



Grow! Pray! Study!

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish—Weekly Guide—May 6, 2018
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Scripture Lesson — John 15:9-17 New King James

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My

“Famous Last Words”

A Sermon by

Rev. Dr. Chris McNeill

Scriptures:

Acts 10:44-48 1 John 5:1-6
Psalm 98 John 15:9-17

Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and **that** your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.

Friended

A pastor was eating pizza with the youth at a Sunday night service. She asked them what they thought a friend was. This is what she got:

“A friend is someone who is herself.” “A friend is nice.” “A friend cares about you, listens to your problems, and helps you.” “A friend thinks about you before he thinks about himself.” “A friend cares about other people’s opinions and beliefs, and respects them.”

If friends are important to us, then they are super important to young people. They can easily get text messages saying things like, 'The world would be better off without you, just do yourself in.' 'Your hair is so long because it has to cover your ugly face.' That is reality. Add some video memes with their faces and send them around the school and despair can grow quickly. So, to have a real friend is better than all the gold in the world.

Jesus didn't call the disciples 'friends' when he first met them. We joke that he chose some scratchy people but he knew they were humble and could be taught. After 3 and a half years he calls them 'friends.' I think one of the best signifiers of friendship is the ability to stick around. All heck could break loose and a friend at least shows up. That's a big start. The disciples stuck around and they could have easily gone back to their families full time and their jobs, security. But they were around for the Last Supper, even Judas.

The second best signifier of friendship is conflict resolution. It is the number one indicator of success in pre-marital counseling. Real friends do not let stuff go under the rug. Real friends do not see conflict as an immediate friendship breaker. Where I grew up, people were so 'nice' because any real confrontation meant the relationship was over. So we invented other ways to let the aggression out: 'Bless your heart' is not a real blessing. Neither is 'Poor thing.' 'You look *almost* good enough to take downtown.' The lack of conflict resolution is a number one killer of churches as well. What that tells me is that the disciples worked things out with Jesus--- there was no way unresolved issues were going to be able to feed into the new Church. They may not have been mature at the beginning, but they grew up with Jesus. Enough to be friends. Sticking around. Working it out.



Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

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Weekly Guide — May 6, 2018

Lifting up Our Church Family in Prayer

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving:

For all of our leadership past, present, and future
For those who live with open hearts and hands

Prayers of Comfort:

For the Family and Friends of Alonzo L. Saldaña

Prayers for Health and Healing:

Pastor Chris McNeill, Annie Gaspar, Nelda Zamora, Ruben & Elida Espinoza, Edna Henry, Wilma Beverly, Winna Bjornaas, Edith Owens, Patsy Welsh, Walter Welsh, Gloria Rae, Ruby Bolton, Justine Baly, Christopher Huron, Virginia Hardwick, Bobby Malek, Nathan Fleming, Anne Wofford, Linda Hulseley Bracewell, Alsine Ryan, Bob Allen, Ruth Allen, Wanda Arnold, Doann Flores, Astrid, Harry Rogers, Kim, Kailey, Mason, Mike Young, Alfred Wendelken, Eleanor Robinson, Bobbie Latham, Ed Pierce, Kevin Chapman, Ruben & Mary Espinoza, Juan & Maritza Zamora, Daniel & Tommie Mascorro, Bernice Steele, Nadine Bishop, Carroll Latham, Charles Robinson, Carolyn Dean, Jean Nichols, Leonard, Ashley Urbaniak, Doris Grauerholz, E'mile Landry, Kaylee Barfield, Stephannie Bryant, Jimmy McGee, Luis Ricardo Ochoa, Crossroads Community

Prayers for Hope:

Please let us know your prayers and hopes by noting them on the Registration pads with your name.

Prayers for Our Church, Our City, Our State, Our Nation:

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish, its pastors and its people, City of Houston, Texas, the United States of America, and members of our Armed Forces and their families

Prayers for our Covenant Mission Partners:

Crossroads, Mission Milby, Technology For All, Southeast Area Ministries, and Justice For Our Neighbors

Regular Sunday Schedule

—9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Small Groups

—10:30 a.m. Celebration Worship Sanctuary

Prayer:

You have blessed us, O God,
with the gift of friendship,
the bonding of persons
in a circle of love.

We thank you for such a blessing:
for friends who love us,
who share our sorrows,
who laugh with us in celebration,
who bear our pain,
who need us as we need them,
who weep as we weep,
who hold us when words fail,
and who give us the freedom
to be ourselves.

Bless our friends with health,
wholeness, life, and love.
Amen.

Quotes:

"As I have loved you: radical love of enemies,
the poor, tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes,
lepers; the relentless challenges to the righteous
and pious, truth telling, table overturning, and
finally cross bearing and death embracing, laying
down his life for his friends.

"It makes me want to hide under my desk.

"I'd feel better if Jesus really ascended far away
into heaven, remotely busying himself at the
"right hand of the Father." Unfortunately, the
enthronement takes place within our own
hearts."
—Suzanne Consiglio

"We all long for heaven where God is, but we
have it in our power to be in heaven with Him at
this very moment. But being happy with Him
now means:

Loving as He loves,
Helping as He helps,
Giving as He gives,
Serving as He serves,
Rescuing as He rescues,
Being with Him twenty-four hours,
Touching Him in his distressing disguise."
—Mother Teresa of Calcutta