



KENILWORTH UNION
CHURCH

Kenilworth Union Church
Sixth Week After Easter
May 11, 2021 at 12:15 p.m.

[Connect to Mid-Day Prayer Here](#)

“God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.”

Augustine

Opening Response

Psalm 100:1–4

Leader: Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

**All: Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before God with joyful songs.**

Leader: Know that the Lord is God.

**All: It is God who made us, and we are God’s;
we are God’s people, the sheep of God’s pasture.**

Psalm Reading

Psalm 98, responsively

Sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things;
God’s right hand and holy arm have worked salvation.

**The Lord has made salvation known
and revealed God’s righteousness to the nations.**

God has remembered God’s love and faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

**Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;**

Make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of
singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

**Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.**

Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

**Let them sing before the Lord,
for God comes to judge the earth.**

**God will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.**

Scripture Reading

John 15:9–17

“As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.”

As I was thinking about love this week I couldn't help but reflect on how, Jesus says people will know we are his disciples if we have love for one another. Acts of love are a joy to offer. What can sometimes hurt like (heck), is to accept and receive them.

For me, to be loved, is just harder somehow. Because feeling loved sometimes comes with some interesting company. Like, also feeling unworthy.

There always seem to be conditions we must meet in order to be truly lovable. We must be good people, obviously... *and* only think kind thoughts, *and* always have pure motives, *and* be selfless *and* well-groomed *and* funny *and* not have embarrassing habits and this goes without saying—obviously also be totally free of cellulite. *Then* we are worthy of love.

So sometimes receiving love, or grace for that matter, reminds us of all the conditions we have not met, in order to consider ourselves worthy of that love.

But the thing is: meeting the conditions of being worthy of love is *our* formula. Not God's. What makes you worthy of both giving AND receiving love is that God desires it for you. Were it not true, Jesus wouldn't have made such a big deal about wanting us to love one another. And by one another he means he wants you to both love and be loved. It may sting at first but it's like any medicine—eventually you will be healed by it.

Prayers of the People

Almighty and God, how deeply we appreciate this time to pray together, for our church, one another and ourselves. We are so grateful for your holy regard and humbly ask that we might approach and abide in you. Help us O, God, to grow and nurture a fuller and deeper understanding of what love is, to offer it generously to others, and to take in and accept love's grace when it is offered or generously given, to us. We listen for you now in this time of silence: _____ (*90 seconds of silence*).

We pray for the work of this church, and we pray in thankfulness and pleasure, as we begin again, to meet and worship face to face. We pray for those who are in the new members class, considering joining us in worship at Kenilworth Union Church. And we pray for the members in our church whose names we speak now—for your presence and your peace for them and their families: John & Jill Fix, John & Linda Fix, Bill & Joan Flader, Vandy Fleming, Laurie Flentye, Linda Flentye, Patty Flentye, Tim & Kristin Flentye, Andrew & Katie Florig, Kevin & Melanie Flynn, Mike & Susan Flynn, Christopher & Kristen Folland, Bill & Sue Folland, Andrew & Lucy Folland, John & Dee Fortson, Mike & Molly Foster, Scott & Maria Fowkes, Margaret Ann Fowler, Sherry Fowler, and Todd & Justine Fowler.

As we approach and re-enter the world beyond our quarantines and cautious living, help us God, to remember the lessons that came to us in the past year. Help us to bring these learnings with us as our lives pick up pace. Help us to remember what is important. And as we celebrate vaccinations and reunions, help us be mindful of the very many who mourn, for those who feel devastating loss, for those who are lost.

We pray the names of those known to us—with love and compassion. Please God be with those who need to be reassured of your love, care and presence.

Thank you, God for our beautiful world in springtime. For new growth—for green and flowering abundance. Thank you for the way you restore us, that even when the worst things happen, it is not the end. Thank you for promising to be with us always. We pray all these things to you with the deepest gratitude, as your beloved creations, in the name of Jesus, who 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.**

Blessing

Lord, God, open our eyes to your presence,
open our ears to your call,
open our hearts to your love,
that we may be aware of you
and your coming to us all. Amen.

David Adam