

Sunday, February 23, 2025 – 9:30 a.m. Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

TODAY'S FOCUS: DISCIPLESHIP. When Jesus says, "Love your enemies," which enemies is Jesus talking about, exactly? Does he mean all of them? He can't mean ALL of them!

PRELUDE — Scott Anderson

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — Lin

***PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST** — Lin

***OPENING HYMN** UMH #549 "Where Charity and Love Prevail" (vs 1-4)

1. Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.

2. With grateful joy and holy fear true charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and strength now love Christ in return.

3. Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
And let us love each other well as Christian holiness.

4. Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
Be Christ the glory that we seek, be ours his holy peace.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** — Suzanne Gallagher

One: Come and learn the ways of life.

Many: We have come to follow Jesus.

One: Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you.

Many: We have come to follow Jesus.

One: Bless those who curse you and pray for those who persecute you.

Many: We have come to follow Jesus.

One: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Many: We have come to follow Jesus.

One: Come and learn the ways of life.

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OPENING PRAYER — Lin

HYMN

TFWS #2233 “Where Children Belong”

CHILDREN’S STORY — Lin

SPECIAL MUSIC — Rinn Choir

“Count Your Blessings”

SCRIPTURE: Luke 6:27-38 — Suzanne Gallagher

²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³² If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return (11). Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful (12). ³⁷ Do not judge, and you will not be judged (13); do not condemn (14), and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven (15); ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you (16). A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

MESSAGE

“The Hardest Part”

Rev. Lin Cheek

RESPONSIVE HYMN

TFWS #2169

“God, How Can We Forgive?”

1. God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?

How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?

When human loving fails and every hope is gone,

Your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.

2. When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,

How can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?

The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.

A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.

3. Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,
When you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.

OFFERTORY — Anneke Toomey

***DOXOLOGY** UMH #94

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** — Suzanne Gallagher

All: Lord of Love and Compassion, how easy the road of discipleship would be if all you asked from us were the gifts we bring to your altar. How convenient would it be if we could just write a check and leave here to live like so many do, focused exclusively on our own wants, needs, and passions? Bless these tithes and offerings, and bless us, as well, as you send us into the world to respond in radical love to those who would judge us, hurt us, and threaten us. We pray this in the name of Jesus, who loved and forgave, even as he was tortured and nailed to a cross. Amen.

"Offering Prayer" by Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship, Discipleship Ministries, from www.umcdiscipleship.org. Used by permission.

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER — Lin

All: 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.

***CLOSING HYMN** UMH #428 "For the Healing of the Nation"

1. For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords;
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word, help us rise and pledge our word.

2. Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release,
That, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase,
Fear will die and hope increase.

3. All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;
Pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span, may we hallow life's brief span.

4. You, Creator God have written your great name on humankind.
For our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind,
That by our response and service earth its destiny may find, earth its destiny may find.

***BENEDICTION** — Lin

POSTLUDE — Anneke Toomey

Prelude/Postlude—Anneke
Song Leader— Scott
Liturgist — Suzanne Gallagher

Accomp.—Anneke
Special Music — Choir
Children’s Message— Lin

Offertory—Anneke
Organ — Betsy
Violin — Rae Ann