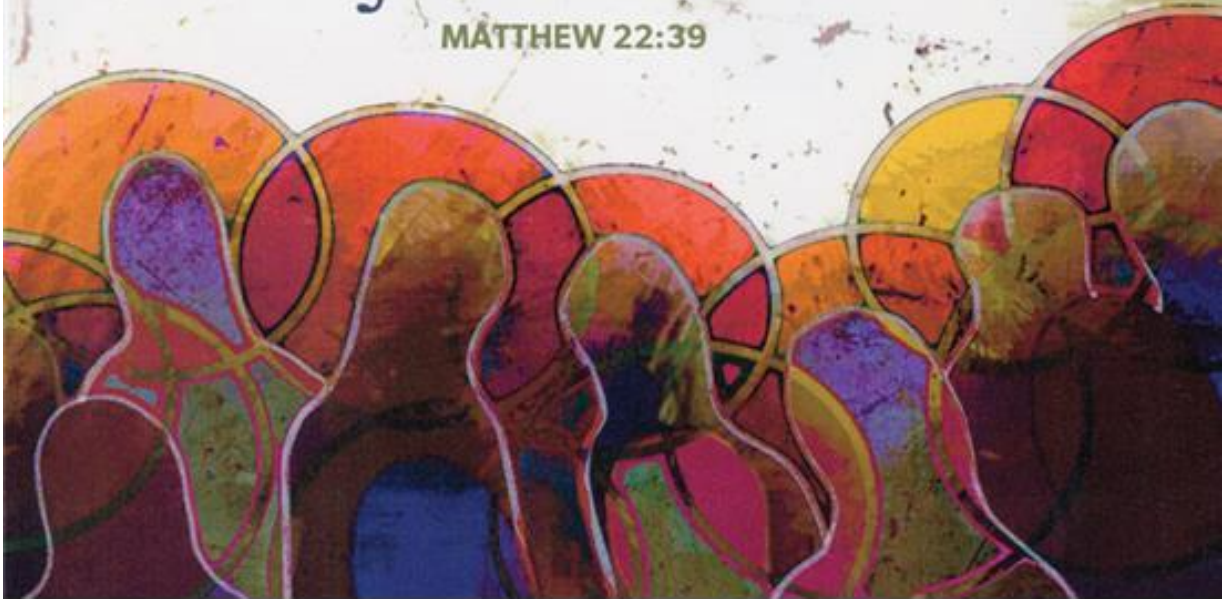


Love your neighbor as yourself

MATTHEW 22:39



*Sunday, October 29, 2023
22nd Sunday after Pentecost/
Reformation Sunday*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

**Sunday, October 29, 2023 ~ 22nd Sunday after Pentecost/
Reformation Sunday**

PRELUDE

Canon, Fughetta, and March on “Ton-y-Botel”
(Thy Strong Word – ELW 511)

Thomas J. Williams
setting, William D. Gudger

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jesus’ summarizes the law in today’s gospel reminding us we are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is out of such deep care that Paul shares the gospel with the Thessalonian community. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and to be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God’s love and mercy in the world. On this Reformation Sunday we remember that the church is always being reformed in order to live out this love of God and neighbor in an ever-changing world.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God,
you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world’s violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and

your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	ELW 504
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GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

By Grace I'm Saved

O DASS ICH TAUSEND ZUNGEN HÄTTE (DRETZEL)

Cornelius Heinrich Dretzel

arr. Lauran Delancy

The Chancel Bells

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Paul uses maternal imagery to depict the caring and nurturing relationship he shares with the Thessalonian Christians. When he first came to their city it was not to benefit himself but to share the gospel with them, which was his responsibility as an apostle of Christ.

¹You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, ²but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; ⁶nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, ⁷though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ⁸So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:34-46

Put on the spot by the Pharisees, Jesus displays wisdom by summarizing the law of God in just two commandments and by demonstrating the Messiah must be more than the son of David.

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴²“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet”?”

⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

**As we go out into the world
May we be connected to God –
the One in whom we live and move and have our being,
the One who created all things,
the One who loves us completely;
and may we use ALL that God has created
to love and serve our neighbor.
Amen.**

APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

#1 Holy God, you give the law that your people live by it and flourish. Write your law on the hearts of all who bear your name, and teach us to love your commandments, that we live as you intend. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

#2 Holy God, you plant the earth and water it and bring forth a fruitful harvest. Send favorable weather, just wages, and the bounty of your abundance to all who are engaged in the labor of harvest. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

#3 Holy God, you watch over the ways of the righteous and judge your people with fairness. Guide judges, courts, elected officials, and all those tasked with upholding the law, inspiring them with your wisdom and zeal for justice.
Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

By the power of your Spirit, you build us into your beloved community. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Laura (Thomas), Karen (Jonathan), John & Robin, Jacob & Rachael (Clara, Levi), and John & Laurie. Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Extend your arms of mercy to those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Evelyn E, mother of Kay S, who died on 10/23
- Chick F, whose funeral will be held on 11/3

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Sara E, daughter of Pat E, who is at home after being hospitalized
- Kathy F, who is recovering after a recent hospitalization

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.
Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

ad. from Revelation 22
Paul O. Manz

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of power, God of plenty,

all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed.

Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Lord Jesus, you are resurrection and life.

We give thanks that at your table you fill us with good things and feed us from your abundance.

Pour out your Spirit on us and this feast of love.

Build us into a lasting community that embodies your love. Strengthen us to serve you in all we do. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who

sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

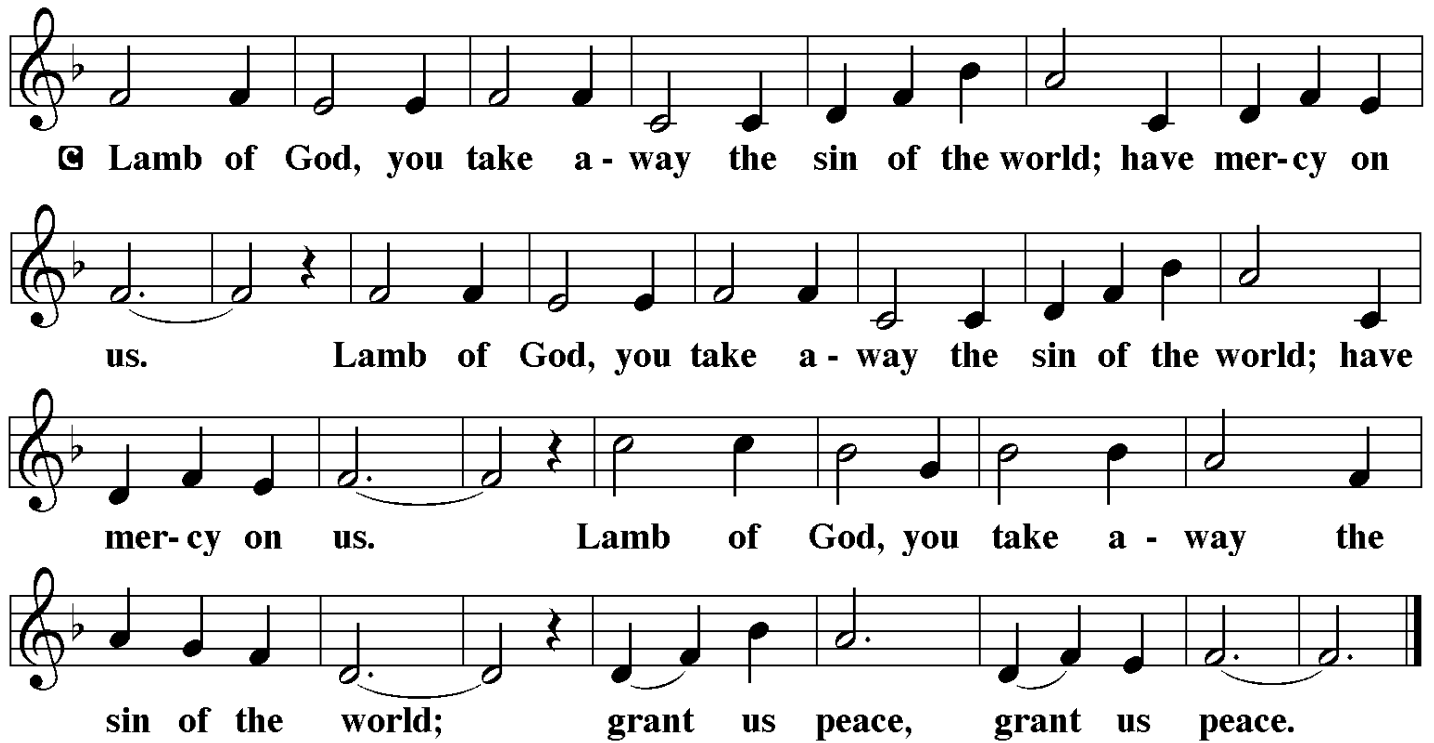
Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



