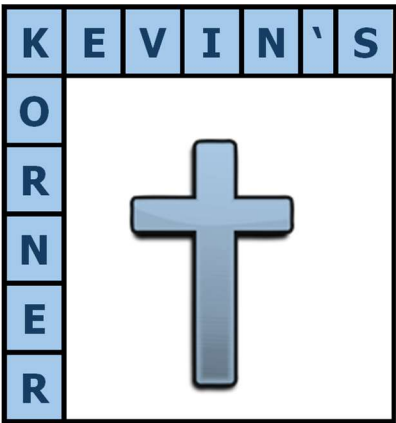




The scene is set. Jesus gathers at the table with his disciples to break bread and break the news that this is their Last Supper together. Alarming fear, bitter betrayal, and tension-laden uncertainty fill the room. In the midst of this unsettling moment, the Gospel of John records Jesus’ “famous last words.” Central among these was the commandment to love one another. How do we survive, or even thrive, in times like these? We put love into action, replacing “othering” with “neighboring.”

Love is a verb, an action word. This is right at the heart of our identity as First Christian Church. Sure, we proclaim:

At First Christian Church, Grand Junction, our identity is deeply rooted in God’s Word and the love of Jesus Christ. We are:

Reaching Up to God in engaging and transformative Worship.

Reaching In, through the Holy Spirit, to nurture spiritual growth, acceptance, belonging and connection as individuals and as a community of faith.

Reaching Out to serve others and share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Reaching up; engaging, worshiping, reaching in; nurturing, growing, accepting, belonging, connecting, reaching out; serving, sharing. These verbs all describe our identity as a church and they all describe what we do as a church. And these verbs all describe one word; Love. This brings me back to the top, the scene we will portray in our worship series in October, “Love One Another” (Replacing “othering” with “neighboring”). The first Sunday, October 4th, is World Communion Sunday, which brings our focus on the world’s greatest example of love, as Jesus brings all of his heritage, his ministry, his teachings, his identity and his very life to the climax around a simple table in a simple upper room, located in Jerusalem. Jesus brought his entire story together in one word, Love.

During our worship series in October we will focus on this one word, Love. “Love one another.” “Show us” (This is Love). “Abide in Love.” And, “You are my Friends.” This all takes place around the Table of Love, the Lord’s Supper, which we celebrate in every worship service. It reminds us every week that Love is the center of our lives of faith. At this table we remember how much God loves us. At this table we show how much we love God. And then we show the world how much we love God, by our actions during the week.

In preparation for our October worship series, “Love One Another” (Replacing “othering” with “neighboring”), I invite you to prepare ahead of time, by considering Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John,

*"This is my commandment,
that you love one another
as I have loved you."*

So let us Love!

Blessings,

Pastor Kevin