

Blest Be the Tie That Binds: Part 1

One of the less derogatory descriptions of Methodism is that we sing our faith, and that is very true. Charles Wesley, younger brother to John Wesley, wrote over 5,000 hymns, and a few of them are in our hymnal (ex: “*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*”, “*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*”, “*O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*”). Even though it was not written by Charles Wesley, there is a hymn that I hope will be an inspiration to you as we face difficult times as a congregation. It was written by John Fawcett in 1782, and the title is “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” This week I’ll focus on the first verse.

Blest be the tie that binds / Our hearts in Christian love /

The “tie” that the stanza mentions is Christ our Lord. He is what binds us together as a congregation. While our intellect is certainly a part of our spirituality, it is our hearts that are tied to our risen Lord and Savior. In that relationship, and as a part of the KINGdom of God, we then feel God’s unconditional love for us—that we are adopted as his children just as we are, and as imperfect as we are. The unconditional nature of *agape* love is vitally important to understand. Just as God loves us with all our faults and shortcomings, so too are we to love others with their faults and shortcomings. This thought is also expressed in the Lord’s Prayer: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*” If that other person, with different perspectives and approaches, is tied to Christ, then we are tied to them as well. That is what Jesus asks of us; to do what is difficult in our interactions with others, not what is easy. If we are willing, there is a sweet sense of spiritual freedom, healing, and power when we can love others without putting conditions on them.

The fellowship of kindred minds / Is like to that above.

Our ability to reason—the other side of our personal spirituality—is very much in play in our effort to be bound together in Christ Jesus our Lord. We do not lose the ability to think; we are, in fact, encouraged to use it to overcome social conventions that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus (greed, pride, prejudice, etc.). The sweet sense of freedom, healing, and power to overcome the evil around us creates fellowship. It doesn’t matter whether the gathering is a worship service, Sunday school, a dinner, a mission project, a meeting, a clean up day, or some other small group, we feel a sense of closeness to each other that allows for differences of opinion in our joint faith in Christ. Fellowship is a horizontal and human representation that mirrors the vertical relationship of divine grace we have with God, and that God has with us. Together, we can indeed do all things in Christ who strengthens us.

Yours in Christ our Lord,

Pastor Tom



On Going: Les Case, Wade Davis, Roger Grable, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Linda Koleiny, Shane Miley, Kirk Morehead, Nancy Rowe, all the families who have lost loved ones or are sick from the Covid Virus

Depression and Mental Health: Robby Sherrod

Comfort and Peace: Dean Rohr's family, Wayne Rogers family, Family and friends of Bill Zaner

Strength and Healing: Rick Collier, Kaleb Lamb, Mike McMillin, Rev. John Morrison, DJ Petty, Helena VonRosenberg, Andrew White

Missions: Kenyan G-Marc Project, Chics for Chicks, Hillcrest Transitional Housing, Harvester's Food Bank, Lazarus Ministries, Tarsney Lake Families, Congregation de Mellier, Heart and Soul Children's Learning Center

Please contact the office to update or add prayer requests

As we improve our ability to live stream our worship services with better equipment within the next month, we will need one other person in the back (in addition to the team that monitors our worship slides) to operate the high definition camera that is mounted on the wall and the additional laptop computer that will be hooked to it for our 10:00 Sunday morning service. It sounds daunting, I know, but there will be a tutorial and a written guide on this vital part of our virtual ministry as we continue to live stream the service to those who cannot attend and those who may be "checking us out."

**If you or someone you know can help us, please
let Pastor Tom know at 831-333-6893
or pastorllcumc@gmail.com**



RESTART OF ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL!!

You are invited to a genesis of our adult Sunday school class on **February 7** at 9:00 on Sunday mornings! We will be using the **NOOMA Videos Series** by Rob Bell (feel free to Google him). There will be 24 sessions in this video series. A discussion off the video will then follow that will be facilitated by Pastor Tom. The video is short (10-15 min.) and will give us food for thought as Rob shares elements and applications of biblical truth and Christ-like living to our relationship with God through Christ our Lord in his unique style of presentation. The first video is titled "Rain" where he talks about the storms of life.

Rob is a well known pastor and author of ten books, including the New York Times bestsellers "What We Talk About When We Talk About God", "The Zimzum of Love", "Love Wins", and "What Is the Bible?" His podcast, called the RobCast, was named by iTunes Best of 2015. He's been profiled in the New Yorker and Time Magazine named him one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2011.

The title of each week's video will be in this newsletter prior to each Sunday and sent to specific persons who attend the class via email. No purchase of a book is necessary; just come and share in the fellowship between the two services. Coffee will be available on that Sunday. Should we outgrow the large classroom, we will move to the sanctuary in order to maintain physical distancing.

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DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.
- GENESIS 4:6-7 MSG

January 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	31	1 Happy New Year!	2
3 Services 8:00 & 10:00 am	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Services 8:00 & 10:00 am	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Services 8:00 & 10:00 am	18	19 Missions Meeting 7:00	20	21	22	23
24 Services 8:00 & 10:00 am	25	26 Church Council Meeting 7:00	27	28	29	30
31 Services 8:00 & 10:00 am						