

Ah, remember church in the Before Times? We all had things to worry about back then too, it wasn't a perfect time, early in 2020, but we gathered. The guys from Trinity Glen came and sat in the pews with us, we got to hear Jeremy Dakin's jokes at announcement time, what I call half time. We got to listen to the sound of Christine's beautiful music played on the organ.

We could see each other up close, ask about families and ailments, "Is that back of yours getting any better?" "How is aunt Sally doing?" We got to drink coffee and tea together and enjoy cookies, cakes and sometimes little pigs in a blanket if Alice was so inspired, guacamole when Tom's turn at hospitality came up.

We loved each other and our neighbors with the passing of the peace, Eucharist, singing hymns and enjoying food together. We got to hug.

After about eight months of this New Abnormal, and with Covid clusters appearing in our area, no wonder many of us are feeling a little blah, uninspired, or in some cases outright depressed. When will things return to normal, we ask? And the answers vary depend on who is speaking. And the answers aren't very heartening.

And still, some things haven't changed, by the grace of God. Jesus shows up in our Gospel reading this morning and reminds us of the bedrock of faith. The first commandment is to love God with heart, soul and mind. And the second commandment, just as important, is to love your neighbor as yourself.

It doesn't matter what our circumstances are in life. Maybe church is different, but love is the same. Church in this new form is **still** the place where we hear Jesus telling us what we need to hear. God cares about every single person. Bishop Michael Curry says in his book, *Love is the Way*, that "**Everybody is God's somebody.**"

If you are listening to this sermon this morning then your faith and your church are important to you, and probably, the words of Jesus are vital to you. Jesus teaches us how to live and, not just that, how to thrive. Trinity Church is our place in God's great world, where we both can learn from Jesus, give thanks to God, and reach out to really love all our neighbors as ourselves.

Linda Lloyd, our Senior Warden, has been thinking about how we can still have those conversations like we used to at coffee hour. It's the old-fashioned buddy system. Carol

Taylor, Linda and I will soon put into place an idea she has to let us keep having those conversations that help us thrive.

The more we connect with each other, the more we connect with God, the closer we are to making sure that each person knows that **“everybody is God’s somebody”**. Each of us need personal experiences to bring us the Spirit of Jesus. If you would like to find out about our buddy system, or help us put it into practice, please call or write Carol, Linda or me.

This is how we take care of each other. And now, our treasurer, John Oler will take a minute to tell us how we take care of the Trinity Church that you support, and that we need. Our sustaining effort is needed **now** so that when it’s possible, we’ll be able to return in full force to the sound of hymns, the smell of coffee brewing, and the taste of the holy meal Jesus provides to feed our souls.