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## *The Gathering*

**Prelude**

"Praeludium in G Major"

J.S. Bach

**Welcome and Announcements**

Lois Corbin, Elder

**Call to Worship**

Betty Kreger, Lay Leader

**L:** In creation, God is the center. God is Love --- and loving.

**P:** **From outside to inside, Love comes in.**

**L:** Love comes to the world from God through us.

**P:** **From outside to inside, Love pours in.**

**L:** Love seeks His kind and Love flows both ways.

**P:** **From inside to outside, Love must come out.**

**L:** God gives Love: we only have it: it cannot be stopped.

**P:** **From inside to outside, Love will always come out.**

**All:** **Love lives in us, through us, completes us, perfects us. God IS love and will not rest.**

**Opening Hymn**

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

No. 517 (1,3)

**Opening Prayer**

Betty Kreger

**Passing of Our Presence**

Video Presentation

**Children's Moment**

Sandy Pendergraft, Elder

# *The Reading and Proclamation of the Word*

## **Introduction to Scripture: 1 John 4:7-21 NRSV**

Betty Kreger

The passage today from 1 John continues the theme that is seen throughout the letter, of God loving us and us loving one another. This passage helps us answer the question of how people learn the nature of love. Many would give a psychological or sociological answer to the question of how we learn to love. Many would say that we learn to love from our families, however imperfectly, or from examples of love in society. But the answer given here is theological love comes from God. God is love, and if we do not translate that love to our brothers and sisters, we cannot love God. Indeed, we are incapable of loving God if we don't love our brothers and sisters. Hear now the words from 1 John 4:7-21.

## **Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:7-21 NRSV**

Betty Kreger

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

## **Special Music**

"Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts"  
Chancel Choir

Dale Peterson

## **Introduction to Scripture: Acts 8:26-40 NRSV**

Rev. Tanja Walker

In this passage from Acts, we learn more about the works of Philip, who presumably is the same Philip mentioned in Acts 6:5, one of the seven appointed by the apostles to serve the physical needs of the brand-new church. After the persecution in Jerusalem of The Way began, the leaders were scattered and Philip went to Samaria and preached there, healing people of unclean spirits along the way. As this passage begins, he is told by an angel of the Lord to go south to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. There, he encounters an Ethiopian eunuch, returning home from worshiping in Jerusalem. Because he is a foreigner and because he is a eunuch, he would not have been allowed in the Jewish temple, yet he wants to know more about the God of the Jews. His encounter with Philip results in the first conversion of a Gentile, pointing to Jesus' declaration in Acts 1:8 that his followers will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Hear now the story from Acts 8:26-40.

**Scripture Reading: Acts 8:26-40 NRSV**

Rev. Tanja Walker

<sup>26</sup> Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup> So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup> and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup> He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." <sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup> As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" <sup>38</sup> He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**Sermon**

"Outsider to Insider"

Rev. Tanja Walker

*The Church in Prayer***Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer**

Lois Corbin

*Remembrance through Communion***Invitation to Christ's Table**

Lois Corbin

Jesus gathered his friends and companions in the midst of a tense and dangerous time, they found each other at table, connecting over the story of God enfleshed among them. And so let us come to the table expectant, eager, open to tasting the rich blessings of heaven born from unexpected places, and people and experiences. In this meal we remember the life, death, and resurrection of the One who still takes flesh among us today. Let us prepare then to meet our Lord at this table.

**Special Music**

"Jesus Loves Me"  
Handbell Choir

William B. Bradbury  
arr. Joel Raney

**Prayer for the Bread and Cup/Words of Institution**

Rev. Tanja Walker

**Communion Response**

Congregation

*By eating this bread and drinking this cup,  
we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.*

# *Offerings Given in Response to Remembrance*

## **Moment of Stewardship**

Betty Kreger

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch as told by Luke in Acts is an amazing retelling of God guiding the direction of the evolving church, of reaching out to outsiders, to become insiders. There are several things worth noticing about how God directed Philip and how Philip responded. The God of this account is the same God who still speaks today, and the more we know of his ways, the more we are likely to recognize his voice in our own lives.

We have many resources and blessings to share that speak of God's blessing in our lives. As a church, in our personal and collective stewardship, we can choose to use these resources to show that Jesus abides in each of us. Often, we won't know if we've made an impact when we tell people about Jesus. But if we are responsive to God and people around us, it could be life changing.

## **Offering Prayer**

Betty Kreger

## **Doxology**

No. 50

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## *Sending Forth*

## **Invitation to Discipleship**

Rev. Tanja Walker  
[connect@fccponcacity.com](mailto:connect@fccponcacity.com)

## **Closing Hymn**

"All Who Love and Serve Your City"

No. 670 (1,5)

## **Benediction**

Lois Corbin

God of all, as we leave to take your message to the world,  
Give us courage to open a conversation with those we meet,  
Give us discernment to understand the yearning of their hearts,  
Give us wisdom to explain how Jesus can fulfill their deepest needs,  
And give us clarity to invite them into a relationship with your son, our savior, Jesus.  
Amen

## **Postlude**

"Voluntary in C Major"

Henry Smart

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**Greeters:** Jerry & Ruth Brace

**AV Tech Team:** Karen Adams, Mike Morriss

**Sound Board:** Bob Jorgenson, Sheila Kirkpatrick, Marta Sullivan

**Organist:** Burton Tidwell

**Chancel and Handbell Choir Director:** Marta Sullivan

**Accompanist:** Sheila Kirkpatrick

**Worship Planning Committee:** Chairman: Marta Sullivan; Members: Karen Adams, Diann Benson, Bob Corbin, Becky Davis, Rev. Kent Dorsey, Nancy Stevenson, Patti Ziegenhain

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