

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1) The sacrifice required of us is a “living sacrifice” in which we utilize our spiritual gifts in service to others. What gifts do you possess that you may demonstrate your love for others as a living sacrifice? Write your thoughts here, asking God to reveal how you may utilize your gifts in loving others.

### Thursday, September 19

Read John 15:9-17. When considering the second phrase of our Mission Statement – Connecting with Others - we are talking about two vital connections: the connection within our church as well as the connections we make in the world meeting the needs of others. In the church we connect with each other, each of us bound by God’s love founded in Christ and each of us offering our gifts in service making up the body of Christ in the world.

The love we demonstrate to each other within the church is a supportive love that seeks the spiritual well-being of each other and the discovery of God’s guidance upon our lives. How can you help others in the church to be spiritual healthy and vital part of Christ’s body? What can others offer you in order to be a healthy member of the body of Christ? Write your thoughts here and ask for God’s guidance for understanding what it means to be the healthy body of Christ.

### Friday, September 20

Read I John 3:18-24. The second vital connection we need to make as a church is with those in need. Once we become the body of Christ in the world, we are moved by Christ’s example to love others – meeting their needs. What do you consider to be the greatest needs of “our world?” Write your thoughts here and consider how we might love others with the love of Christ.

## Message Notes – September 15, 2024

### *Our Mission: Connecting With Others* \*

- I. The truth is that \_\_\_\_\_ friendships or \_\_\_\_\_ friendships can only do so much.
  - A. If you asked the average person, "How many friends do you *really* have?" they aren't going to put up \_\_\_\_\_ fingers.
  - B. The truth is that if they have any \_\_\_\_\_ friendships, they can probably count them on one hand.
  - C. Meaningful \_\_\_\_\_ are harder to come by and fewer in number.
- II. The reason that Jesus gives for his willingness to have his own life cut off is “\_\_\_\_\_” for his “\_\_\_\_\_.”
  - A. Here’s where a little understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ language might be helpful: The word used here for “love” (*phileo*) is a form of the word translated “friend” (*philos*).
    1. In Greek, a “friend” is literally one who is \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. Friendship, in the way that Jesus uses it, is always grounded in a deeper love that endures; and this love Jesus speaks of endures in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. To be a “friend” of Jesus, then, means to be one who is loved in a \_\_\_\_\_ way.
    1. But it also means following Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. “This is my \_\_\_\_\_,” says Jesus to his disciples, “that you love one another as I have loved you” (v. 12).
      - a. We must love others \_\_\_\_\_, too, being willing to lay down our own lives as

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\*John 15:9-17 and I John 3:18-24

Jesus did for us.

- III. When it comes to the second phrase of our Mission Statement, ***Connecting with Others***, we are talking about two \_\_\_\_\_ connections: the connection \_\_\_\_\_ our church as well as the connections we make in the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting the needs of others.
- A. In the church we connect with each other, each of us bound by God's love founded in Christ and each of us offering our gifts in service making up the \_\_\_\_\_ in the world.
  - B. The second connection we're speaking of when we say "Connecting with Others" is connecting with those in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. Connecting with others means being the body of Christ in the world wherever we are in the world and – connecting with others means being the body of Christ both here in this \_\_\_\_\_ and when you walk out that door.
  - D. It means being the body of Christ in Waterford, Pontiac, White Lake, Keego Harbor, Rochester, Auburn Hills – \_\_\_\_\_ you live, work and play.
    - 1. To be clear, Jesus wasn't talking about – and I'm not talking about – rent-a-friend or friendship \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2. We're talking about friends as those who are \_\_\_\_\_.

## ***Daily Meditations and Study Guide***

The following is a daily meditation and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, September 16**

Read John 15:9-17. The message was the second in a series of messages about our church's Mission Statement. It was said that a local congregation must have focus and intentionality in determining their identity and direction for ministry. Jesus made

it clear that as His followers we are to love one another as He loves us.

The love that Christ has for each of us is lived out first in our love for one another and for the world. The leadership of our church has worked very diligently on making sure that our Mission Statement is more than a slogan but rather a vehicle that shapes the ministry of our congregation. Read our Mission Statement on the front of our bulletin, meditate upon it and write your thoughts here – praying that God will reveal the way our Mission Statement can be lived out in your life.

### **Tuesday, September 17**

Read John 15:9-17. Pay close attention to and meditate on verse 15 where Jesus tells his followers "I have called you friends." The word used here for "love" (*phileo*) is a form of the word translated "friend" (*philos*). In Greek, a "friend" is literally one who is loved. It's more than just a connection of shared common interests and goals. Friendship, in the way that Jesus uses it, is always grounded in a deeper love that endures; and this love Jesus speaks of endures in you and me.

Think about your friends. How many deep friendships do you have? Are these deep friendships marked by love? How would you characterize your friendships – both within and outside the church? Write your thoughts here and ask God to guide you in developing deep and loving friendships.

### **Wednesday, September 18**

Read John 15:9-17 and I John 3:18-24. Yesterday, we mentioned that the Biblical concept of a friend is "one who is loved." This love is also sacrificial. Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13) How might your love for those in the church and those in need in the communities we serve be sacrificial?