

Sermon for Sunday May 10 2026

John 14:15-21 – Easter 6

I loved my grandmother. I would describe her as a very opinionated but very committed Christian. She told me once that I would make a good pastor because I was big and would fill the pulpit nicely. Strange qualifications. She lived two houses away from the church in Mitchell and knew everything that happened. With her friends she would sneak into the church and sit in the balcony to watch all the weddings. Of course, like many of the ladies from the church, she was a member of the lady's auxiliary and the quilting group. She loved quilting and she was a perfectionist. I heard stories of her going back to the church after everyone had left to rip out one person's stitches and redo them. Can you imagine? Again, though she loved to quilt. She made a quilt for each of her grandchildren to be given to them when they got married. I received one at my first wedding. I have used it every day even after my divorce and it is still in really good shape. Although the quilt is not a comforter, when I go to bed each night, I feel comforted wrapped in a special item made with love.

Jesus is referred to as many things. In our text today he is referred to as the Paraclete or Advocate, which is one of many ways to describe him. His actions can be described in other ways. He is a comforter. He is many other things. What would some of those things be? Just shout them out...

Redeemer, Healer, Miracle Worker, Friend, Sanctifier, Helper, Intercessor, Counsellor, Spirit of Truth, Prince of Peace, King of Kings, Lord of Hosts.

The disciples knew this but there was much for them to learn.

Jesus had told the disciples the words of John 13 and 14 encouraging a new world order after he died just twenty-four hours later. The disciples had a choice. They could give up after Jesus was gone. They could've joined the world of vengeance, victims and victors.

Recognizing the disciples might feel abandoned, vulnerable, and even orphaned by God, Jesus promises them that he will send an Advocate who will offer comfort after he is gone. He promises his followers that they will not be left orphaned.

This text is kind of sobering. We live between two worlds and, caught between them, we worry. We worry about melting ice caps, jobs, health care, and politics. We worry about having enough and being enough, about measuring enough or about contributing too much or too little. We worry about the poor and disenfranchised, about being safe and valued, about the world future generations will inherit. We worry about people with different worldviews and priorities, about the church and its future, about the fidelity and presence of God. We can wear ourselves out with worry.

Jesus invites us into a different world, one in which he reigns, love is widespread, and we are not orphaned but have an ever-present Advocate. Poised between reality and hope, wavering between thinking of this moment as a crushing moment of difficulty or a wondrous moment of possibility, God is our call and the world's deepest need, we are invited into a world where we who love Jesus resist temptations to forget or doubt him, instead trusting and following his commandments, "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34).

Rather than living as if Jesus is dead and gone, we can celebrate him as alive and active. Invited into a reciprocal relationship of loving and being loved, we may love as a bodily act of testimony and resistance to the seductive world of anxiety. We live as citizens of the new world Jesus is summoning. We remain voices of hope that resist despairing over what has not yet happened but draw attention to God among us.

Like the disciples before us we are neither helpless, powerful, nor abandoned. As Easter people, we must declare and live into God's new world, resisting the temptation to reduce our faith to a privatized entity and instead embrace the world-generating, world-changing commandments of Jesus.

Living beyond our present circumstances requires community, for no one can robustly and sustainably hope and alone. In speaking to a group, Jesus returns time and again to a central theme: love. Love has been embodied in the washing of the disciples' feet and prioritized in the issuance of a new commandment that they love one another (13:34-35). Now in today's lection Jesus reinforces the call to love one another.

I believe we want to live distinctively and make positive impacts together.

I still think there is space to explore the questions, “How do we as a community love in the way Jesus commands, models, and empowers? Such love is more than emotion or sentiment. As Jesus was sent by the Father, so we are sent. What might it look like to love deeply and seriously the few blocks or few kilometres around our church building or in Pembroke? What does it mean that we are located where we are? Furthermore, what does it mean that the love of God is reciprocal. How do we allow ourselves to be loved and open ourselves to the gifts, kindness, beauty, and goodness of others? We need to be loved as we need to share love. What it means to be people of God, we know in Jesus, actively share and receive love.

Jesus promised he would ask for another Advocate to be with the disciples once he was gone. The Second Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, will support them because they knew him and the Spirit was in them.

We too like the disciples know the Spirit. Through baptism the Holy Spirit abides in us. The Lord comes to us to offer us new life. God shows us his love and through God’s grace enables us to love others.

God is our advocate who will not leave us orphaned. God is our Redeemer, Healer, Miracle Worker, Friend, Sanctifier, Helper, Intercessor, Counsellor, Spirit, Empowering and Comforter.

May the love of God envelope you with hope, encouragement and peace. Be love to one another. Be love to our community. Be Christ-like to all. Keep the greatest commandment to love one another. For God is present always and you are his beloved. Amen.