

# Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 2, 2025

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey  
*(As the Prelude begins, prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)*

Greetings, Announcements & Prayer

\*Call to Worship

Rescue us, O God!

**Fill our hearts with hope  
and our mouths with praise!**

Guide us, O God!

**Show us the way of love.**

**Lead us to the shores of peace.**

Be with us, O God!

**Strengthen our faith and  
renew a right spirit among us.**

Rescue us, O God!

**Be our rock and our salvation!**

\*Opening Hymn *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"* 140

\*Opening Prayer

**O God, make us instruments of your love. Stretch our concerns and capabilities so that the church as the body of Christ may resonate with your good works. Help us individually and as a community to do your will and only that which is pleasing to you. Give us the courage to worship you with our whole selves, for we pray in the name of the One who gave His life that all may live, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

\*Psalter Psalm 71:1-12 794

\*Affirmation from Romans 887

\*Gloria Patri 70

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Passing of the Peace

"Let the Children Come!" Patsy Meek Boggs  
*(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)*

Anthem *"Only Trust Him"* Choir  
Scripture Readings Jeremiah 1:4-10 Pages 661-662 (O.T.)  
Luke 4:21-30 Page 61 (N.T.)

Scripture Reading 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Page 165 (N.T.)

Homily *"These Three: The Essentials"* Tom Geddens

\*Hymn *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"* 384

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory Christopher A. McCroskey

\*Doxology 95

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen**

\*Closing Hymn *"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"* 452

\*Benediction

\*Benediction Response *"May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You"* Choir & Congregation

\*Please Stand As You Are Able

## Leading in Worship Today

Guest Speaker: Tom Geddens AV Director: Marie Stiles  
Music Director: Christopher A. McCroskey AV Assistant: Chris Derrick  
Time Together: Jack Stevens; Pam Turner

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME** in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor's tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning.

*Today's Lovely Flowers* are given to the **Glory of God** and in celebration of **Mary Kamoroff's** upcoming 87<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 7<sup>th</sup>, by **Bonnie Ramsey**.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS ...

Hilda Edwards	Patsy Shuler	Marilyn Lloyd	Tom Lloyd	Ruth Frady	Christopher McCroskey
Kathy Aiello	Diane Muszynski	Latson Lewis	English Percy	Ray Frady	Hannah Glanz
Kaye Floyd	Libby Strickland				

**Shut-Ins:** Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor

**Family and Friends:** **James Leonard** (previous coworker of Mark Lewis); **Kathleen Varnadore** (Ted & Ruth Frady's neighbor); **Paul Frenzel** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Sissy Henry** (former member of Trinity); **Sean & Tucker Smith** (cousins of Darlene Kelley); **Sonny Hardee** (brother of Lynn Martin); **Colby Martin** (son of Donna Muszynski); **Lynne Powell** (friend of the Ballentines and Branhams); **Bobby Johnson** (friend of Billy Pearson); **Rev. Donna Eidson** (former pastor of Trinity); **Ima Thibodeaux** (friend of Christopher McCroskey); **Keith Jordan** (nephew of John & Kay Jordan); **Ann Cullum** (friend of Bob Strickland); **Malcolm Skipper** (grandfather of Matthew Skipper); **Bryan Collard** (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); ; **Charlyn McNeill, Michael McNeill** (sister & brother of Mary Sue Lewis); **Missy Abrams** (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Chuck Hardee** (cousin of Lynn Martin); **Bruce Beatty, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd** (friends of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Nancy Wilson** (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon** (friends of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron & Janet Walker** (friends of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Monnie Tiller** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Janet Beck** (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

Attendance 01/26 SS: 9 Worship: 32

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 01/26 \$ 995.33

**OUR SERVICE...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

02/03 Exercise, Class, 10:30 a.m.

02/05 Choir, 6 p.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

02/06 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

02/07 Office Closed



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Elrod

Jesus Christ

inspire and

FAITH  
HOPE  
LOVE

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**Grieving with God**  
**Tuesday, February 11**

All who are on the journey of grief are invited to join us each second Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room of the church. Retired Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplain from Richland Hospital, Jerry Fonte, facilitates discussion.



**Saturday, February 15**

The Trinity Ladies Group will meet at Lizard's Thicket on Hwy 1 at 9:30 a.m. on **Saturday, February 15**. They will be meeting on the third Saturday of each month. Contact Marie Stiles at (803) 463-9706 if you are interested in being added to the group email and text for notification.



**Sunday, February 16**  
**Following Worship**



**Monday, February 17**

The group will meet at WECO on **Monday, February 17, at 7 p.m.** If you have any questions, please see Slone Taylor or Patsy Boggs. If you are interested in attending and would like email or text message updates, please email Slone Taylor at [Slonetaylor21@yahoo.com](mailto:Slonetaylor21@yahoo.com) or text her your cell phone number to (803) 397-7294 and she will add you to her list.



**Valentine's Party at The Pines**  
**Saturday, February 22**  
**2 p.m.**



**Sunday, February 23**

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on **Sunday, February 23**. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and fellowship!

