

Spiritual Focus

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Luke 6:31

A Word of Life

“Love Not as the World Does”

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian

February 23, 2025 at Wall Street United Church

Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

Good Morning Wall Street and a Blessed 197th Anniversary to you!

I bring you greetings from Trinity United Church in Smiths Falls. It is truly an honour and a privilege to be with you today in this historical moment in time. 197 Years! I rejoice with you for all that you have done and you continue to do for the Glory of God.

What is 197 years in the greater scheme of God's love? Truly it is not even a drop in the great bucket of the greatness of God's love and existence.

Today, we heard one of the difficult passages where Jesus says “Love your Enemies”. As an individual whose ancestors have survived a genocide, how can I keep this commandment from Jesus?

“But what if ... this is not a Commandment but a promise?” A promise that though the world does not understand it, the Love of God helps us understand it, as the Love of God embraces us from eternity to eternity even when we fall short. What if this is an invitation for us to “treat others the way we want to be treated?” How about if this is a reminder that there is enough, more than enough — love, attention, food, worth, honor, time — to go around?

Beloved, Wall Street, what is the church? What is the work of the church? The Church is a community of people who are imperfect but attempt to live through the perfect love of God — not just for their own selves but for the sake of the world that God loved so much. The church is a community of human beings who are loved and accepted by God before they were born, during their life on Earth, and even after this physical life.

The church is not here to create hell on Earth by oppression, and aggression, but to practice a life of making heaven on earth a reality.

The church is the body of Christ who is the incarnation of the love of God and attempts to share that unconditional love with everyone.

“Love your enemies”, Jesus said. He did not say “Love your enemies and LIKE everything they do.” The True Church of Jesus does not like how wars and genocides are taking place in the world, the True Church does not like the fact that the rich are getting richer and the poor forgotten. The church is here to fill in the gaps where Governments fall short.

Yesterday, Wall Street raised over \$2,000, for the Coldest Night Initiative, and I know Trinity did as well, and many others participated too. Why? Because the church fills in the gaps where the Government falls short. The Church and State cannot be separated because they are both here to meet the needs of their constituents.

Beloved, the world is nothing without Love, the Church is nothing without love, Governments are NOTHING without Love.

Christianity is nothing without love, care, mercy, grace. Peace. Peace on earth. Not only peace in heaven. Joseph, who was sold out into slavery by his brothers, was lifted up by God. Joseph forgave his brothers because he saw that whatever the world offers to us is NOT forever. God will take all our ashes and turn them into something beautiful. We are called to love one

another not as the world loves, but as God loves. We go against the grain of the world to give life and more life.

Wall Street United Church — you are almost double the age of the United Church of Canada! But it is not the length of the life that we have that is the question, but it is HOW we live the life we are given.

How will we live our days is the real question. How do we love? How do we respect? How do we lift each other up? This is what Jesus said in the inauguration of his ministry Luke 4:18 . “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.” Beloved, this is the Work of the Church to be — because the work of the church is the work of Christ that Jesus started over 2000 years ago.

How is the church serving this world?

By BEING AND LIVING the Word of God – and if necessary, using words. Each and every one of us is to Called to Become the WORD of God, the Love of God made flesh.

Beloved, the Love that God offers is nothing like the love that the world offers. The world will say “I give you peace, but you need to give me 50% of your precious minerals.” The world will say “I will make you better homes than before, but you need to leave this country and come back later.” Lies... Lies, Lies... God’s love doesn’t work that way. ‘Love and Care’ is not a business. Love gives abundantly ... God’s love has no restrictions, God's peace has no restrictions. And this is what the church is to proclaim in the world to the world... this is why we gather as a Community of Faith. We gather together so that we can encourage one another, so that we can continue the work of Jesus together . *Where two or three are gathered, I am there.* And this is why community is important. This is why the church must be informed of what is going on in the world! We do not live in a bubble, we are part of this world and our aim is to live a life that makes this world a better place. Like Jesus said, “*Thy kingdom*

come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Jesus did not say “Create hell on earth so that you can go to heaven!” Many religious fanatics, and some Christians, do...

Beloved, the Church is not the building. The Church is the people who share love, care and compassion with others.

The church is the love of God who offers liberation through the power of love that God gives, and not as the world gives. Therefore, Wall Street United — be strengthened, go forward from this point by praising God for the 197 years of Grace that you have experienced, offered and still do... Birthdays are not only moments of celebration, but also a time to consider and see how we can go forward with the Love of God and reach out to many more – not to fill up the pews, but to fill up the hearts of the people who need it the most.

Happy and Blessed Anniversary Wall Street! You are an amazing community of Faith, from your spiritual leader, to your music directors and to the youngest members. You are loved more than you know and your commitment to the work of Jesus is not in vain! Love each other and EVERYONE who comes your way not as the world loves, but as God does.

Remember, 197 years is not even a small drop of water in the great bucket of God’s Love. Wall Street, you are just getting started!

Thanks be to God. Amen.