

June 19, 2022
The Second Sunday after Pentecost
“Kid-Friendly” Eucharist

Galatians 3:23-29
LUKE 8:26-39

“ONE GREAT FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE”

Interactive sermon

I’d like to invite the kids to come up front to help me explain this morning’s first Bible reading to the grown-ups.

[After they have gathered.] You know, we talk a lot about Jesus in church, about the difference Jesus makes in our lives and in the world, like in today’s first reading when St. Paul tells us that “in Christ Jesus you are **all** children of God through faith,” but have you ever thought about what things were like *before* Jesus?

Let’s go together in our own “way-back machine” and see if we can learn a little about what it was like. Do do this, let’s put our pointer fingers on top of our heads and spin around slowly twice.

[After that.] OH NO! Things are so *different*. With Jesus we can sing “in Christ there is no east or west,” but back before Jesus, people felt *divided* based on *where they were born* ! *Everybody* who was born in New Jersey has to move, if you are able, to the *pulpit side* of the church, everyone who was born *some place else* has to move to the *organ side* of the church. Grown-ups and teens too! If you’re with a small child who was born someplace different than you, you can stand together in the aisle.

Look at this. Back before Jesus, before we knew we were ALL children of God, people used to “diss” each other based on where they were born ! How dumb is that ? But it happened.

And oh no! People are *divided* in other ways. St. Paul tells us “in Christ there is no male nor female,” but back before Jesus women and girls were considered *second class*! All the men and boys please move up front, all the women and girls in the back half of the bus — uh, church. Grown-ups and teens too. If you’re with a small child of a different gender or if you’re non-binary, you can stand in the middle of the church.

Look around at this. But this is *the way it was*.

Oh no! People back before Jesus were divided in *other* ways too ! Everyone with brown...eyes come up front, everyone with any other color eyes — blue, gray, green, hazel and so on — in the back half. If you're with a small child who has different color eyes, you can be together in the middle.

Look at this! This is awful ! Is there any reason to discriminate against people because of *the color of their eyes*? [Responses.]

I *really* don't like the way people were divided and discriminated against. Anybody want to go back to life *with* Jesus ? Right, let's get into what our "way forward machine," pointer fingers on the tops of our heads, and turn slowly around in the opposite direction from the way you did last time. This is indeed the way forward.

PHEW! That's so much better ! Now everyone can sit *wherever they want* and *with whoever they want* and everyone *can get first class treatment* — **says Jesus !**

Of course, there are still people today who treat people badly for no reason, which is wrong and upsets Jesus, so it's up to us to remember our **Baptismal Covenant**. Please repeat after me: "Stand up for justice and peace [all repeat] for *all* people [repeat], and "to respect the dignity [repeat] of *every* human being [repeat] with God's help [repeat]."

ALL means ALL, and EVERY means EVERY. Sometimes it's hard, which is why we ask God's help to "make each of us a blessing to someone today."

And often there are special months and days we can make special efforts to respect certain groups of people. So right now, it's JUNE. Any special celebration for the month of June? Right, it's PRIDE month. So let's put our hands together for all LGBTQ people! [Applause.] And today is June 19th. Can anyone tell me what Juneteenth is? [Responses.] Right, this is a day to celebrate freedom for African-American people [applause]. Finally, this is the third Sunday in June. Right, it's Father's Day ! Any fathers here, take a bow, and single parents, as I was told once, you get to celebrate *both* Father's Day and Mother's Day.

Let's finish by singing again the first verse of our opening hymn: "In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south nor north, but once great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth."

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