

May 17, 2020 – They will know we are Christians by our love

With Reverend Deacon Nina Page
Sixth Sunday of Easter

INTRODUCING REV. PAGE

The Worship Team would like to welcome Reverend Deacon Nina Page as a new speaker to Faith United Milton. Nina has been a member of Grace Anglican Church in Milton for over 20 years, and was ordained as Deacon in the Anglican Church in 2012. She is a registered psychotherapist specializing in grief and trauma, and a hospice, bereavement and spiritual care counsellor for Acclaim Health. She has been married to John Page for 50 years, and has two sons, four grandchildren, three stepchildren and two golden retriever furbabies. Welcome Nina!

Now, let us centre ourselves for worship. If you would like, have a real, battery-operated or imaginary candle available.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and Loving God, we are grateful that you have called us together this day, drawing us from darkness to the glory of your light. May our spirits rejoice at the good news you have for us today. Open our hearts to your healing love, O God, for we ask this in Christ's name.
Amen

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Light a candle and say the following

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you."

We light this candle, remembering that Jesus taught and witnessed to God's love. Jesus encourages us to love each other with compassion, and hope, always.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 14:15-21 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.

MESSAGE: They will know we are Christians by our love

This message has been prepared by the Reverend Deacon Nina Page for the Faith United Milton congregation on May 17, 2020 and is also shared with Palermo United. ©Nina Page 2020. Provided here with permission.

Link to video presentation of message: <https://youtu.be/1lEdjAeYfQ8>

Prayer of Illumination:

May these words we are reading and this meditation of the heart
be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

Homily for John 14:15-21

On the last evening Jesus spends with the disciples before his death, Jesus tries to show them two elements of reality that are difficult to hold together: He is going away, yet he will not leave them orphaned.

As they listen, the disciples have questions.

Peter: "Where are you going?" (John 13:36).

Thomas "How can we know the way" (John 14:5).

Philip, "Show us the way" (John 14:8).

All ask questions or make requests of Jesus as he is preparing his loved ones for his departure. I wonder what questions we would have for Jesus today: "When will this be over"; "How can we know the way"; "Show us the way to live today". I am sure we would get the same answer.

In John 14:19, Jesus had said, "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live."

While the world will not see him any longer, it will see his followers. The words that follow are for his followers, yet it is probably not a coincidence that as his followers keep loving him, the world will see those followers keeping his word. To keep the word of Jesus means to keep his commandments. It is to wash one another's feet, to love one another. As the disciples keep the word of Jesus, they will be a community characterized by mutual regard, love and service.

Throughout the farewell discourse, Jesus makes it clear that followers love him by serving others. One could say that Jesus' love language here is "acts of service." Although we might distinguish between loving Jesus and keeping his word, and imagine that we can do one but not the other, Jesus does not recognize that distinction. "Those who love me will keep my word". Love for Jesus simply is love in action.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen love in action. We have seen neighbors reaching out to one another; strangers offering to shop for our elderly or compromised community; companies offering meals to the staff at Milton District Hospital and Allendale; companies making PPE equipment and donating it to our front-line workers. Whether they know it or not they are showing Jesus's love for one another.

As a Deacon in the Anglican Church, I am charged with bringing the world to the church. It has been my privilege to work with different groups at this time, many of whom I probably would have not have even met at other times: The Optimist Club and supporting their Food Drive for Grace; donations of surplus bread, pastries and hot food from La Rose Bakery and delivering them to the Salvation Army, Milton Bible Church and the Halal Food Bank; partnering with the group Milton Covid 19 to make sure anyone who needs a nutritious meal can get one;

supporting the Italian Club who are preparing fresh hot meals weekly to be delivered to those in need; helping to distribute frozen meals from a local Golf Club around the community. You can see all the groups that are supporting local merchants on Facebook. Milton truly is a great and caring community. People of all faiths, all walks of life coming together to serve each other.

This past week we lost a good friend. While she did not belong to any faith group, she showed Christ's love in all she did and said. She would put other's first before taking care of herself. She believed that God had placed her on earth to take care of others. She showed God's love and she also knew that God loved her.

Just as the disciples knew it, for us to live that kind of love, we will need the constant presence of God in our lives.

We would not be able to have this love of Jesus if the Father had not first loved the world enough to send his Son into it. Jesus promised us that he would send an advocate to be with us always. The spirit guides the disciples and us to think back over what we have experienced of Jesus, and as we seek to let our love for him show up in the ways we relate to others. The spirit helps disciples and us to understand Jesus and his word and to love Jesus by keeping his word on behalf of the world.

Jesus chose the Passover meal to drive home his point about love as he took up a basin and washed the disciple's feet. God calls us to be neighbours – to recognize in the "other" one whom God also loves and calls us to love.

I pray that we will continue to care for one another, that we will show the world how to continue to love one another.

HYMN: They will know we are Christians by our love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX1OnT1R87o>

CLOSING PRAYER AND SENDING FORTH

Living and gracious God,
through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
you have brought us out to a spacious place
where we are called to live as those redeemed.
Empower us by your spirit to keep your commandments,
that we may show forth your love
with gentle word and reverent deed
to all your people. Amen.

This service has ended, our service has just begun.
Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord. Alleluia

GO NOW IN PEACE: Faith video (link takes you to Youtube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdUap5fcp4k>