



**Kenilworth Union Church**  
**February 12, 2019, 12:15 p.m.**  
**Prayer allows us to experience God's love**

“Love each other as I have loved you.”

- **John 15:12**

**Opening Response**

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ,

**All: God invites us to bring our doubts and fears,**

Leader: our joys and concerns, our petitions and praise,

**All: and offer them for the earth and all who dwell here.**

**Scripture Reading**

1 Corinthians 13, responsively

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.** If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

**Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.** It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

**Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.** For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. **When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. **And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.**

**Reading** (F. Gregory Boyle, an ordained Jesuit priest, founded Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, which has become the largest gang intervention program in the world; he shares this story about Rene [a homie/former gang member] in his book, Barking to the Choir)

Rene is having a bad day. He's at the bus stop, eating a peach and stuck in a funk he can't shake. It's a common experience for homies when as my friend Celeste Fremon says, they "realize how thrown away they are." Things get dark. Today the darkness is weighing more heavily on Rene than his usual list of burdens and woes. It is nearly paralyzing.

Every day, before he heads to work at Homeboy, he can be found at this bus bench. An elderly Japanese woman is also there every day. He doesn't know where she goes; maybe a senior center. She is bent over and appears to be too old to work. Everyone always makes sure she gets a seat on the bench. The bus arrives, and six or so folks around Rene begin to line up to board. Rene makes sure the Japanese *viejita* is ahead of him. As they make their way onto the bus, the old lady turns to and says to Rene, "I admire you." This is the first time they've ever spoken.

"You do?" Rene asks. "Why?"

"You eat healthy," she says matter-of-factly. "Every morning you're here eating fruit. A banana. An apple. Today, a peach. You eat fruit. So I admire you." Rene helps her climb on the bus. They buy their tickets. She sits up front in the senior section. He sits in the back, in the unofficial "homie" section. He sits there and replays in his mind what the woman has said to him, and he realizes the funk is gone.

He can't help himself. He works his way through the morning crush of commuting bodies and finds the Japanese woman. He gets on one knee and looks her in the eye. "Thank you for bringing so much spirit into my day." The woman smiles, she touches Rene's arm, and he returns to the back of the bus. Every moment it turns out, is an invitation to recognize our interconnectedness. "You are the other me and I am the other you."

## **A Connected Church**

As we prepare for Valentine's Day, our culture prods us to buy extravagant gifts of fresh flowers, expensive meals, or precious jewelry to demonstrate our love for another. But Paul's words in 1 Corinthians remind us there are other ways of showing love. Waiting patiently in line, being gratuitously kind to another person, having genuine care without envy, eliminating boastfulness; being willing to subvert your desires to another's preferences. What if we choose not to be irritable or resentful...even for one day? Actions like this show love to not only to our family members, but even to a stranger at the hardware store or a bus stop. What if the elderly Japanese woman had chosen not to praise Rene that day? Many days had passed when she watched him eat a piece of fruit, but she did not say anything to him about her observations. By speaking up and acknowledging him for his healthy eating choices, she transformed his day...maybe her words gave him more faith in himself as someone worthy of being loved. What opportunities will God provide for you this week to demonstrate love in your words or actions? Jesus charges us to "Love each other as I have loved you." May God prompt you to "bring spirit" into another's day by sharing His love.

## **Prayers of the People**

Lord God, thank you for sending Jesus into the world to reveal your love to us in a deeper way. As we experience your love for us, help us to love others with the genuine traits that Paul describes to the Corinthians. Remind us how one woman's acknowledgement encouraged Rene's spirit. We now pause to listen to you in a time of silence: *(90 seconds of silence)*.

We thank you, Lord, for each of the individuals who serve faithfully as members of the Memorial Guild in our church. We are grateful for their selfless service to families who gather in this church to mourn the passing of a loved one with friends. Give them words of care and compassion in difficult circumstances, perhaps even the quiet presence of one willing to listen. Bless each of these men and women who serve in this ministry and encourage them that their efforts bring glory to you.

As our community seeks to express love for those in our congregation through prayer, we commit to pray for one another; today we pray for: James & Stephanie Cavanaugh, Clarke & Mary Caywood, Peter & Ellen Chadwick, Dave & Liz Chandler, Howie & Trina Chandler, Hamilton & Lilly Chang, Cynthia Chase-Kofkin and Robert Kofkin, Chris & Kim Chatain, Faris & Chris Chesley, Gene & Katherine Chiao, Candace Christman & Tim Kupczyk, Chris Cole, Tom & Connie Cole, Jim & Peggy Colley, Jerry & Jo Ann Collins, Rob & Mary Collins, Kevan & Katie Comstock. Harry & Brooke Conkey, Dana & Laura Connell, and Sean & Diana Connolly

We also pray for your grace and presence with members of our community who need you with them at this time.

We are grateful for the confidence we have in your love and grace as we lift these prayers up to you. Now we close with the prayer that you taught us to pray:

**Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Prayer for the Day**

David Adam

**We give thanks for all who have enriched our lives by their love  
and goodness, for families and friends, for those know to us  
and for the stranger. Amen.**

**Blessing**

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers

God of all the prophets, you knew us and chose us before you formed us in the womb. Fill us with faith that speaks your word, hope that does not disappoint, and love that bears all things for your sake, until that day when we shall know you fully, even as we are known by you. Amen.