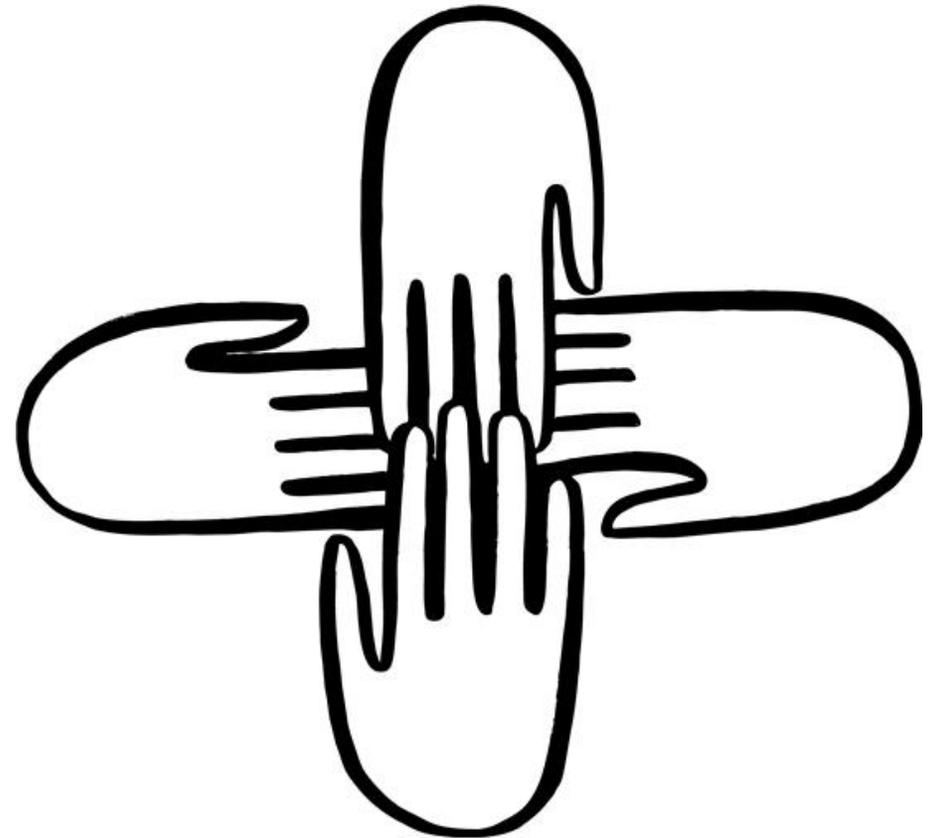


## Parkview Prayer Requests

- Thanksgiving for Birthdays and Anniversaries this week including **Chase Turcotte** (5/15), **Nell Schradle** (5/17), **Brandon Waalen** (5/17), **Brandy Turcotte** (5/21), **Renee Nykanen** (5/21), **Cassandra Higgenbottom** (5/21)
- The friends and families of **Donald Freer** (Addie's cousin), **Martin Glinski**, **Linda Cunningham** (Karen Peterson's sister), **Dave Mrdutt**, **Andy**, **Craig Brown** (a dear friend of Lynn Steinmetz) as they all continue to grieve the deaths and celebrate the lives of their loved ones.
- Evie** (Dorie's friend), **Becky** (Bev's friend), **Joe Molls** (Harvey's friend), **Jeanette** (Judy Jeska's sister), **Pam** (Georgeina's cousin), **"Digger"** (Kay Harr's friend) and **Bill** (Judy Jeska's friend)
- Judy Benes**, **Larry Klich**, and **Daphne** (Addie's daughter) as they recover from knee surgery
- Missy** (Judy Jeska's niece) and **Ruby** (Delores Barr's cousin) as they continue to receive cancer treatment
- Beverly Nalewaja** as she spends time with her sister **Helen**
- A peaceful and just end to the violence in Ukraine and God's strength and grace to be with all the refugees and hosts.
- Healing and peace for those around the world who are suffering from Covid or have lost a loved one during this pandemic
- God's gracious power and presence to be with **Jeff Heintz**, **Karen** (Lynn Steinmetz's aunt), **Eric**, **Mary Mattson**, **Kevin**, **Tom** (and his wife **Roxy**), **Beverly M.**, **Mary**, **Terry**, **Vivian**, **Jayna**, **Anna**, **Al**, **Clay**, **Jane**, **David**, **Julie**, **Kim**, **Gloria Paulson**, **Teresa**, **Hayden**, **Alaura**, and **Lynn**.
- God to be at work in the heart and life of **Nathan** (Gail and Larry's son), **Teddy and Courtney** (missionaries to Russia), **Scott** (the son of Jerry and Linda), and **Dayne Nygaard**
- School staff, teachers, administrators and students, doctors, nurses, and other frontline health-care workers

Welcome to Worship at  
Parkview United Methodist Church

Sunday, May 15



## Gathering as the People of God

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Sharing of Joys and Concerns by the Congregation

