

At Our Core; Romans 15:1-13

Summary

The sermon series 'At Our Core' explores the fundamental values of the church, focusing on why the church exists and its purpose in the world. The church is designed to glorify God, live out the Gospel, and facilitate salvation. First United Methodist Church's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, guided by core values such as welcoming everyone with Christ's grace and hospitality. The sermon emphasizes the importance of welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, using Romans 15:1-13 to illustrate this point. The message encourages the congregation to invite, accept, and include others, reflecting God's love and grace.

Key Verses

Romans 15:1-13

Matthew 25:35

Hebrews 13:2

1 Peter 4:9

Life Application

This week, challenge yourself to invite someone new to join you at church or a church event. Reflect on how you can make them feel welcomed and valued.

Key Takeaways –

The church exists to glorify God and facilitate salvation.

Welcoming others is a core value that reflects Christ's grace.

Hospitality involves inviting, accepting, and including others.

Every individual has a role in making the church a welcoming place.

God's love is demonstrated through our actions of grace and hospitality.

Devotionals

Day 1:

The Divine Design of Welcome

Devotional Have you ever felt that deep longing to belong somewhere? That's not by accident. God intentionally designed us with a need for community and connection. Just as a puzzle piece is crafted to fit perfectly with others, we are created to be part of something bigger than ourselves

- the church family. This isn't just about having a place to go on Sundays; it's about fulfilling our fundamental human design. When we understand that this need for connection is part of God's blueprint for humanity, we begin to see church involvement not as an optional add-on to our faith, but as an essential element of who we are meant to be.

Bible Verse

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Romans 15:7

Reflection Question

How has your need for Christian community shaped your spiritual journey, and in what ways might God be calling you to help others fulfill their need for belonging?

Quote God has designed us, all human beings, so that as a part of our design, within our very God created design is a need for church.

Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for designing us with a need for community. Help us recognize and embrace this aspect of our creation, and guide us in creating spaces where others can find the belonging they seek. Amen.

Day 2:

The Power of Invitation

Devotional Think about the last time someone personally invited you to something special. How did it make you feel valued and wanted? In our Christian walk, invitation isn't just a social courtesy - it's a powerful expression of God's heart. Most people won't simply walk through church doors on their own; they need someone to extend that personal invitation. Just as Jesus invited his disciples to 'come and see,' we too are called to actively seek out and invite others into our faith community. This isn't about filling seats; it's about fulfilling our mission to share God's love in tangible ways.

Bible Verse

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." - John 1:43

Reflection Question

Who has God placed in your life that might be waiting for your invitation to experience Christian community?

Quote Nine times out of ten, the person who needs to be a part of this church, who really desires it, even before they know a person who's not a part of this church, but one we should be welcoming here, nine times out of 10, they're not going to show up on a Sunday morning. They're going to need to be searched out and invited, welcomed.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, give us courage and wisdom to extend your invitation to others. Help us see opportunities to welcome others as you have welcomed us. Amen.

Day 3:

Acceptance: The Heart of Welcome

Devotional True acceptance goes beyond mere tolerance. It's about seeing others through God's eyes - as beloved creations worthy of love and respect. When we truly accept others, we're not endorsing every behavior or belief, but rather acknowledging their inherent worth as someone made in God's image. Just as Christ accepted us while we were still growing and learning, we're called to create spaces where others can grow at their own pace. This kind of acceptance doesn't compromise truth; it creates the safe environment where truth can be embraced.

Bible Verse

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. - 1 John 3:1

Reflection Question

How can you show acceptance to others while still maintaining your own convictions and values?

Quote What acceptance means is that you are welcomed here to grow at your own pace, to hear

the message of repentance and sanctification, that none of us are totally right with God, but we are yet all loved by God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to accept others as you have accepted us. Give us wisdom to create spaces where people can grow in their faith journey. Amen.

Day 4:

Building True Belonging

Devotional Belonging goes deeper than just being present - it's about being known, valued, and needed. When we create environments of true belonging, we're reflecting God's heart for His children. Remember, God has engraved us on the palms of His hands, showing how deeply He values belonging. This kind of belonging isn't earned through perfect behavior or complete theological understanding; it's offered freely, just as God's love is freely given to us.

Bible Verse

See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. - Isaiah 49:16

Reflection Question

What specific actions can you take to help others feel they truly belong in your faith community?

Quote People need to know that they are invited and they are wanted and they are needed and they belong.

Prayer

God, thank you for giving us a place to belong in your family. Help us create that same sense of belonging for others in our midst. Amen.

Day 5:

Living Out Christ's Welcome

Devotional Christian hospitality isn't just about being nice - it's about embodying Christ's love in practical ways. When we welcome others, we're not just following a church growth strategy; we're living out our identity as followers of Jesus. This welcome should be as natural as breathing because it flows from who we are in Christ. Whether it's a warm greeting, an intentional conversation, or an invitation to coffee, these actions demonstrate God's love in tangible ways.

Bible Verse

Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. - Matthew 18:5

Reflection Question

How can you make showing Christ's welcome a more natural part of your daily life?

Quote Christian hospitality reveals a genuine love for the other, grounded in God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us to be living examples of your welcome and love. Make our hearts more like yours, seeing and valuing each person we meet. Amen.