There is peace, there is love, and they’re not so far away.”