



Love your neighbor as yourself.

LOVE

Love brings us to great action. Wesley sailed the open seas and crossed the fire swamp for Buttercup. Sam offered his service and life for Frodo. Marlin left the reef and crossed deep waters for Nemo. Yes, these are all fantastic stories, but fewer ideals in our lives spur us onto more meaningful adventure than love. It strengthens us and gives hope long after the odds makers have told us to stop. Love ties us to others and great works in a way which makes life blossom all around us. No wonder then that John Wesley placed love at the center of the Methodist movement.

Wesley believed his grand deposit for the Christian faith was entire sanctification. One who has been sanctified had perfect love. *“By ‘perfection’ I mean ‘perfect love,’ or the loving of God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing and everything to give to give thanks.”* Perfect love meant we are free from that which so easily entangles to live out God’s will. Again Wesley proclaimed, *“For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?”* God’s love in us, sanctifies us and breaks the power of canceled sin. John Wesley’s emphasis is still good news for us today.

Many in our culture have let love fall to a mere emotion. It comes and goes. This is not the love we read of in the Bible. The love we proclaim as Christians is one of action and devotion for it is rooted in truths deeper than our present affection. Look again at Jesus famous reply about love in Mark 12:29-31 - *The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”* We are quick to point to our love of God and our love of neighbor in this, and rightly so, but there is so much more. Read it again. What else stands out? Did you see that both the love of God and neighbor are conditional? Jesus was sure to define who God was, commanding us to Hear and believe who the Lord is. Only in rightly knowing God does our loving action take root. In letting God’s perfect love fill us as we love our God, then we can rightly love ourselves - a precondition for rightly loving others. This, Wesley said, is our Christian zeal - all love.



May Central be covered in this love as we flip the calendar once more. Whether you have well articulated resolutions or will use the last few months of winter to ponder new beginnings, I hope your new year is one filled with love. I pray you know the love of God and others know it through you. May 2023 be one full of such zeal and adventure.

Go forth in the blessing of Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its

name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Joseph



HALLOWED BE THY NAME

In the Old Testament, a name served not only to identify a person, but also to express a certain aspect of their identity. Throughout the scriptures, God is referred to by many names, and we can learn about various facets of His nature and character by studying these names. To this end, we will embark upon a study of the names of God throughout the 2023 year in the hope that we may learn more about Him, and what it means to truly “hallow His name.”

The first stop along this journey is to understand how names were constructed in Ancient Near-Eastern cultures. Sometimes, people were named after attributes they possessed or to serve as an explanation of their personality or birth. (A good illustration of this is found in 1 Samuel 25 where Abigail pleads with David to forgive her husband's disrespect, explaining that his name, Nabal, means “fool” and he has acted like a fool.) However, more prominently in the Hebraic tradition, when referencing servants or angels of the Lord, two or more words could be put together to describe the person being named and their relationship to God.

The word “El” in Hebrew means God. “El” is often used in combination with another verb to describe a specific interaction with, or characteristic of, God. See how each of the following names adheres to this pattern:

Immanu-El means “God is with us,” with “Immanu” coming from the Hebrew verb meaning “to be with” and “El” meaning God.

Gabri-El means “God is my weight-bearer,” with “Gabri” coming from the Hebrew verb meaning “to bear weight” and “El” meaning God.

Samu-El means “God heard me,” with “Samu” coming from the Hebrew verb “to hear” and “El” meaning God.

See how it works? How many more such names come to mind? As you read and recognize more instances of this naming system, I encourage you to reflect upon and question what each person's name reveals about their interaction with God. Why was this name chosen for this person? Was there a defining moment in his or her life that resulted in this particular lifelong identity? Most importantly, what do these names reveal to us about the characteristics of God?

Stay tuned for more exciting lessons on the names of God, and may He bless you richly as we embark upon this journey together!

Pastor Ashley 



FOUR NOTORIOUS SONGS ABOUT LOVE *and why Madeleine dislikes them (mostly)*

I was tasked with creating a lamplighter article on the subject of love. After contemplating writing about Valentine's Day (realizing: no, that's a secular holiday...) or about which songs I generally "LOVE" the most (no, too broad), I settled on selecting four hymns/songs with love as the theme and briefly discussing them (aka: roasting them!). Please do not take my words too seriously, as these are just my opinions which are inundated with sarcasm and satirical humor. Without further ado, let us commence with the list!

1. And Can It Be (Amazing Love) by Charles Wesley (1738): This iconic Methodist hymn has amazing lyrics which describe Christ's ultimate sacrifice. Here are some of the cool lyrics: "Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!" and "I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off, my heart was free." As it is Charles Wesley, you can feel confident that it will be an extremely well-written hymn. Very unfortunately, however, the melody is nigh unsingable. Wesley got overzealous when constructing the leaping intervals that occur at the end of each verse ("That th-ou-ou, my Go-o-od, should di-i-ie for me"). The melody slides ALL over the place, and it does not help matters that this hymn has six verses.

