

Christ Moravian Church
Pastoral Letter for the Weekend of May 24th, 2020

Greetings Friends in Christ:

I'm sure we all have enjoyed this shift into springtime weather...warmer temps, sunshine, refreshing rains, buds, blossoms, lush greens coming to life. Springtime offers such a gift in God's creation coming to new life once again. Amidst this time of the COVID-19 virus, springtime is life-giving as we begin to plant some marigolds, trim the trees, mow the lawn, or walk around the neighborhood to see what's new.

Again, I find it so fitting that the Moravian Watchwords speak to our experience with insight. This week's watchword from 1 Peter 5:7 says: "Cast all your anxiety on God, because God cares for you." In these days of anxiousness and worry we find calm and peace knowing God partners with us to carry our anxiety.

We realize that as May shifts into June more activities will begin to open up following the suspension of various business and activities. The CMC Executive Board and Fellowship of Elders will be carefully discerning the guidance and direction of the health care experts as we consider the resumption of certain activities. Some discussions have recognized that our "theology", our core values and our faith beliefs, will be firmly reflected in these decisions.

The Executive Board met this past week in a virtual gathering. As the pastor of CMC, I am so grateful for the faithful and conscientious leadership found throughout the congregation's life, especially within the Executive Board. You will find a financial update from the CMC Treasurer, David Bennett attached to this e-mail. In it you will read the latest update on the financial picture of CMC, and please know that all of the generous support and financial donations are a sign of faithful people with a love of Christ. Many thanks for the generous outpourings of gifts at such a difficult time.

This week's video worship service is a special "Singing Service", so I thank all the folks who sent in their favourite selections, and apologies to those whose songs were not able to be included. Steve Blackwell will make this service available on Saturday.

Along with the weekly worship service posted on this website, CMC continues to offer virtual opportunities to be together to share our faith. Links to these events are provided in the May 22 email, or you may contact the church office. Materials for the Bible Study and for the young folks and children are available in this letter.

- CMC Men's Group: Saturday, May 23, 8:30 am
- Bible Study: Sunday, May 24, 9 am
- Virtual Fellowship Gathering,: Wednesday, May 27, 2 pm

Andrea is now publishing the updated 2020 Congregation Directory. One copy will be mailed out to each household. If you require an additional copy, or if anyone would prefer to receive this in PDF format, please contact Andrea at moravian@nucleus.com stating your request.

Thanks!

A reminder that May birthday Sunday will be on the May 31st video, and I need your submission of those May birthday's by Tuesday, May 26 to be included on the video list. And, for those who have been collecting "Noisy Offering Donations" please email me the amount each person has collected, and we will celebrate this grand total.

Finally, Don Niefer continues to make available the "Bread for the Journey" devotional booklets, and the edition for June, July, August is here. Please email the church if you wish to receive a copy...it will be mailed to you.

Shalom,

Pastor Steve

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

SPIRIT OF LOVE: LOVING
NEIGHBOR

Acts 10:1–48

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

WHERE THE SPIRIT IS moving, love for God always, always, always overflows in love for neighbor. And according to Jesus, our neighbor isn't just the person who is like us, the person who likes us, or the person we like. Our neighbor is anyone and everyone—like us or different from us, friend or stranger—even enemy. As Peter learned in his encounter with Cornelius, the Spirit wants to break down walls of prejudice and hostility so that we stop judging *us* as clean and *them* as unclean, opening the way for strangers and enemies to become neighbors, friends, family.

That comes as a shock to many of us who were taught that *same is safe* and *different is dangerous*. That belief probably served our ancestors well at certain points in our history. Their survival often depended on maintaining trust in “our” tribe and fear of other tribes. That's why they used paint, feathers, clothing, language, and even religion as markers, so everyone would know who was same and safe and *us*, and who was different and dangerous and *them*.

