

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

POINTS TO PONDER:

Our Easter Season readings from the Gospel of John lead us to the subject of “love”. Our cultural view of the English word “love” colors our ability to grasp the wonder, and profound nature of “love” as described in the Bible. In American English we say we “love God”, but also that we “love ice cream” – two totally different mental images. We use “love” in a manner resulting in a mental picture that is related to “feelings”. We can be reasonably confident that John, when writing about “love”, did not have a mental image about a “feeling”. Why? Because his cultural perspective comes from being a Hebrew, and John’s original text is in Greek: Both languages have multiple words, with very specific meanings, that we translate to English as “love”. There is also the aspect of John quoting Jesus in a Greek manuscript, when Jesus was probably actually speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

In John 15:9 (ESV) John quotes Jesus, *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.”* “Love” in John 15 is the translation of various verb forms of the Greek concept of “Agape” (uh-gah-pay). The Christian view of Agape is the unconditional, self-sacrificing love of God, and our reciprocal love for God in a covenant relationship. For the specific subject matter in John 15, both Jesus and John would, likely, have a mental image formed from the Hebrew word “Hesed” (keh-sed). The Hebrew word origin reflects bowing one’s head toward another in a covenant relationship: there is no equivalent word in English, nor in Greek. So, English translations try to capture the context of “Hesed” with phrases like “unfailing love, mercy, charity, loving-kindness, steadfast love ...” as well as the word “love”. Picturing every positive aspect of God described in the Old Testament, including his covenant faithfulness, and we get a glimmer of “hesed” – a choice, not a feeling, an action of undeserved kindness and generosity of God directed at us.

So, let us read a bit more in John 15 (ESV) and apply the concepts of agape and hesed to Jesus’ words:

12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Do you see it now? It is not about warm fuzzy feelings: While peace, contentment and other heartfelt feelings may result from a loving covenant, the love Jesus is talking about is a choice. What about the John 15:9, “... Abide in my love.”? Abide = to “dwell,” “remain,” “be present,” and to “be held and kept”. Being held, kept, and present in God’s perfect love, that is what generates the “feelings”.

So, if you have struggled with *“How can I love my neighbor (James 2:8), or even my enemies (Luke 6:35)? My neighbor is an awful person ... for that matter, so is my [sister, brother, mother, father ...].”* God is not saying you are a failure if you don’t have warm and fuzzy feelings for these folks. God simply desires we choose to act towards others in a manner reflective of his perfect love, to honor the value God places upon this other person. So, has the “love them” got you feeling unworthy, somehow a failed believer ---

Well, then, some insights from Peter’s struggle with “love”:

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

Jesus had given Simeon a new name “Peter” (John 1:42) , and Peter states he would lay down his life for Jesus (an agape act) - but Jesus says Peter will deny him 3 times (John 13:37-38) – Peter denies Jesus 3 times (John 18:15-18, 25-27). However, Jesus restores Peter to a new role, in a discussion about “love”:

READ *John 21:15-19* --

Here we see how Jesus (God) deals with a believer who feels like a crushed total failure; there is much more than what is apparent in the English translation --

Peter denied Jesus three times, now Jesus asks Peter three times if Peter loves him. Peter was previously designate a “fisher of men” (evangelist), now he is to take the role of shepherd of the flock (tend my sheep). Jesus addresses Peter as “Simon, son of John”, not as Peter – basically Jesus politely stating that Peter reverted to his “old self”, and that is what is being addressed in this session of questions and answers. So, now let us look at the Greek nuances of the question and answer session between Peter and Jesus:

There are as many as 7 terms in Greek that would translate to English as some type of “love”. Here the focus is on two types: Agape - other focused self-giving love based on the will, and Phileo - brotherly love, or affection which involves choice and selection - friendship love or affection (hence Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love).

So, let us use “love” where it the Greek uses Agape, and “affection” where the Greek uses phileo ---

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?” (agape)

“Yes, Lord; you know that I have affection for you.” (phileo)

“Feed my lambs.”

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?” (agape)

“Yes, Lord; you know that I have affection for you.” (phileo)

“Tend my sheep.”

“Do you have affection for me?” (phileo)

“Lord, you know everything. You know that I have affection for you.” (phileo)

“Feed my sheep.”

Ponder what might be in Peter’s thoughts --- Maybe something like:

Jesus knows I let “my old man” take control: I denied Jesus three times, now three times I honor Him, and the truth in me, by acknowledging within me is currently phileo for Christ, not the agape I desire and professed ... and then ran away and denied Christ, three times. In my failure the best I have is phileo. Now I hear “Well then, out of your phileo for me, provide food for my lambs.” AND “Well then, out of your phileo for me, tend (provide all that is needful) for my sheep.”

AND most importantly,

“You desire to faithfully respond with agape, but honestly know you can only muster, at this time, phileo, that does not define you for eternity; the agape you seek is found in walking in the steps I created for you at the foundation of the world. Want agape? The path is in “tending my sheep”.

John 15:12 (ESV) “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Biblical love for others is a choice, an obedient act, not a feeling.

Chuck

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

Announcements

Serving This Month:

Altar Guild – Jenny Nelson **Greeter** – Mike Alderson

Readers for Sunday Services

May 5- Karen

May 12- Linda

May 19- Maria

May 26- Doyle

Learning with Fellowship

Ladies Bible Study: We take a break until the fall of 2024. All ladies are welcome to join us when we resume the study in the fall. Watch for the announcement when we resume.