Opening Prayer

Opening and Centering Hymns

“Open Our Eyes” #2086

“We Will Glorify the King of Kings” #2087

## Hearing the Word of God Proclaimed

Little and Medium Disciples’ Message

John 13:31-38 and Acts 11:1-18

Sermon offered by Pastor Adam

## Responding To The Word Of God

Responsive Hymn “Where Charity and Love Prevail” #549

Prayers of the People and The Lord’s Prayer

Offering of our Time, Talents, Gifts, Resources, Prayers,  
and Witness

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

## Going Forth In God’s Mission And Grace

Sending Hymn: “The Trees of the Field” #2279

Blessing and Benediction

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We are collecting the financial offerings through the passing of the plates. The metal plates are for tithes and offerings toward the ministries, missions and operations covered by our church budget. Loose coins and cash that are deposited in the “Noisy Cans” (the coffee cans we pass around) will go toward the fund to purchase and make new banners for the Sanctuary for the various church seasons, holidays and occasions.

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### **Thanks for joining us for Worship.**

*We invite you to also join us for...*

- \*\*Fellowship and Conversation with Pastor Adam each Sunday at 9:00am in the Fireside Room
- \*\*JAM in Sunday School for Kids each Sunday at 9:30am
- \*\*Revelation Wellness: Worship and Workout Class Mondays at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall
- \*\*Ladies Bible Study Wednesdays at 2:00pm in the Fireside Room

### Upcoming Events: Save the Dates

- \*\*Summer Ministries and Outreach planning meeting on Wednesday, June 1 at 6pm
- \*\*Church Rummage Sale: set up the week of August 1-4, sale on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning
- \*\*Vacation Bible School: kick-off party the evening of Sunday, August 7 and VBS at Parkview August 8-10 in the morning
- \*\*Fall Harvest Dinner on Sunday, September 25

If you need to get in touch with Pastor Adam throughout the week please email at [pastor.adamwoods@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.adamwoods@gmail.com) or call/ text him at (608) 513-2937

Check us out at [parkviewtl.com](http://parkviewtl.com)

*Sermon by Pastor Adam*

*based on John 13:31-35 and Acts 11:1-18*

*Acts 11:1-18 New International Version*

11 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

8 “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

9 “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with[a] water, but you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.’ 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

31 When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

33 “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

36 Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

37 Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

38 Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

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What a remarkable life Simon Peter had, starting from the moment he met Jesus.

Well, actually, after Jesus first saw, called out and invited Peter and his brother Andrew to lay aside their fishing nets and join him.

What a whirlwind of a life Simon Peter began as he followed Jesus throughout the land, as he witnessed Jesus healing the sick and accepting the invitations to eat with sinners, as he heard Jesus speak about the nearness of the Reign of God and the promises of the coming Kingdom of Heaven.

Simon Peter had a front-row seat to the starting of what often is referred to in the Bible as “The Way” but today we call the birth of the Christian faith and Church. In fact, he even gained a nickname, “The Rock”, because Jesus wanted Simon Peter to remember that he was to be the one the Church on earth would be built upon.

This morning as we near the final weeks of the Easter Season, we read from the Acts of the Apostles and again from the Gospel According to John. And, no surprise, Simon Peter is a key player in both of these passages.

As we continue to journey through the Easter season, our lectionary passages return us back to the night in which Jesus is betrayed by Judas, abandoned by all of his disciples, and even denied by Peter three times!

The lectionary does this because, in the light of the Resurrection we have new eyes, ears and hearts to perceive what Jesus offers and reveals on this night.

He gives his disciples a new commandment: to love one another as he has loved them—the way of love of course referring to the foot washing that had taken place only moments ago a few verses earlier.

In this discourse, however, Jesus also says, “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.”

“Lord, where are you going?” Peter asks a few verses later. Interestingly, this is what Peter latches onto—not this supposed “new commandment” as Jesus introduces it or all this talk about glorification and connection with the Father which Jesus spoke before the going away comment.

Peter is more curious about Jesus's whereabouts than Jesus's explanation on how to love one another or how Jesus can make such a great claim that he has been glorified and God has been glorified in him.

To be fair to Peter, he has heard the commandment to love one another enough times. After all, it's as old as Leviticus and Deuteronomy, a long-established and cherished command held and upheld by God's covenant people. From the earliest days of Judaism the commandment and invitation to love God and neighbor, others and ourselves has echoed in the family of our faith.

Peter has heard this call to love before and he thinks he has it down and covered. But the sort of love Christ calls us to on this night is not easy. It is not convenient or safe. It's the sort of love that can't be explained with words.

The love that Jesus speaks of on this night is a love that he has been embodied moments earlier when he as their teacher and leader washed their feet instead of having them wash his.

The love that Jesus commands on this night is what will sustain him through the arrest, trial, and crucifixion that he endures by the hands of the Romans, by the scheming of the religious leaders and through the inaction of his closest followers.

The love that Jesus speaks of is not one that sets up an "in" and an "out" group, a worthy-and-unworthy litmus test, a way to differentiate "us" versus "them." No, it's a love that is expansive and inclusive, sacrificial and self-giving.

It's a love that Peter immediately proves unable to reciprocate. For the rooster does indeed crow following his three denials of Christ.

