

**Sunday Worship - May 5, 2024**  
*Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*



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**Narrative Lectionary Year 2 Week 35**  
**The Season of Easter: The Greatest Is Love**  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Mark 12:28-31

**First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa**

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –  
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

## Welcome to Worship

\*Please stand if you are able

### PRELUDE

### RINGING OF THE HOUR

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, beloved of God,

**All: laying aside the hard and harsh ways of the world.**

One: Come, beloved of God,

**All: to practice the patient and kind ways of love.**

One: Come, beloved of God,

**All: to trust the love that holds fast in all things. Hearts soft and minds open, we come.**

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### \*OPENING PRAYER

Leader: We come seeking, O God, peering toward you though we see only dimly,  
listening though we understand only partly, learning slowly though we are already fully known.  
Make us present to the fullness of your kingdom today  
that we may surrender our illusion of control  
and find ourselves grounded in your love. Amen.

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### \*HYMN #366 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

- 1. Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.*
- 2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;  
let us all in thee inherit; let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.*
- 3. Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*
- 4. Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:  
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

## \*CALL TO CONFESSION & PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Leader: To truly come before God requires that we are first honest with ourselves about who we are, about the mistakes we make, and about how well or poorly we care for others.

In this spirit, let us offer our prayers to God:

**ALL: Your love stands firm, no matter how hard we push, O God.**

**We press for advantage, we weigh heavy on your creation,  
we try to skirt round the edges so we can claim faithfulness while getting what we want,  
and still your love stands firm:**

**the foundation you give us to build on,**

**the fundamentals we must learn if we are to live your kingdom life.**

**We confess that we do not like to practice fundamentals.**

**We don't want to put in the effort, the time, the repetition;  
practicing is boring and we would rather be out performing.**

**Forgive our shallow hearts, O God.**

**Remind us that when we do not practice love, all else we do is just that:**

**performance, getting attention but leaving us only hollow nothingness.**

**You have shown us the more excellent way,**

**the way that leads to life deeper than the mask, the way that satisfies every longing.**

**May your forgiveness draw us into practice,**

**building up our capacity to love more and more, as you do.**

~©Teri Peterson for BibleWorm

*Time of silent prayer*

## \*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Amen.

God is love — love that withstands all things, even the worst we can do.

God is love — love that believes all things, even the unbelievable.

God is love — love that endures all things, even to the end of the age.

And this love is for you. This love surrounds you. This love is in you.

Live in Love, and be at peace.

## \*RESPONSE HYMN #583 Gloria, Gloria

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

*Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: Hear the teaching of Christ:

A new command I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 13:34)

The peace of Christ be with you all!

**ALL: And also with you.**

## DISCOVERY TIME

## SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: In the beginning was the Word.

**ALL: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

Leader: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (NRSV, Updated Edition) – The Greatest is Love

Reader 1: If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.

Reader 2: <sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Reader 3: <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, 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. <sup>13</sup> And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

Mark 12:28-31 (NRSV, Updated Edition) - The Greatest Commandment

Reader 2: One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;’ <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup> The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,  
**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

## REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN #693 Though I May Speak (The Gift of Love)

- 1. Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire,  
and have not love, my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.*
- 2. Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess,  
but not be given by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin.*
- 3. Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control; our spirits long to be made whole.  
Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship, and are freed.*

## CALL FOR THE OFFERING & PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Leader: With gratitude, we offer ourselves and our gifts in response to God's abundant generosity and provision. Let us pray together:

**ALL: We offer ourselves with our gifts, Giver and Sustainer of Life, confident that you have a purpose for them and for us. Expand our limited vision to embrace new possibilities.**

**We rededicate ourselves to you with our giving. May our offerings reach beyond the barriers of our former thinking and doing. In the Spirit of Christ, we would pray and live. Amen.**

*~Worship Sourcebook 2nd Edition*

## GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

## SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

~ "Bread of Life: An All Ages Liturgy" by Nancy Cocks, *Iona Big Book of Liturgies*, pp. 50-54

### INVITATION

Come and see the gifts of God's love,  
laid on this table waiting for you.  
Come and touch the gifts of God's love for you,  
love as fresh as sliced baked bread,  
love as lively as wine on the tongue.  
Come and taste the goodness of God,  
broken open and poured out for you in Jesus' life and death.  
Come and share the goodness of God, in Jesus' name.  
Wherever you've come from, whatever your age,  
come and know that all this is for you.  
Whoever you are, wherever you've been,  
whatever you've done, all this is for you  
when you receive these giftswith all your heart, strength, mind and soul.

## PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: God who makes us wonder, Maker of all that is:

we bless you for every good gift in the world –

for snow and sunshine to make it sparkle, for starlight in the deep night sky,

for seeds waking up as the spring comes closer.

We bless you for food to eat and water to drink, gifts of this good old earth.

We join our voices with all these amazing thingsto praise you for the life you give us.

Jesus, you walk beside us day by day.

It is so good to know that you lived a life like ours,

walked in the sun, got tired, had sore feet.

It's even better to know you enjoyed your food,  
sitting down with your good friends for a meal.

You laughed and you cried. And you played with children in the town square.  
We thank you that you lived on earth and died on earth  
to show us how to find God in the middle of everything that happens.  
Here and now you meet us and feed us at this table,  
just as all your other friends around the world meet you at theirs.

Holy Spirit, Breath of God, breathe on us now and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
As we taste the bread, make us remember that God will always give us  
everything we need to live.

As we sip our cups, make us remember  
that you are God's love within us to show how to share everything we have  
with neighbors in need and make the world a wonderful place to live in.

As often as we eat bread or drink wine in Jesus' name,  
help us remember that your love will never let us go. Amen

## BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Jesus said, 'I am the Bread of Life. Take this to remember me.'

Jesus said, 'I am the vine and you are my branches.'

This is the cup of joy. Drink from it, all of you, to remember Jesus.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Taste and see that God is good.

## SHARING THE MEAL

HYMN #507 Come to the Table of Grace (verses 1-2,4-5)

1. *Come to the table of grace. Come to the table of grace.  
This is God's table; it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of grace.*
2. *Come to the table of peace. Come to the table of peace.  
This is God's table; it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of peace.*
4. *Come to the table of hope. Come to the table of hope.  
This is God's table; it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of hope.*
5. *Come to the table of joy. Come to the table of joy.  
This is God's table; it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of joy.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Leader: Let us pray:

**ALL: Loving God, your love is as close to us as our own hands and feet. People who need your love are as close to us as the people beside us, behind us and in front of us. Send us now into your world to love each other, sure that you love us. Show us where we are needed and how we can make a difference so that the world will be a good place for all your people. We know this is what Jesus wanted. Help us live for Jesus wherever we go. Amen.**

\*HYMN #137 He Came Down

*He came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have love;  
hallelujah forevermore.*

*Additional stanzas:*

*...that we may have light  
...that we may have peace  
...that we may have joy*

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:

Emily Fitzpatrick, Liturgist  
Communion Servers  
Gerald Gerber & Scott Larson, AV  
Fellowship Host

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:

Lori Wunder, Pastor  
*Kristi Karwal Clark, Director of Christian Education*  
*Position Vacant, Music Director*  
Donna Warhover, Office Manager  
Jonathan Walsh, Treasurer  
Trent Bowman, Custodian