Sunday School: Each Sunday, 9 am to 9:45 am in the Educational Building. Open to all adults and children before church service. Coffee will be served. We will discuss the scripture readings for the following Sunday.

Meetings

Council Meeting Monday, May 13th at 10 AM.

Pot-Luck Meal – May 26-**Last Sunday** after service

Services

Sunday 10 AM.

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

LCMC Texas District Upcoming Events

Save the Date

July 9-12 - LCMC Youth Event in Des Moines, Iowa

July 26-27 - Texas District Annual Gathering in Kerrville, Texas

We'd love to hear (and share) what your congregation is up to! Do you have some exciting congregational news to share, working on any mission projects, or hosting a special event that you would like to invite other congregations to?

Please send us your updates today!

For more information [CLICK HERE](https://www.lcmctexas.org/events-calendar/) for Hyperlink to Web page at <https://www.lcmctexas.org/events-calendar/>

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

We Are Family

See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are!— 1John 3:1



**Mission
Moment**

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



I have recently been thinking about how rich the image of family is as a metaphor for the church. Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ is an association of congregations and “family” is a great word to describe who we are together and how we relate to one another. We have unity in a common confession of faith and a mission to make new disciples of Jesus in the world. Yet we also celebrate our freedom in Christ that leads to diverse expressions of worship and ministry as each family member lives out their faith differently as each is uniquely called and positioned in the Kingdom of God.

As family we connect, communicate, care for one another, forgive one another, share in each other's joys and sorrows, help one another in times of need, hold one another accountable, offer and receive advice and counsel and respect that each family member is ultimately responsible for themselves and their own decisions. Not only is this a good and helpful understanding for our association, but also for the individual members of a local congregation. The brothers and sisters of Christ gathered in a local church are called into a family relationship. When we are attentive to our church family and live into these relationships well, not only are we blessed by the relationship, but we bear witness to God's love to the world, too!

All too often the world sees Christians and the church as unkind, unwelcoming, judgmental, and primarily interested in controlling behaviors according to what the world sees as an antiquated moral code. Unfortunately, some of this reputation is warranted. We probably all are familiar with people and churches that reflect this reality. Yet God's desire for the church is to be the family of God and to lovingly relate to one another in ways that reflect the heart of Christ. If Christians do not love one another, forgive one another, enjoy one another or care for one another, then what does that say about us to the world?

God calls us to be family. We are united in our identity as children of God and co-heirs with Christ. In God's Spirit we are to love one another as Christ loves us, truly caring for one another. As you greet one another, meet with one another, worship and serve with one another, remember that we are family. It will change the way you see and relate to the people you attend church with. And the world will take notice, too. To quote an unbeliever's observation of the early church: “Behold! How they love one another.”

Pastor Bryce Formwalt is the Director of Mission Growth for LCMC Texas District and Program Director of Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net). Residing in Georgetown, Pastor Bryce is available to coach congregations on mission. Feel free to contact him with any questions or comments: 512-942-7776 ext. 2 or bryce@lcmctexas.org.

© 2024 Bryce J. Formwalt, All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. April 2024

2024 LCMC Texas District
Annual Gathering



LOVE WORKS

LUKE 10:27



July 26 - 27, 2024

Zion Lutheran Church
Kerrville, Texas

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Greg & Susan Finke

Authors of the *Joining Jesus* Book Series

FEATURING:

18 Breakouts to Choose From

Designated Youth Track

20+ Exhibitors

Great Food & Worship

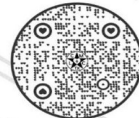
TICKETS:

Adult - \$75 thru 6/30 | \$100 after

Under 21 - 50% off



lcmctexas.org/annual-gathering



Why Harvest Workers?

Flexible: online and self-paced

Affordable: low monthly subscription

Practical: real world ministry preparation

Faithful: rooted in scripture & Lutheran theology

Mission-Minded: evangelism, discipleship, & multiplication

Choose a Track:

1. Church Leader Track: 5 required courses + 1 elective
2. Pastoral Ministry Essentials Track: 13 courses

Harvest Workers Equips...

Church Planters, Contract Pastors,

Youth / Worship / Care Ministers

Congregational Leaders, & More!

audit & group course options are also available

Learn More and Apply Online:

www.harvestworkers.net

512-942-7776



Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

Revised Common Lectionary Scripture Readings		
Date	Church Calendar	1st Readings: Psalm, 1st, 2nd, Gospel
Sun, May 05, 2024	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Psalm 98, Acts 10:44-48, 1 John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17
Thu, May 09, 2024	Ascension of the Lord	Psalm 47 or Psalm 93, Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:44-53
Sun, May 12, 2024	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Psalm 1, Acts 1:15-17, 21-26, 1 John 5:9-13, John 17:6-19
Sun, May 19, 2024	Day of Pentecost	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14, Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21, John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15
Sun, May 26, 2024	Trinity Sunday	Psalm 29, Isaiah 6:1-8, Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-17
Fri, May 31, 2024	Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth	Psalm 113, 1 Samuel 2:1-10, Romans 12:9-16b, Luke 1:39-57

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Serving this month (Greeter, Altar Guild, Readers)
5 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	13 10:00 am: Council Meeting, Monthly	14	15	16	17	18
19 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	20	21	22	23	24	25 Baby Shower- Community Hall
26 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight) 11:00 am: Potluck after Church Last Sunday of the Month	27	28	29	30	31	