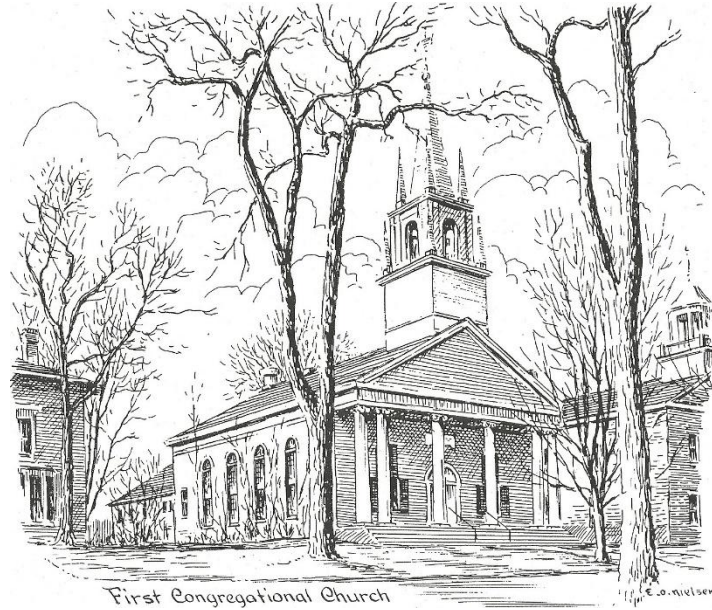


First Congregational Church
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Church



We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.

VISION: We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.

MISSION: Together we strive to praise God, grow in faith, cultivate love, spread joy, care for all people and God's creation, promote peace, and do justice.

May 17, 2026

JOYS AND CONCERNS: After each Joy or Concern, Please respond:
Pastor: "God," Congregation: "**Hear our prayer.**"

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE
Global Mission Partner Prayer this week: Kenya

MORNING PRAYER, MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PRAYER & SILENT PRAYER

Litany of Extravagant Welcome

Let us pray to the God of our Ancestors, who is the Creator of all Life: Eternal Divine Spirit, we pray for the Church that you created through your Son, Jesus Christ; that it may provide an extravagant welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness, particularly in minority communities.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guide us, the citizens and leaders of this land, this region and this city ... that we may unite to provide for and protect those of us who are poor, homeless and suffer in mind, body and spirit.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Forgive us as a community, when we knowingly or unknowingly ridicule, look in disgust, neglect or discriminate against those who suffer from mental illness.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Grant patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are ill. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions and abuse.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Oh God, increase our awareness, compassion, and sensitivity so that we can embrace our siblings and cousins who wrestle with Mental Illness.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Because of their intense pain, and at times, their lack of perceived options, we commend to your mercy and defense all who are contemplating suicide today, right now. Bring someone or something to intervene.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace accepts their loved one, despite the event that brought them into your loving arms.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guide those who do research for the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses; uphold them with your compassion and diligence.

God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Eternal Spirit of Love, Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all confusion with your order, all fear with your peace. Through Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

'Come and Fill'

Taize

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 17:1-11

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people,^[a] to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this

is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

L: The Word of God

P: THANKS BE TO GOD

* HYMN *‘The Church’s One Foundation’* Red Hymnal No.238

SERMON ‘Nourish VS. Anorexia or Gluttony.’

OFFERTORY PRAYER

* DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

DEDICATION PRAYER

* CLOSING HYMN *‘Be Thou My Vision’* Red Hymnal No.445

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTORY RESPONSE

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see. God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.**

POSTLUDE *‘Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag’* Johann Walther

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

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Those serving you today:

Ushers: Becky & Dave Lenz

Reader: Cindy Clement

Flowers: Sherri Dunbar

Online Streaming: Sarah Whitfield

The special yellow floral arrangement will represent Mental Health Awareness.

Please join us for fellowship, coffee or tea, and refreshments in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Please take note of the colored paper prayer slips in the pew rack. These are for you to write a word or phrase of prayer or concerns. Fold it and place it in the offering plate. It will only be shared with Rev. John.

Happy May Birthday to Ann Dunlevy, Angie Eddy, Sally Flesher, Steve Whitfield

Help Yourself Shelf Wish List

* jarred spaghetti sauce * 1lb. white rice * drink mixes * canned chicken * tuna * * cereal
* SPAM * mayo * baked beans * toothpaste * dish soap * cat litter *

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 17th - Red Geranium orders available for **Pentecost Sunday (May 24th)**

May 17th - Rev. John's Installation 3:00pm

May 18th - Rev. John in Mexico, ME. for funeral. Out of the office.

