



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

June 22, 2022

From Pastor Tom

The Four Loves

I always appreciate it when people recommend books to me, and a couple of weeks ago Doug Miller recommended a book by C. S. Lewis entitled *The Four Loves*. C. S. Lewis is perhaps best known for his children's series "The Chronicles of Narnia," in which he manages to pack a lot of important Christian theology into a form accessible to children (and adults who enjoy children's books, in particular high fantasy!). He has also written extensively for adults on a host of religious and theological themes (he is also widely known for his best-seller *Mere Christianity*).

In *The Four Loves* the author brings his usual insightful, thoughtful, philosophical, and Christian gifts to bear on the topic of love. In a comprehensive yet concise way, he begins by introducing two primary categories of love: "need love" and "gift love." The former is distinguished by its being based on a need of some kind (as in a young child's love for its mother). The latter, conversely, is generated by a desire to give to or help someone (as in a mother's love for her child). With that as a framework, he goes on to identify four general yet distinct types of love: Affection, Friendship, Eros, and Charity.

The Love of Affection, he says, is a kind of love that is typically based simply on comfortableness and familiarity, as with someone we have been "around" a long time (for example, the family gardener), someone who both knows us and is known to us. Also, it is often enhanced by feelings of simple appreciation. The love of affection can include both need-love and gift-love. The relationship between parents and their children typically includes the love of affection (in both directions). But Lewis also calls it "the humblest and most widely diffused of loves, the love in which our experience seems to differ least from that of the animals" (which he hastens to add, is not to devalue it in any way).

The love of Friendship is of course something we are all familiar with. It goes beyond Affection in that it involves a strong sense of camaraderie and commonality, as when two or more people discover a common interest (e.g. hiking, or sports), passion (e.g. music, or faith), or important life experience (which certainly would include childhood and adolescence, as well as any other stage of life). It typically grows out of a sense of finding and discovering this commonality ("Oh, you too?!"). Partly because of the way we are socialized, it often occurs between two or members of the same sex. And, accompanying the mutual solidarity is a sense of uniqueness, of "us against the world."

The love of Eros is the type we usually associate with romantic love. It has a distinctly sexual dimension (best exemplified as occurring in a marriage relationship) but is bigger and broader and deeper than that. It is

generated by attraction, and maintained by a kind of “chemistry” or inseparable bond (as in the rather cliché phrase “You complete me”).

And finally, the love of Charity is the least “natural” of the four loves, and not surprisingly is the love we share with God and is the most God-like. (And interestingly, it can assume both “need” and “gift” forms—as in the human need for God.) Best exemplified by God’s (and Christ’s) love for us, it can nevertheless be modeled in our interhuman relationships. While surprisingly Lewis never uses the Greek, biblical work *agape* in reference to Charity, it is clear they are the same thing. And while it is in many ways the most difficult of the four loves, it is also the one we were (and are) ultimately created for.

All four of these loves are a gift from God, and when enacted in mature ways, glorify God. Where do you find all four kinds in your own lives? Where do you find them in the church, specifically our church? May all four deepen our appreciation of God, our relationship with God, and our faithful obedience of God! And, may all four contribute in their own, important ways to our life together at the First Mennonite Church!

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ This week continue to pray through our directory.
- ☞ Pray for **the family and friends who have lost loved ones** (including ourselves!) as they gather on Saturday morning and afternoon for memorial services. May this be a time of celebration, and the deepening of our faith, as we remember.
- ☞ **Pray for our farmers** (and of course, their families) as wheat harvest continues. Pray that their combines and other equipment won’t break down at inopportune times, and that their yields will be abundant!

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **This Saturday, June 25 - Schedule for helping at the two memorial events is posted on the board.** Thank you so much for volunteering to help!

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Five favorite hymns or spiritual songs:** Share a testimony of your spiritual life by sharing songs which are meaningful to you and check out what others enjoy also, posted on the wall in the foyer. These songs will be included in our Sunday morning worship services through the rest of the summer and into the fall.

☞ **The adult Sunday School Plan for summer:**

June 19-July 17

Half truths : God helps those who help themselves and other things the Bible doesn't say / Adam Hamilton.

They are simple phrases. They sound Christian -- like something you might find in the Bible. We've all heard these words. Maybe we've said them. They capture some element of truth, yet they miss the point in important ways. Join Adam Hamilton in searching for the whole truth by comparing common Christian clichés to the message and ministry of Jesus. The clichés include: Everything happens for a reason; God helps those who help themselves ; God won't give you more than you can handle ; God said it, I believe it, that settles it ; Love the sinner, hate the sin. 5 sessions

July 24-August 28

Simply Enough : straight talk from Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne on Simple, Just Living Features a conversation between Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne, plus pertinent songs on prophetic themes of peace, justice and simplicity. Six sessions on these topics: Lifestyle, Food, Celebrations, Stuff, Money, Justice.

Everyone is invited. Drop in for one or come for all. . . There will be a short video clip followed by discussion. No advance preparation necessary.

Contact Mark and Sandy Hiebert if you have questions

☞ **This coming Sun.**, June 26—7:00 pm Berlin Exodus Presentation - —Come hear the story of how MCC worker, Peter Dyck, moved 1,200 Ukrainian Mennonite refugees located in Berlin to a waiting ship in West Germany to travel to Paraguay in 1947 (75 years ago). **The Berlin Exodus (also known as the Great Escape)** is the theme of an evening presentation at Trinity Mennonite Church here in Hillsboro led by Calvin Buller.

☞ **Life Enrichment returns to Bethel College with the start of the fall 2022 semester** – but It will be on a different day. Life Enrichment resumes Thursday, Aug. 25, and will be on Thursdays thereafter. Place and time remain the same: Krehbiel Auditorium, 9:30 a.m.
See <https://www.bethelks.edu/academics/convocation-lectures/life-enrichment> for more information, and look for a brochure coming later this summer.

Verse of the Week:

I Corinthians 13:13

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.”

