



Wednesday Prayer

4th Sunday after Epiphany – Love as a Call to Action

**“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three:
and the greatest of these is love.”
1 Corinthians 13:13**

Of all Bible passages that are taken out of context and misused in our modern era, this one probably wins the prize for frequency. It’s often used in weddings and other contexts where it is thought to convey a warm and cozy feeling, but Paul’s intent was quite the opposite. The church in Corinth was a mess with arrogant arguing, in-fighting, and division among its diverse members. Paul’s kind of love was a call to action, put-in-the-hard-work kind of love in which we reach out with compassion instead of complacency, patience instead of willfulness. It unifies rather than divides.

Too many congregations today are like the congregation in Corinth. We’re broken sinful people, and too often we want things our own way, and we bully and argue, or simply leave if worship is at a different time than we want to worship, or if someone says something we don’t agree with. Children and youth see this behavior and sadly may come to the conclusion that people in the church act just like people in their community or in their homes that are acting in hurtful, hateful, or harmful ways - so they stay away.

When we are able to hear Paul’s words with new ears, and answer this call to action through love by fostering caring conversations with people who are different from ourselves, we instead show children a different life from what they see elsewhere. We send the message that this is a safe place that offers hope, so they aren’t drawn to the false promises of those who want to exploit them. Join us tomorrow over your lunch hour for a [Lunch & Learn: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Youth](#). You’ll hear from Lutheran Social Service professionals supporting youth across the state of Minnesota and what we as community members can do.

Together, let’s find new ways to show children and youth that faith, hope and especially love, are alive in your community.

God who welcomes all in love, we pray that today’s church may proclaim and live out your love to all. Amen.

Written by Kay Kinkel, MSW, LICSW, a Behavioral Health Professional with LSS, a member of the Cherish All Children Advisory Board, and a member of St. John’s Lutheran in Shakopee, MN.