

Readings

Scripture

²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
- Ephesians 1:22-23 (*English Standard Version*)

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

Valley Springs is an intergenerational community of grace, learning to love God and serve our world together.

Sermon Outline

What will you do this year for love?
Ephesians 1:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Year Verse 2018
Brad Anderson

Because the love of Christ holds us fast, that same love will predictably give new shape to our lives... (2 Corinthians 5:14a)

How will the love of Christ predictably give new shape to our lives?

By drawing us into a wider community of grace... (Ephesians 1:22-23)

By teaching us to live for one another... (2 Corinthians 5:14b-15)

By guarding us from viewing anyone according to the world...
(2 Corinthians 5:16-17)

By entrusting us with the message of ceasefire... (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

Reflection Questions (*taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- How does the metaphor of a body help you to understand the interconnectedness of the church? How important is grace to this community? Describe how grace fuels both newness of life and assurance of hope for the body of Christ?
- As head of his body, the church, Jesus Christ offered his life for her in love. Describe how that kind of love is good news.
- Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 that to live for Jesus is the antidote for our fallen, human condition. How does living on behalf of Jesus and subsequently others through our service draw our attention away from an unhealthy preoccupation with self? Describe the learning process involved in this happy discovery.
- How has God used failure in your life to teach you about love?
- When Valley Springs uses the phrase "learning to love" what does that mean? How does the phrase "service" describe our love for God and others?