Driven by that belief, our ancestors spread out across the world, each tribe staking out its own territory, each guarding its borders from an invasion by others, each trying to expand its territory whenever possible, each driving others farther and farther away. No wonder our history is written in blood: wars, conquests, invasions, occupations, revolutions, and counter-

revolutions. The winners take all, and the losers, if they aren't killed or enslaved, escape to begin again somewhere else.

Eventually, because the Earth is a sphere, our dispersing tribes had to come full circle and encounter one another again. That is our challenge today. We must find a way to live together on a crowded planet. We have to graduate from thinking in terms of “our kind versus their kind” to thinking in terms of “humankind.” We must turn from the ways of our ancestors and stop trying to kill off, subjugate, or fend off everyone we judge different and dangerous. We must find a new approach, make a new road, pioneer a new way of living as neighbors in one human community, as brothers and sisters in one family of creation.

That's why the apostle Paul repeatedly describes how in Christ we see humanity as one body and our differences as gifts, not threats, to one another. In Christ, Paul came to realize that people aren't different because they're trying to be difficult or evil—they're different because the Spirit has given them differing gifts. Just as a foot needs an eye to tell it where to step, and just as a nose needs a hand to grasp the food it smells, and just as feet, eyes, noses, and hands all need kidneys and bones and skin . . . we humans need other humans who are different from ourselves. The Spirit of God, we learn, is a team spirit, and in the holy team Spirit, we experience a unity that is energized by diversity.

That doesn't mean all our tribes need to wear the same paint and feathers, speak the same language, cook with the same spices, and celebrate the same religious holidays. But it means all our human tribes—nations, religions, cultures, parties—need to convert from what we might call dirty energy to clean energy to fuel our tribal life. True, the dirty energy of fear, prejudice, supremacy, inferiority, resentment, isolation, and hostility is cheap, abundant, and familiar. That's why our societies run on it, even though it's destroying us. More than ever before in our history, we need a new kind of personal and social fuel. Not fear, but love. Not prejudice, but openness. Not supremacy, but service. Not inferiority, but equality. Not resentment, but reconciliation. Not isolation, but connection. Not the spirit of hostility, but the holy Spirit of hospitality.

So the “most excellent way,” Paul said, is the way of love. Old markers of

gender, religion, culture, and class must recede: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Old tribal indicators, he says, count for nothing: "the only thing that counts is faith working through love." Where the Spirit is, love is. Where the Spirit teaches, people learn love. Faith communities at their best are Spirit-schools of love, engaging everyone, from little children to great-grandparents, in lifelong learning. In the school of the Spirit, everyone majors in love.

Of course, if love remains a generality, it's just a word. That's why the New Testament is serious about translating love into practical, specific, concrete, down-to-Earth action. Because each of us has something to give and much to receive, the term *one another* keeps popping up on page after page of the New Testament. These "one-anothers" tell us what the prime directive—*love one another*—looks like in action:

1. "**Love one another** as I have loved you." (John 13:34; John 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22, 1 Pet. 3:8, 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 1 John 4:7, 11; 2 John 1:5)
2. "**Wash one another's feet... serve one another in love.**" (John 13:14, Gal. 5:13)
3. "**Be at peace with each other.**" (Mark 9:50, 1 Thess. 5:13, 1 Pet. 3:8)
4. "**Be devoted to one another** with mutual affection." (Rom. 12:10)
5. "**Honor one another above yourselves.**" (Rom. 12:10)
6. "**Live in harmony with one another.**" (Rom. 12:16)
7. "**Stop passing judgment on one another.**" (Rom. 14:13)
8. "**Accept one another** as Christ accepted you." (Rom. 15:7)
9. "**Greet one another with a holy kiss.**" (Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Pet. 5:14)
10. "**Agree with one another** so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor. 1:10)
11. "When you come together to eat, **wait for each other.**" (1 Cor. 11:33)