May 19th - May 21st - Rev. John will be attending Maine Clergy UCC Convocation in Augusta

May 25th - The church office will be **closed** for Memorial Day

May 30th - Organ Society Clearance Sale & Purse Auction, including some “celebrity” purses, and Bake Table

May 31st - Congregational meeting after worship

Coming Up This Week

Monday, May 18

Rev. John will be out of the office for a funeral in Mexico, ME.

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Mah Jongg 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Tuesday, May 19

Rev. John will be out of the office for a Clergy conference in Augusta

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Wednesday, May 20

Rev. John will be out of the office for a Clergy conference in Augusta

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00pm

Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am

Sunday, May 24

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following worship

Pentecost Sunday



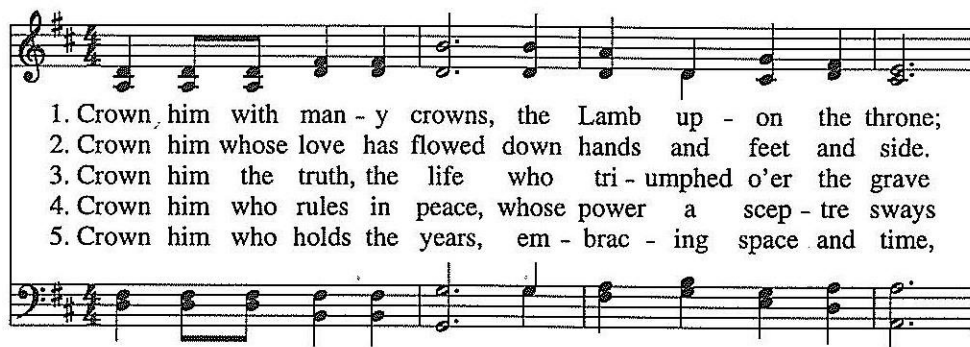
First Congregational Church UCC
PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, ME 04578

Minister and Teacher: Rev. John Hogue
revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com
Pastoral Care – 207 955-0055

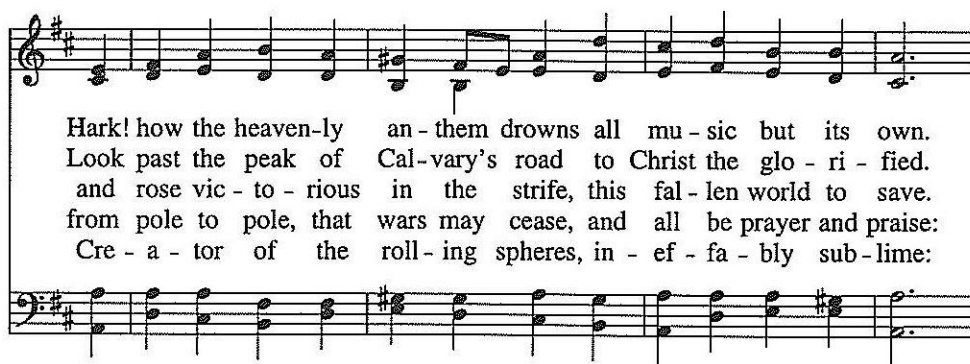
Music Director: Joel Pierce
Sexton: Mary McKinney
Office Administrator: Hilary Atwood

Church Office Email – fccw@myfairpoint.net
Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544
Church Website – www.uccwiscasset.org

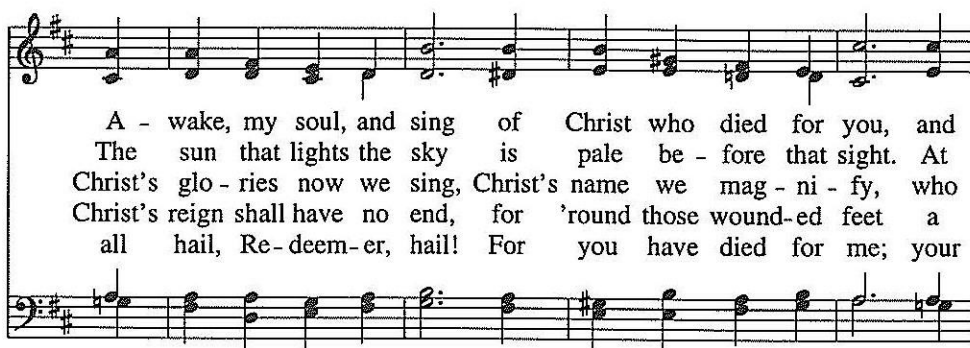
Crown Him with Many Crowns



1. Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on the throne;
 2. Crown him whose love has flowed down hands and feet and side.
 3. Crown him the truth, the life who tri - umphed o'er the grave
 4. Crown him who rules in peace, whose power a scep - tre sways
 5. Crown him who holds the years, em - brac - ing space and time,