And yet we aren't done with Simon Peter when we reach the end of John 13.

We aren't done with him and neither is God. For soon enough he encounters the Risen Christ and goes on to begin to live into his call and vocation as the rock on which the Church is built.

This call and vocation to be the foundation of the church, and to love as Christ first loved him, takes him many places, but our reading from Acts highlights his experience in the coastal town of Joppa.

In chapter 10 we read of his vision in great detail, and in our lectionary passage from chapter 11, we hear his explanation and retelling of the event when he is back in Jerusalem.

While in Joppa, he sees a vision that he doesn't immediately understand. A vision of what he could only describe as a sheet being lowered by its four corners all the way down to the dust of the earth. On it were all kinds of four-footed creatures, reptiles and birds.

A voice says, "Okay Peter, I heard you were hungry. Go ahead, take your pick and eat whatever you'd like."

Peter, has a lot of self-control as he looks upon all the animals on the sheet. Apparently, none of them were acceptable to eat according to religious dietary laws. He replies to the voice, "I can't! I can't eat what is profane and unclean." The voice speaks again, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane."

Peter must not have understood because the scene plays out three times.

But even after the third round, he remained greatly puzzled—wouldn't any of us be as well?

Suddenly, three men sent by a man named Cornelius show up at the house Peter was staying at.

While Cornelius is upright and socially accepted by the Jewish leaders, he still had two major things going against him. First, he was a centurion, meaning he was the commander of 100 Roman soldiers. His job was to maintain the supremacy of the Roman emperor. Roman soldiers, in the New Testament, are, more often than not, the bad guys, and for good reason.

And not only that, he was a Gentile, a person who was not a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob and therefore not part of God's covenant people.

Now to us today, this whole talk of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles might sound silly and useless at best, and exclusionary and oppressive at worst. But keep in mind a few things.

The Jews in this Gentile-versus-Jew framework are those who were descendants of the Hebrews freed by Moses and delivered from slavery to Pharaoh. The Jews could trace back their cultural identity, economic mindsets, political persuasions and social norms to the story of the 40 year period when Moses led the newly freed Hebrews across the desert and to a promised land. A time when, through the prophet Moses, God revealed to them the very specific ways that God wanted them to leave behind the systems and structures of oppressive Egypt, resist the follies of neighboring peoples, and embrace a new way of living and being as recipients of God's Torah, God's Law.

All of this teaching, refining, forming and molding to help them serve as a witness to all the families of the earth that God is good, God is love and God is here.

Yet Cornelius, a Gentile centurion of the Roman Cohort did not share this Jewish ancestral identity and story to shape his way of seeing the world, himself, humanity and God.

Likewise, Jews, such as Peter, had ancient and not-so-ancient relatives who endured conquest and exile at the hands of empires, like the one Cornelius was tasked with defending and expanding.

Cornelius, a Gentile centurion of the Roman Cohort might not have had the intergenerational trauma and metaphorical scars like Peter, the other disciples, the Jewish people and even Jesus lived with.

But Peter had enough trust in Cornelius and a deep sense of calling and identity in Christ to be willing to follow the leading of the Spirit and bravely go up the men sent by the Gentile Roman Centurion. Peter replies to these messengers from Cornelius, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?"

The men share that Cornelius had seen a vision instructing him to send for Peter to come back to Caesarea and share with him a message.

Peter, goes with the men, shares the story, message, love and legacy of Jesus and eventually witnesses the Holy Spirit falling upon Cornelius and all those in his household. A sort of repeat of the Pentecost event, but this time with only Gentiles.

Our passage today from Acts 11 is Peter recounting all of these things to the apostles and circumcised believers in Jerusalem who had heard these of these conversions of Gentiles and outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who were uncircumcised, but needed Peter's first-hand account to help them make sense of all of it.

Yes, as circumcised believers of the Gospel Jesus embodied and proclaim, they had come to appreciate that following him means loving one another and loving quite broadly and holistically. But the people Peter was bringing in to the Church now were not fellow Judeans and Israelites following "The Way." No, these uncircumcised Gentiles who are supposedly receiving the Holy Spirit!

Is God's love big enough to include them? Could they have enough love to include them?

In Peter's speech, he makes it clear that it's ultimately not his decision that allowed for the Gentiles to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become a part of the early church. He didn't weigh the pros and cons and come to a conclusion. No, he received a vision that revealed the next step in God's love for the world.

It's not that God didn't previously love Gentiles. Rather, these two scriptures assigned to the fifth Sunday of Easter show us a key step in how God's has created, and is still creating the Church, the spiritual assembly who will be Christ's body on earth, a community who will be the hands and feet of "The Way"

The love that Jesus speaks of the night he gives himself up for us is the love that forms the Church. And the vision Peter sees on this day is the vision that shows what the church will look like.

It will look like those who are brought into the fold through Christ's love for them and who are willing to share that love for others.

True, the church is built upon the Rock, the one named Simon Peter. But more accurately, it is built upon God's love being revealed and shared and embodied and extended through those like Peter, who had enough trust in humanity and faith in the Risen Christ to love as he has first loved us. Amen.