

Love One Another — Even Now

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” — John 13:34-35

Jesus could not be clearer. Love one another. He says it twice, just to make sure we don’t miss it. And he doesn’t just mean love in theory. Jesus he means real, stubborn, show-up kind of love. The kind of love that makes people stop and notice.

Martin Luther would call this the very heart of the Christian life. We are justified by grace through faith, not by works, not by how well we follow the rules, not by being the “right” kind of person. God’s love comes first. Everything we do is a response to that love. Luther even said, “God doesn’t need your good works — but your neighbor does.” That’s the point.

And let’s be honest, loving one another isn’t easy right now. We are living in a time when everything feels like a fight. Culture wars rage over classrooms, libraries, election signs in our neighbor’s yard. The news makes it sound like the whole country is shouting at each other.

But Jesus doesn’t say “love one another, **except** those people.” He doesn’t say “love one another even when you agree on politics or theology.” He says love one another as he has loved us. And let’s be clear, Jesus loved tax

collectors and zealots, women caught in sin and men who betrayed him, sick folks, poor folks, annoying disciples who never seemed to get it.

Christianity is a commitment, not a performance. It’s not about being seen as holy or “winning” an argument. It’s about choosing the way of love, even when it costs us. Even when it feels like swimming upstream.

Luther would remind us that this kind of love flows from freedom. Grace sets us free from fear, free from proving ourselves, free from fighting for our worth. And in that freedom, we are called to be “little Christs” for our neighbors — to show up, to serve, to heal.

This month, let’s lean into that freedom. Let’s love so boldly that in a world obsessed with division, people notice. They’ll know we are Christians by our love. Not by what side we’re on, but by the way we show up for one another, for strangers, for the world God loves.

Blessings,

Pr. Jeanie