Hark! how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own.
 Look past the peak of Cal-vary's road to Christ the glo - ri - fied.
 and rose vic - to - rious in the strife, this fal - len world to save.
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise:
 Cre - a - tor of the roll - ing spheres, in - ef - fa - bly sub - lime:

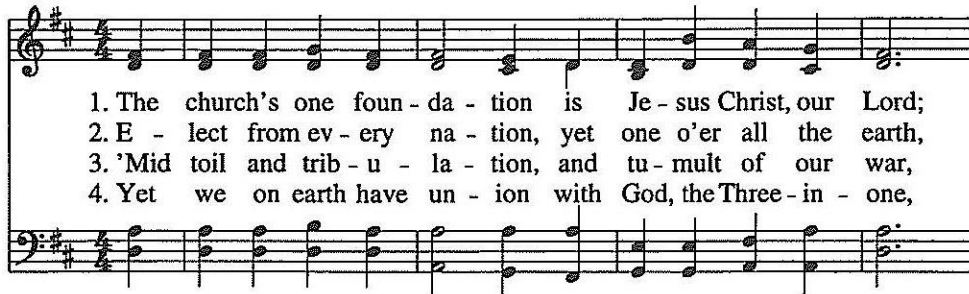


A - wake, my soul, and sing of Christ who died for you, and
 The sun that lights the sky is pale be - fore that sight. At
 Christ's glo - ries now we sing, Christ's name we mag - ni - fy, who
 Christ's reign shall have no end, for 'round those wound-ed feet a
 all hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For you have died for me; your

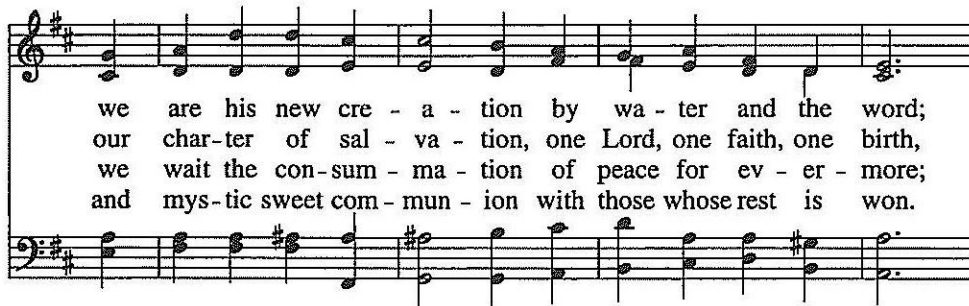
WORDS: Matthew Bridges, 1851, and Godfrey Thring, 1874; adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1993, alt. DIADEMATA
 MUSIC: George J. Elvey, 1868 SMD

The Church's One Foundation

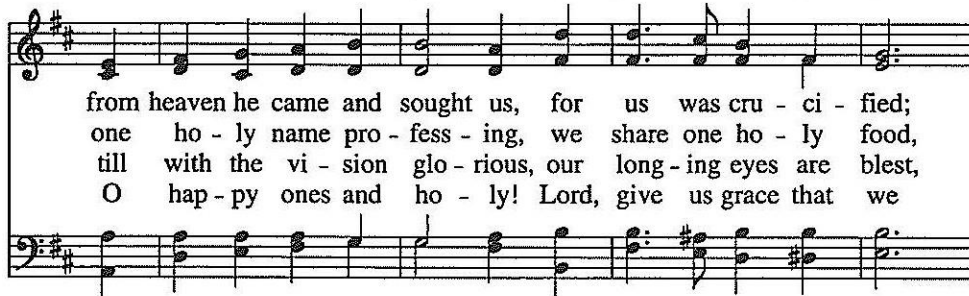
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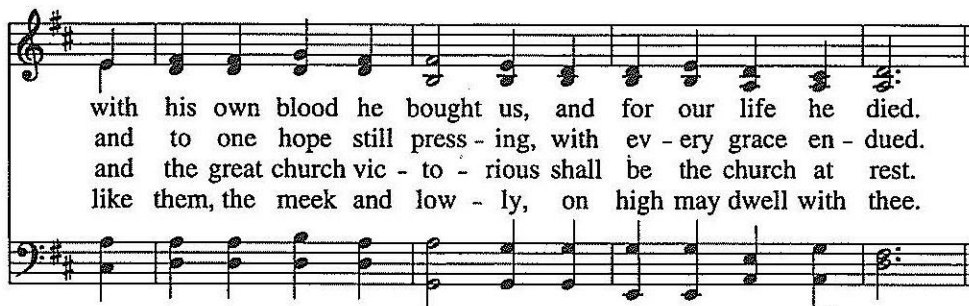
1. The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, our Lord;
 2. E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3. 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of our war,
 4. Yet we on earth have un - ion with God, the Three - in - one,