☞ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace

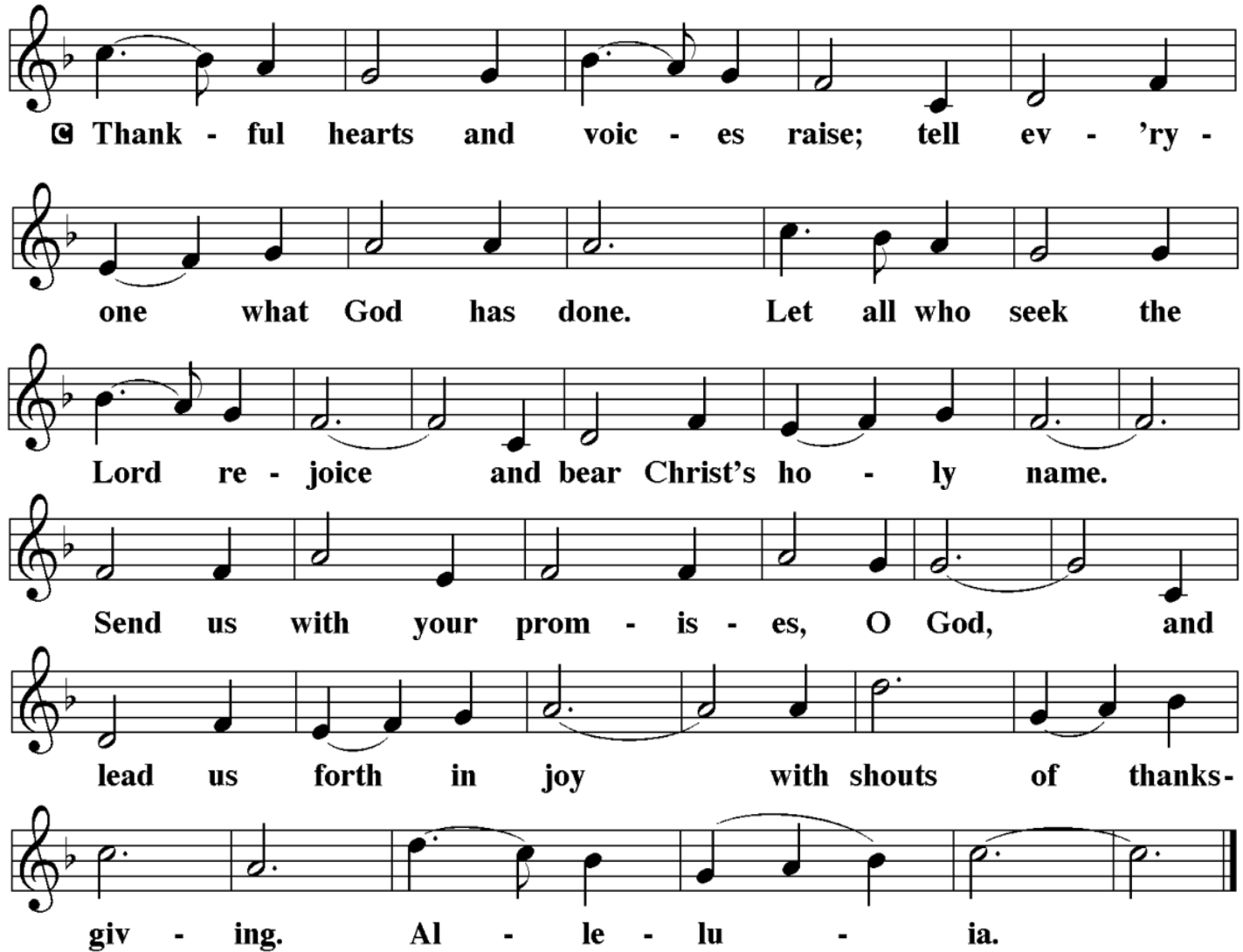
ELW 716

O Word of God Incarnate

ELW 514

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



☞ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in † Christ Jesus.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

God of Grace

(CWM RHONDDA)

John Hughes
setting, Paul O. Manz

Assisting Musicians

Cantors: Madeleine Hoffman, Roxanne Jeanotte, Vivian Jeanotte

Flute: Sue Cardinal

Guitars: James Berner, Rich Towsley

Trumpet: Richard DePasquale

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education
Of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
Used by permission. All rights reserved.
Christ Is Our Cornerstone: Text: Anonymous c. 500-600; tr. John Chandler Music: Gregory D. Wilbur

Notice of congregational meeting – Today! Sunday, October 29, following worship. Please attend Bethlehem's annual congregational meeting. Your presence will help us achieve the required quorum to conduct essential business of the congregation, including adopting a spending plan for the fiscal year. This meeting is in-person only.

Jesus Is Really into Relationships!

Love God, love neighbor, and love self. Jesus is really into relationships! Oftentimes, even if unintentionally, we put loving self first, and because “we are bound to sin and cannot free ourselves” we usually do a poor job of actually loving ourselves. This means we have less love to give to neighbor and even less for God. Jesus puts relationship with God first. He doesn’t do this to make us last but so that we can fully understand love and relationship the way God desires it for us.

Today’s readings give us insight into the ways God desires us to be in relationship: by being just in all our dealings with others, by not being lead astray by the wicked, by sharing the gospel with humility and tender care, and by loving God and neighbor. It might sound simple, but relationships are far from simple. Relationships are complex creatures with complex issues. Even the best relationships include struggle.

People in our congregations struggle with relationships each and every day. Love should be an easy thing, but it takes work and effort to love God, love others, and love oneself. In Psalm 1, the psalmist uses the image of trees planted by streams of water to describe people who “delight in the law of the Lord.” These are not weak, brittle, or dying trees; these are strong trees that prosper. Our faith plants us, nourishes us, and strengthens us to love.

How can we be like trees planted by streams of water? In what ways can the church help people to make and maintain healthy relationships? How do we encourage self-worth and humility? This is an excellent day to ask these questions, to create forums where answers can be discussed, and to remind one another how much God truly loves us.