2. What Wondrous Love is This? - Anonymous Southern folk song (1811): I'll admit it: I don't like this one, despite it being a staple of Holy Week. I find it overly repetitive and to be quite a dirge-y downer. It also doesn't help that it is in a spooky minor key. The phrase "When I was sinking down" appears SIX times in verse 2:

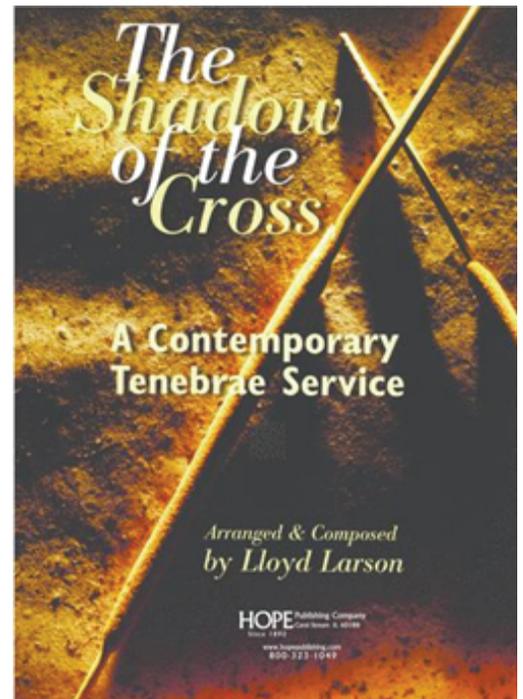
"When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul."

Apparently the tune though is most likely from the 1701 English song, "The Ballad of Captain Kidd" which describes the exploits of famed pirate William Kidd. That fact makes this song much cooler, but it ultimately does not redeem its slow, plodding drudgery.

3. How Beautiful by Twila Paris (1990):

I have a big soft spot for this one. This is a song which the choir used to sing every year as part of a Maundy Thursday cantata called "The Shadow of The Cross" by Lloyd Larson. It also appears in one of my piano books called "Songs for weddings". Paris' lyrics are just so pretty:

"How beautiful the heart that bled
That took all my sin and bore it instead
How beautiful the tender eyes



That choose to forgive and never despise
How beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful
Is the body of Christ”

This song discusses Christ’s love for us shown by His ultimate sacrifice. It is an example of an exquisite text paired quite effectively with beautifully expressive music.



4. **Jesus, Lover of My Soul by Charles Wesley (1740):** I'll admit: I also dislike this one (you're probably asking: Madeleine, do you like ANY Lenten hymns?! Answer: mostly no). The words are quite nice, but again, it is in minor key and overly spooky in my opinion. The music doesn't seem to flow in a natural or enjoyable way. Also, a fun note: the tune is called “ABERYSTWYTH” because composer Joseph Parry was teaching at a Welsh seaside resort of the same name at the time (around 1876). Again, this little nugget makes me like the song more because Welsh words/languages in general are interesting. Ultimately though, it does not redeem this one.

Grace and Peace,
Madeleine Demetriades

Music related announcements/calendar items:

July 2023 (date TBA): Summer Music Camp
Saturday, October 14th: Bicentennial Celebration Concert

CHAIR TIME IN THE NEW YEAR

Borrowing from some saints in the past, I want to challenge all of us in 2023 to set aside 10-15 minutes a day to be present to God and His word. Find a chair (or whatever), bring a Bible (maybe a journal), read and listen. Maybe you read a whole book. Maybe you read one verse over the course of a week. Listen and go where God leads. The purpose is to prioritize this time in your calendar and cultivate a discipline of prayer and presence to God and His Word.

For those needing a daily challenge, I invite you to read the whole Bible in 2023. We will be walking through the Bible Project’s, ‘One Story that Leads to Jesus’ study. This can be found online, in the YouVersion Bible App, or a paper copy can be picked up in the office. This plan journeys from Genesis – Revelation while reading 1 Psalm per day. For those who can make it, we will be discussing the weekly readings at our Fireside Chats every Monday at 1:30pm.

So please join us for Chair Time in 2023. I am excited to see where God leads us all through our reading, reflections, and revelation in the next 12 months.





RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE THANK YOU!

Thanks to 30 donors at the December 6th blood drive, including 6 from Central United Methodist, 29 units of blood were collected for the American Red Cross. A special thanks to David Shaw for assistance in set up; Elaine Mollenkopf, Beth Hartsough, Patty Kelley and Diane Desonie who served as greeters; and Charlie Black, Duane Locker and Gary Rogers who took care of the tear down of the donation area.

ALTAR GUILD

Would you like to be part of the ALTAR GUILD here at Central? Each member of the guild takes one month during the year to come in once weekly to refill the altar candles and refill pew pockets. Contact Ann Cashner at 765-994-1979 or 962-8458 if you would like to help. We need help during the following months in 2023--: February, March July, August, and October.