we are his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word;
 our char - ter of sal - va - tion, one Lord, one faith, one birth,
 we wait the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion with those whose rest is won.



from heaven he came and sought us, for us was cru - ci - fied;
 one ho - ly name pro - fess - ing, we share one ho - ly food,
 till with the vi - sion glo - rious, our long - ing eyes are blest,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord, give us grace that we



with his own blood he bought us, and for our life he died.
 and to one hope still press - ing, with ev - ery grace en - dued.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 like them, the meek and low - ly, on high may dwell with thee.

WORDS: Samuel J. Stone, 1866, alt.
 MUSIC: Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

AURELIA
 76.76D

Be Thou My Vision

445

Unison

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3. Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4. High King of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

nought be all else to me save that thou art.
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - it - ance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou my Re - deem - er, my love thou hast won;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 thou in me dwell - ing, and I with thee one.
 Rul - er of heav - en, my treas - ure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

WORDS: Ancient Irish, tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1905; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1912, alt.
 MUSIC: Traditional Irish melody, harm. David Evans, *Revised Church Hymnary*, 1927

SLANE
 10 10.9 10

The original Irish text dates from c. A.D. 700. SLANE is an ancient ballad tune named for the hill where St. Patrick lit Easter fires.

Harm. © 1927, by permission of Oxford University Press

John 17:1-11 Nourish VS. Anorexia or Gluttony

Rev. John Hogue

May 17th

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign: “Energy-efficient vehicle. Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step on exhaust.” Stepping on the ‘exhaust’ is what certain people like to do. Why? Because unity seems to be an elusive thing these days. Whatever your convictions may be, it seems as though we are challenged daily to double down on those convictions and dig our heels in. Then in the process create as much space and distance as is humanly possible from those who think differently than us! We see this struggle at a national and international level as debates rage about on topics like: foreign and domestic policy, the stability and future of the global markets, how to respond to an epidemic,. etc. However, we also see this in highly personal and intimate ways. Unity is threatened at the dinner table, or on a video call with family members who may or may not share your convictions, or when you choose to avoid people you love because you know they don’t see things the same way you do.

Reminds me of two men riding a bicycle built for two when approaching a steep hill. It took a great deal of struggle for the men to complete a difficult stiff climb. When they got to the top the man in front turned to partner in the back ‘Boy that was quite a hard climb’ The fellow in the back replied, ‘ Yes, and If I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way we would have certainly rolled back backwards. We’re reminded that unity is a “very good and pleasant” thing. It is meant to be a way of life, a defining part of our human existence, not a passing moment or fleeting emotion. We are meant to “live together” in unity. Yet we also learn two things about unity in these verses. Firstly, unity is meant to be a sign that we are family, “kindred” who belong to one another and therefore choose to seek unity with all that we have. Secondly, and helpfully if you find that unity within your family is ever elusive and seemingly impossible, this unity is not something you and I can fabricate or manufacture but is a gift from God and a sign of his blessing. We can long for it, pray for it, seek forgiveness and healing of old wounds, but we cannot force it or make it appear. I would like to present a case study.

