

## **DEVOTION IN COVID TIMES**

### **Scripture**

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.”

*(1 John 4:7–8)*

### **Call to Presence**

God speaks to us in parables and stories.

God remembers us as we re-member ourselves to God and each other.

We discover the wonders God has set before us when we listen to God and each other.

May we share our stories of God and listen, as we come into God’s presence.

### **Prayer of the Day**

We come into your presence, Holy God, standing at the crossroads of past and future. All we have is this moment, this day. We lift our prayers to you, for you are greater than who we are and all we know. We have come through Election Day turmoil, and we are struggling with a pandemic that is out of control and continues to spread throughout our world. As we come to you, may we leave our feelings of despair and loss with you. Lift our hearts and fill our emptiness with your love. God of community, restore our faith, that we may place our hope in you. Amen.

### **Some Thoughts**

We have been through so much this year and it’s not over yet. The virus is still spreading, our churches are still struggling, the storms and fires are still coming, and the election is not over until it’s over! It is hard to imagine what life will be like when all this passes. And when it does, will we be any closer to knowing and loving God?

But love is perhaps the last thing we need to be reminded of in these days following the election. Yet maybe love is what we need to talk about, since love is God’s mandate for us. Love is who we are, and how we are called to treat one another. Many Christians say they know God because they read the Bible, go to church and pray, but their actions do not show that they know God’s love. The scripture says, “Whoever loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). Few of us show God’s love by loving what God loves, so how can we say we know God?

Jesus says that the entire law and the prophets are summed up in two great commandments: love God and love one another (Matthew 22:36–40). It is hard to hear these commandments because they require a new understanding of knowing and loving God, something we cannot do on our own. Our understandings of God and of love are affected by so many factors, our experiences and culture. We think love means liking our enemies and forgetting the trauma we’ve experienced. We think knowing God means reading the Bible and going to church. We are caught in our own minds and there’s little room for listening to and learning from God.

We are all beginners. We are all starting over each day, and we rely on the mercy, grace, and compassion of God. This is what opens us to knowing and loving what God loves.

What resonates with you about God's love? What else would you say...

### **Prayer for Our Community**

O Great God, thank you for knowing and loving us. May all that we do and all that we say flow from our deep connection with you and each other. Help us become a community that shares each other's burdens and works to love what you love. Listen to our prayers for the healing of our world: *[please add your own prayers]* . . .

We offer these thoughts and prayers in your holy name. Amen.

### **A Closing Song**

**Hymn**

**"Love Divine, all loves excelling**

**UMH 384**

<https://youtu.be/jPsxqQsnzJA>