SHALOM SESSIONS

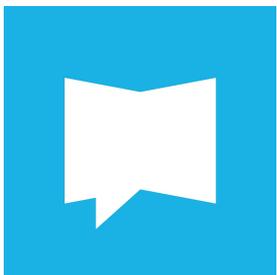
Join us on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 12:05pm in the Fellowship Hall for a brown bag lunch as we discuss the conflict, boundaries and overlaps of living in families, churches, communities, and countries as a follower of Jesus. The King of the Universe had no place to lay his head. How do we love our neighbors who find themselves in the same state?. Bring your lunch, your bibles, and a listening ear. May God break our hearts for what breaks his in this season.

PRAYER WALKS

Prayer connects us daily to a loving God moving in our midst. In his 3 rules for Methodists, John Wesley calls us to both private and public prayer. On the first Monday of every month at noon, we will have a prayer walk through our neighborhood. We will divide into small groups at the entrance of the church and proceed in different directions. Along the way, we will pause to pick up trash and renew our streets and sidewalks. Contact Pastor Joseph with questions.

CREATIVE HANDS

There will be no Creative Hands meeting in January. We will meeting again on Thursday, February 9th from 9am thru lunch. We will be having a garage sale in 2023 so start cleaning after Christmas! If you have any questions, contact Shanron Rider



READ THE BIBLE IN 2023!

Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven." John Wesley knew and lived the Bible. The Methodist movement he started had Bible reading at its core. Let us build this up afresh in the new year. Will you schedule now time to be with God and His Word every day in 2023? Central will be embarking on reading the Bible through with the 'One Story that Leads to Jesus' plan from the Bible Project. This plan can be picked up in the office, found online, or followed in the YouVersion Bible App. You can go over these readings in your small group or at our Fireside Conversations every Monday at 1:30. May the love of God's word cause us to cry out with Mr. Wesley, "O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be "homo unius libri."



2023 GIVING ENVELOPES

2023 giving envelopes are available in the parlor. If you do not see yours, or would like to get envelopes, please let Christin know by calling the church office at 765-962-8543 or by email at christin@richmondcumc.com.

THE 2023 PHOTO DIRECTORIES ARE HERE!

You can pick up your 2023 photo directory in the parlor or in the church office. If you would like to access our online directory through Realm, please contact Christin in the church office at 765-962-8543 or by email at christin@richmondcumc.com

NEW SUNDAY STUDY

Beginning on January 15th, a new Sunday School Study will meet on How to Read the Bible at 9am. We will offer overviews, approaches, history, meditation, and seek deeper understanding.. Whatever your question, this would be the space for the conversation. This class will have ample time for discussion while diving into the Word every Sunday.

CENTRAL HOSTING POINT IN TIME COUNT

Every year, the Federal Government commissions a census of the homeless population to better allocate funding across the country. In Indiana, the Continuum of Care is charged with conducting these counts. This year, that date falls on January 25th. Central will again host the efforts of this count and provide a meal to the workers and homeless. The Emergency Resource Room will open to make sure those on the street have what they need. Please be in prayer for the many homeless neighbors we have in Richmond. If you feel led to join our efforts, please contact Pastor Joseph about the count or Linda Jennings about the meal and hospitality.

TRIBE - WINTER JAM 2023

Tribe will be going to Winter Jam 2023 on January 20th in Cincinnati, OH. Join us for an evening of music and worship with We the Kingdom, Jeremy Camp and more. Tickets are \$15 with scholarships available. Grades 5-12 are invited as are adult chaperones and drivers (or just people wanting to worship with 10,000 of your closest friends ;)). Please contact Pastor Joseph with questions or to reserve your spot.



Love



YOUR

neighbor

as



yourself

MARK 12:31

JANUARY 2023

1	2 Office Closed	3	4	5 Low Vision 10:30am Family Dinner 6pm	6	7
8	9 Mon. Morning Connect 9am Prayer Walk 12pm	10	11	12	13	14
15 Pizza with the Pastors 11:30am	16	17 Shalom Session 12:05pm	18 Lunch Bunch 11:30am	19 Friendship Cir 10am Family Dinner Church 6pm	20	21
22	23	24	25 Point in Time Count 10am Lamplighter Assembly 10am	26 Ad Council 6:30pm	27	28
29	30	31	Sundays Sunday School 9am · Worship 10am TRIBE 5pm			

Weekday Gatherings

Mondays

Women's Prayer 12:00pm
 Fireside Conversation 1:30pm
 Brianna's Hope 6:45pm

Tuesdays

Benevolence Team 1:00pm

Wednesdays

Wisdom Study 10:00am
 Men's Prayer 12:00pm
 Wesley Ringers 5:30pm
 Chancel Choir 6:30pm

Thursdays

Josingers 4:00pm



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