A few years ago off the rocky coast near Maine, two old lobstermen headed out before sunrise. One was named Earl, the other Tommy. (not their real names) Now Earl and Tommy had been “not speaking” for almost fifteen years—which in Maine is practically an Olympic sport. Nobody could even remember why they were mad. Maybe it was about a trap line. Maybe it was a town meeting argument over who made the better chowder. Doesn’t matter. The point is: they were together on the same boat but living like strangers. That morning, thick fog rolled in so dense you couldn’t see the bow of the boat. The compass started acting funny, and suddenly the engine coughed, sputtered, and died. Now there they were—floating, invisible, cold, and quiet. For an hour they tried fixing the motor in icy silence. Nothing worked. Finally Earl muttered, “Well Tommy... reckon this might be a decent time to pray.” Tommy looked at him and said, “Funny. I was just thinkin’ the same thing.” So these two stubborn Yankees—who hadn’t spoken honestly in years—bowed their heads together on that little lobster boat. They prayed for help. They prayed for safety. Then somewhere in that fog, they started praying for each other. Not polished prayers. No King James English. Just raw truth. “God, I’m tired of being mad.” “God, I miss my friend.” “God, this is a foolish way to live.” By the time help arrived, the engine wasn’t the only thing that got repaired. Sometimes God lets the fog get thick enough that we finally realize we need each other. That’s John 17.

Our greatest hope for a life of unity is to move closer to the source of true unity, the Holy Trinity. It is within the life of God that we are reminded of the way unity, diversity find their true and faithful expression. Still, we human beings can mess things up. Now I in no way shape or form want to demean, devalue or hurt anyone’s feelings when I talk about anorexia or gluttony but using these terms not in medical context but spiritual context. Allow me to explain. Andy, a longtime friend of mine (so I am obviously not using his real name) had a life-transforming experience when he was in his early thirties. His life had been a mess of drugs, depression and petty crime. He got talked into going to a type of retreat meant to inspire and renew. There he “met God face to face.” It turned his life around. Probably, in the long run, it’s made a better person out of him, but his wife walked out when she could no longer stand his insistence that she also have his experience. In other words, once he had spiritual anorexia, but now a spiritual gluttony that turns people off. He moves from one church to another, looking for a “spiritual home” but never seems to find it. Too much God can ruin you. Andy has a problem with idol

worship. He has turned his experience, or at least his perception of it, into an idol. People we encounter are running scared of overdosing on religion, so they don't want to encounter God at all, except perhaps in safe, controlled, one-hour doses on Sunday morning. They go to the other extreme and have nothing at all to give their lives meaning. Between those two extremes, I know many folks who have been to life changing events and similar events, and come out of them as lively, fun, active, invigorated Christians who enjoy life and live the presence of God. Surely we can find a way to enjoy the meal and let it nourish us, without falling into the trap of either spiritual anorexia or spiritual gluttony. This brings up the question of the importance of sermons.

Evelyn McLachlan of Mississauga, Ontario wrote to the Chicago Tribune, she says, reports that we spend six months of our lives sitting at stoplights, and 24 months returning phone calls. In the British Weekly someone wrote to the editor, I notice ministers seem to spend a great deal of time on their sermons and preparing them. I have been attending worship services for the past 30 years and during that time I have listened to more than 3000 sermons. For the life of me, I cannot remember a single one of them. I wonder if a minister's time might be profitably spent on something else and signing his name. The Editor wrote back, 'I got out the calculator and discovered that I spent 1,300 hours of my life listening to sermons.' Which of course, begs the question – did that do me any good? Well, yes, because I also figure I've eaten more than 52 thousand pounds of food in my life. To the writer of British Weekly, the final argument was married for 30 years. During that time I have eaten 32,850 meals-mostly my wife's cooking. I cannot remember a menu of a single meal. Yet, I have received nourishment from every single one. Without them I would have starved to death long ago and without that food, I would be dead. Without those sermons, I would also be spiritually dead.

In our scripture context, Jesus is headed toward the cross. What is on his heart? Not buildings. Not budgets. Not branding. He prays for His people. Not that they'd be impressive. Not that they'd be comfortable. But that they would be one.

Because Jesus knows a divided church is like two lobstermen on the same boat refusing to speak while drifting in dangerous waters. You can't navigate the storms of life while rowing in opposite directions. Prayer has a funny way of melting pride. It is hard to stay angry with someone while honestly praying for them. Hard to keep walls up when kneeling before the same Savior. In John 17, Jesus is showing us that unity is not built first in committee meetings—it is

born in prayer. Before Jesus carried the cross for His disciples, He carried them in prayer. If the Son of God thought unity was worth praying for, maybe the church should stop treating division like a hobby. Who is in your 'boat' right now that you need to pray with instead of arguing with? Because sometimes the miracle isn't God calming the storm—it's God calming the people in the boat. So you may ask me, well what if someone keeps putting out the exhaust or not calming the boat? Perhaps this modern parable will explain our calling for unity.