**Please Note:** The Ministry Team will meet immediately following Taste of Trinity.

## **“These Three: The Essentials”**

**By Tom Geddens**

Scripture Reading: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13: 1-13

This is the Word of God for the people of God! Thanks be to God! Let us pray: Father God, help me, please, with the words that I will speak. Blessed Father, remind us to always abide faith, hope and love. It is in Jesus’s Holy Name that we pray. Amen.

Boy, it doesn’t get much better than those verses that we just heard, right? 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthian 13 is one of the most well-known chapters in the Bible. Many of you probably had it read at your wedding. It is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 contains some of the most beautiful and eloquent words that Paul ever wrote. But for my message today, the focus will be on the final verse of that chapter: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13, when Paul writes, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

And while I focus on that one verse, I will talk at length about two of the three virtues that Paul considers essential for a Christian, so much so that you may think that I am overlooking one of the three. But I will get to that one virtue as well.

I want to begin with an observation that I have had. Some of you may have had the same observation. That observation is that some folks ostensibly abide by faith, but not so much love, while others are great at abiding by love but not so much by faith.

I will begin with the people in the first category. Many of us know people who seem to have a very strong faith. They read the Bible. They pray to God. They attend church every Sunday. They show reverence for the Cross. They know the Apostle’s Creed. They know the Lord’s Prayer. But people who know them wonder if they know anything about love. Their hearts seem to be hardened.

And if you were to question any of these Christians who fit this description, some of them may respond with, “Well, I admit that I am not that good at loving others. But at least my faith is strong.”

Well, I have to question that. If your heart is often consumed with anger, bitterness, cynicism and resentment; if your heart is often devoid of empathy; if you are cruel to others... then I don’t believe that your faith is as authentic as you like it to be. Your nose may be in the Bible, but are you absorbing what you are reading? You may be praying to God, but are you just talking and not listening? If you truly have faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then His love should be brimming in your heart, and you should be pouring that love out on others.

On the other end of the spectrum are those whose hearts may be sincerely overflowing with love, but their faith is small, perhaps even non-existent. They include both nominal Christians as well as those who do not profess Christ. It is not uncommon these days to hear people describe themselves as “spiritual.” Probably every one of us has friends and maybe even family members who describe themselves as “spiritual.” When asked if they are religious or attend church, they might reply like this: “I don’t have much use for organized religion. I’m not that sure that there even is a God. And I don’t believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. But I am spiritual. I do believe in love, kindness and forgiveness.”

And a lot of these spiritual people do tend to have a lot of love in their hearts. They are to be admired for the quality of their empathy and their many acts of kindness. But they lack faith. They may say, “I don’t need Jesus in order to love others.” But I say that if they had faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they would be pleasantly surprised

to see how much richer their capacity to love would become. Their love would become more colorful and more vibrant. Yes, they may say that love is all you need, but where does love come from? The Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, tells us in 1<sup>st</sup> John 4: 8: “God is love.”

You believe in love, but you don't believe in its source. Go to the source and your capacity for love will become even stronger.

Paul cited three virtues that we Christians are to abide by: Faith, hope and love, and he listed them in that order. When I read Paul's words and picture those three virtues in that order, I can picture a pendulum. You know: It swings back and forth. Many of us allow that pendulum to swing one way and stop in our hearts. Some Christians put all of their eggs in the basket of faith while neglecting love, while others do the opposite and abide in love but not in faith.

And I believe that when you allow that pendulum to swing only one way in your heart, you are also bypassing that virtue in the middle that Paul mentioned: Hope. Faith without love is also a faith without hope. And love without faith is a love that misses out on the hope of eternal life that God gives to those who embrace His Son.

I said that 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 is one of the most beloved chapters in the Bible. By the same token, John 3:16 is arguably the most beloved Bible verse. It is regarded as our faith statement. John 3: 16 begins with Jesus saying, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”

How beautiful and how powerful a love God has for every man, woman and child that He would sacrifice His own Son! Jesus continues: “... that whoever believes in Him...” There is the “faith” part, if you will, of that unforgettable verse. We are to place our faith in God's only begotten Son. And then Jesus finishes that most beloved of verses with, “... should not perish but have everlasting life.”

And there is your hope, brothers and sisters! There is no greater hope that a Christian may have but to receive everlasting life! John 3:16: Faith, hope and love all wrapped in one beautiful verse. Having faith in Jesus Christ gives us the hope of everlasting life. And we receive this hope because of God's unconditional love for us. And because of God's unconditional love for us, we are commanded to love all who were created in His image.

I want to finish this message by giving thanks. As many of you know, I am not the regular preacher, just the substitute. I have wanted to preach on 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 for many years, but it just was never on the Lectionary on the Sundays that I have been asked to preach. I therefore want to thank Pastor Darlene Kelley for asking me to fill in for her on a Sunday in which 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 was on the Lectionary. Thank you, Darlene! And most of all, I thank God, our Heavenly Father, for the opportunity and the privilege that He has given me today.

And finally, if anyone is wondering why I did not go over why Paul cited love as the greatest of these three virtues, well, we'll just have to pick it up again next year!

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! Amen!