12. "But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should **have equal concern for each other.**" (1 Cor. 12:24–25)
13. "**Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**" (Gal. 5:26)
14. "**Carry each other's burdens**, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)
15. "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, **bearing with one another** in love." (Eph. 4:2, Col. 3:13)
16. "**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other**, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13, 1 Thess. 5:15)
17. "**Submit to one another** out of reverence for Christ." (Eph. 5:21)
18. "**Do not lie to each other.**" (Col. 3:9)
19. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you **teach and admonish one another** with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God." (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16)
20. "Therefore **encourage one another** and **build each other up.**" (1 Thess. 5:11, Heb. 3:13)
21. "And let us consider how we may **spur one another on toward love and good deeds.** Let us not give up meeting together... but let us **encourage one another.**" (Heb. 10:24–25)
22. "Brothers and sisters, **do not slander one another.**" (James 4:11)
23. "**Don't grumble against each other.**" (James 5:9)
24. "Therefore **confess your sins to each other** and **pray for each other** so that you may be healed." (James 5:16)
25. "**Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.**" (1 Pet. 4:9)
26. "**Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.**" (1 Pet. 5:5)

For all of us who want to be part of the movement of God's Spirit in our world, there is no more important and essential pursuit than love. That's

why we walk this road. That's why we seek to improve our fluency and grace in "one-anothering"—especially with people who seem very different from us. For in the story of creation, in the adventure and uprising of Jesus, and in the movement of the Spirit, to love is to live.

ENGAGE:

1. What one thought or idea from today's lesson especially intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenged, encouraged, warmed, warned, helped, or surprised you?
2. Share a story about a time when someone affirmed one of your unique gifts or abilities, and when you appreciated the unique gifts or abilities of someone else.
3. How do you respond to the list of one-another's?
4. For children: What's something you're really good at, and something you're not so good at?
5. Activate: Take a few minutes with each person around your table to identify and affirm some gifts or virtues you see in them. Have someone place a hand on that person's head or shoulder and pray for the Spirit to fill and empower that person in love.
6. Meditate: In silence, simply hold the term "one another" before God. Open yourself to the depths of meaning in this beautiful term.

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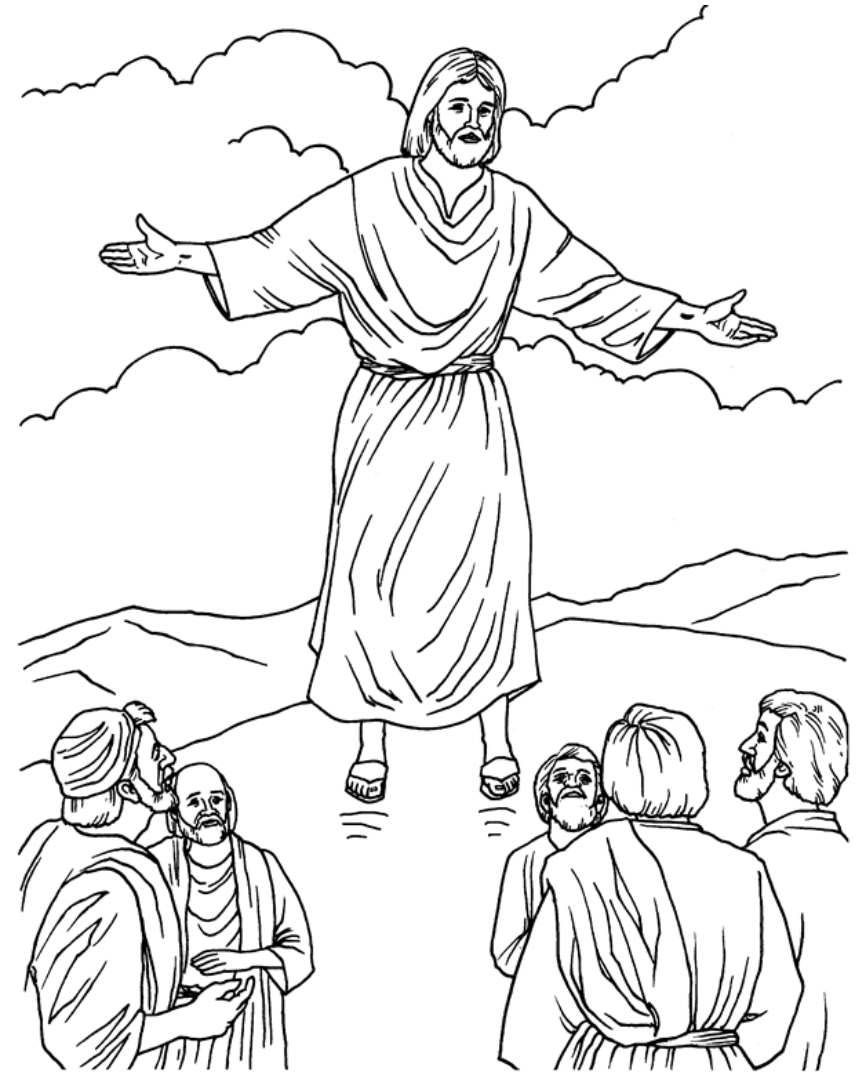
The Ascension