A kind, quiet man who prays in the river every morning. One day after praying, he sees a poisonous spider struggling in the water and cups his hands to carry it ashore. As he places the spider on the ground, it stings him. Unknowingly, his prayers for the world dilute the poison. The next day the same thing happens. On the third day, the kind man is knee deep in the river, and, sure enough, there is the spider, legs frantic in the water.

As the man lifts the creature yet again, the spider asks, "Why do you keep lifting me? Can't you see I will sting you every time, because that is what I do?" The kind man cups his hands about the spider, lifts the spider and replies, "Because that is what I do."

How appropriate are Jesus' words of petition for the church. Because that is what Jesus does. He prays for the church's unity, for oneness in Spirit, so that the church may keep the revelation of the one true God of love and peace. As we look around us we realize how urgently we need this prayer: instead of being one we find ourselves separated. We find ourselves putting up dividers, fences. Fences differ in function and purpose. Some fences are actually good. The ones we put up in our backyards, for instance, may serve for the protection of our little ones so they won't get hurt by the cars that go by. Then there are fences that deter burglars from breaking into our homes, prevent wildlife from destroying our gardens and dogs from using our backyard for their business. Fences to keep out, fences to keep in, fences to protect or to guard--we are surrounded by fences. Our neighborhood is full of crisscrossing fences. And the thing about fences is that we tend not to see them until something happens to draw our attention to them. If we do notice them, we are likely to say with Robert Frost: "Good fences make good neighbors!"

However, then there are also those barbed wire-fences from behind which we see outstretched arms and terrified faces, like those surrounding concentration camps, POW camps, refugee camps. There are fences or walls separating whole countries like the ones that separate former Yugoslavia into Albanians and Serbs. Our obsession with fences, whether they serve a right or

wrong purpose, is really a reflection of our conflicts with one another. Would we really need fences if there was no such thing as burglary? If we got along with our neighbors? If there was unity and harmony in our neighborhoods and communities? Robert Frost, in the same poem I quoted above says, "Something there is (within us) that doesn't like a wall." In an ideal world, we feel there is no need for fences. We hardly think of God's kingdom in terms of fenced-in properties, do we? Still the worst kind of fences--and the most difficult to detect--are the ones that are invisible to our eyes. Where are those invisible fences that keep us from being united with our neighbors and God, from being one in the Spirit? There are fences based on physical appearances, separating persons of different race or ethnicity or gender. There are fences based on nationality, regions, or language, or even accents. There are fences between different generations, between people of different theological, ethical, or political persuasions. We do not easily agree on which fences to preserve and which to tear down in our Christian communities. Some say we must keep distinctions clear, those whom we allow to come to the Lord's table and those we need to refuse. Fences are erected over such issues as birth-control, sexuality, euthanasia, when or how Jesus will come again, whether or not women can preach, whether we should be one sort of church or another. We disagree over the length of the service, what kind of hymns or instrumentation is acceptable, what prayers should be included, who should or should not do certain parts of the service, how people should dress, and much more.

Amidst all our squabbles over where fences should be erected or preserved and where they should be torn down, amidst our disagreements and confusion, we find the Founder of the church praying--one last time. Jesus prays for unity, for peace and for love among the people of God. Jesus praying for the church's unity, we are reminded of Jesus' ministry to the people. We see Christ with arms open wide, welcoming, forgiving, accepting, loving, healing, not just some, a few--no he stretched his arms out to all.

Jesus certainly gave us guidelines, he gave us fences, but Jesus certainly also abolished some of the fences of his time. His ministry was to all--even the outlawed, the unclean, the sinners: "For God so loved the world that God gave his only Son, that whosoever believes shall be saved--whosoever!--not just a few elect...." It seems to me that Jesus erected fences of good standards, healthy living and morality, but never to a point where people were shut out. Jesus nourishes all. When it comes to dealing with people, he never turns his back on anyone--not even the one who

crucified him. Remember his prayer: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do?" So, as we argue over which fences to erect, which to keep, and which to tear down, we should keep this in mind. Jesus knew that the enemy was out there, ready to cause dissention, to cause strife and hatred among God's children.

I would like to close with an anecdote from the Tales of the Hasidim:

An old rabbi once asked his pupils how they could tell when the night had ended and the day had begun. "Could it be," asked one student, "when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it's a sheep or a dog?" "No," answered the rabbi. Another student asked, "Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it's a fig tree or a peach tree?" "No," answered the rabbi. "Then when is it?" the pupils demanded. "It is when you can look on the face of any person and see that it is your sister and brother. Because if you cannot see this, it is still night." Amen!