

SERMON March 22, 2020

“The Spirit of Love”

Jesus said, “love one another, as I have loved you”. Wow. Not an option. A command. Love one another, as I have loved you. Not the easiest command to always obey at the best of times, because people can be irritating, smelly, rude, snobby, and ... just people. But, as the great philosopher Joni Mitchell sang, “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone!” now that we cannot meet together in this strange circumstance of social distancing, self-isolation, and precautionary event cancellations; we realize just how much we love meeting together especially with our church family.

Oh! That we could just shake hands, hug, share communion, sing together, learn together, laugh or cry together again soon! We love meeting each other because we encourage each other. Fellowship over coffee after the service is where we can connect with each other, check in with each other, bear one another’s burdens, ask for and receive prayer, learn each other’s names (for some of us, over and over. I’m talking about myself here, just sayin’) Also, we learn patience with each other, we can exhibit the Christian virtues of patience, and forbearance, putting up with each other, and, yes, loving each other, obeying Jesus’ command and allowing the Holy Spirit to help us do so in generosity, gentleness, kindness, joy, and self-control.

Loving God and loving each other is not something we know only in our intellect, but in our experience. We cannot do this in isolation. Not really. We can do the best we can under the circumstances, but it just isn’t the same.

I am reminded of a scene at an airport, where a young child in a stroller was met by grandparents after a long absence and them smothering her in kisses. The love flowing to that child was almost palpable to the people around. Such is the love of our Father in heaven toward us. During the Children’s talk and blessing at the beginning of our last service, Debbie Hall described the love of God as “lavish”. He wants to lavish us with his love, to soak us in his love for us – and to allow that love to flow out into the world.

He loves the world, you know. His desire is to draw all people to himself. He wants this so much he sent his only Son into the world, so that all who believe in him will not perish, but have eternal life. He wants us home with him. Just like those grandparents who couldn’t wait to smother their grandchild with kisses, he wants to smother us, or lavish us with his love.

So in this difficult, and trying time we are in now – please realize how much you are loved – by your loving Father in Heaven, through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, through the sending of the Holy Spirit – and know also, how much you are loved by your church family. All of us here at St. Aidan’s want you to know, we will be here for you.

We now ask ourselves, how can we obey God’s command to love one another, to be agents of God’s love in the age of Covid 19: Fighting fear; Taking steps to slow the spread; Resisting hysteria (more TP is on the way!); Supporting each other in prayer; Staying in contact; Taking care of ourselves and Keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Amen.