Luke 24:44-53

Word Search Puzzle

B T Q O M D Q S U F F E R U F
F N C Q W O P S A L M S T S A
G X N Q O F S M Z Z H N U C O
B B Y C R O T E C M E T N R J
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J S X V S E W F R N D X I C H
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RISE	REPENT	PROPHETS	TAKEN
SUFFER	PSALMS	OPENED	FORGIVE
HEAVEN	SCRIPTURE	FULFILLED	MOSES
WORSHIPED	BLESSING	UNDERSTAND	MINDS



The Ascension

Christ Moravian Church
Calgary, Alberta

Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

X	W	V	D	J	Q	R	I	B	S	O	A	E	U	C	P	K	N	H	L	G	M	Y	Z	F	T
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

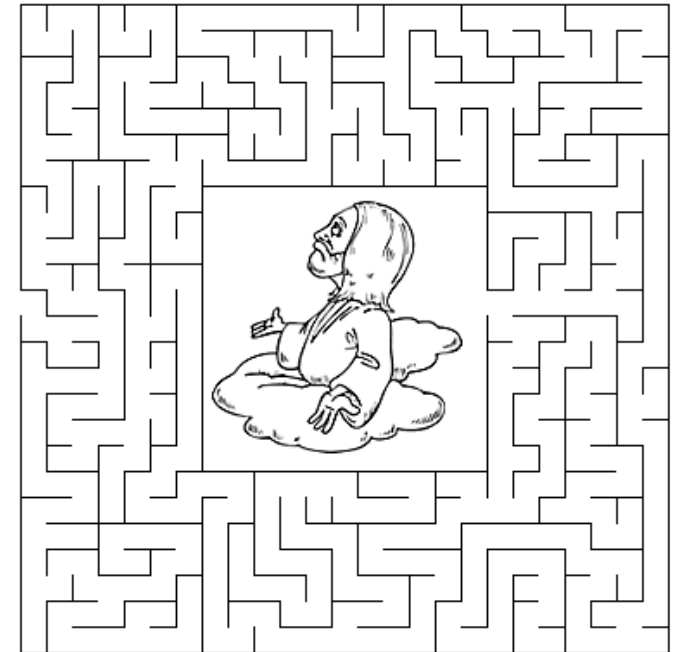
- 25-14-20-25-8-20-20-13-4 _____
- 11-16-13-18-13-4 _____
- 22-8-18-4-10 _____
- 10-15-7-8-16-26-14-7-13 _____
- 7-8-10-13 _____
- 7-13-16-13-18-26 _____
- 9-20-13-10-10-8-18-21 _____
- 26-12-17-13-18 _____
- 19-13-12-3-13-18 _____
- 2-11-7-10-19-8-16-13-4 _____

SCRIPTURE	RISE	REPENT	HEAVEN	BLESSING
MINDS	TAKEN	OPENED	WORSHIPED	FULFILLED



Maze Puzzle

Start Here

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