



THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT AT WEST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

WEST WINDS

Peabody, Massachusetts

February 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, January 28 we studied John 17:20-25 and discovered the source of our true unity is our supernatural nature mentioned in verse 21.

This is the same nature that Jesus shared with His father. We introduced the thought that spiritual unity is deeper than our practices, patterns, and preferences. Here is another article that may give you additional insight on how to communicate with others in our congregation and the greater church at large. May God use his to help equip you in your walk and work in ministry.

Growing In Christ, Pastor Gene

In Essential Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity by Dr. Mark E. Ross

Philip Schaff, the distinguished nineteenth-century church historian, calls the saying in our title “the watchword of Christian peacemakers” (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7, p. 650). Often attributed to great theologians such as Augustine, it comes from an otherwise undistinguished German Lutheran theologian of the early seventeenth century, Rupertus Meldenius. The phrase occurs in a tract on Christian unity written (circa 1627) during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), a bloody time in European history in which religious tensions played a significant role. The saying has found great favor among subsequent writers such as Richard Baxter, and has since been adopted as a motto by the Moravian Church of North America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Might it serve us well as a motto for every church and for every denomination today?

Unity

Those who are united by faith in Christ are thereby united to one another in the church, the body of Christ. We call this union the communion of saints. It is a mysterious thing, and to understand it properly we will need to see it both in its “now” and “not yet” aspects. Because it is a union created by Christ in baptizing us all by one Spirit into His body, the church (1 Cor. 12:12–13), it is true of all Christians now, a fait accompli. But the manifestation of that unity is not always apparent. Christians can display ugly divisions between one another, as at the church of Corinth (1:10–17). Their disunity could be seen in the public square as members sued one another before the ungodly in civic courts (6:1–8). Even the Lord’s Supper was not sufficient to bring them together in love and unity (11:17–34). Manifesting fully the unity in Christ that already is given to us belongs to the “not yet” perfection of the faith that will come at our glorification. With deep longing our Lord prayed for our unity, knowing that on it rests our own blessing and the credibility of the church’s witness for Christ (John 17:20–23).

Liberty

Tensions arising from diversity of belief and practice among Christians are already apparent in the pages of the New Testament and remain with us today. There was apparently a thriving vegetarian faction within the church at Rome (Rom. 14). “One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables” (v. 2). There was also a difference among them about whether certain days were to be honored (v. 5). How do we live

with such differences among us? Paul says, “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions” (v. 1). Such a person is to be welcomed, says Paul, and not just welcomed for the purpose of quarreling with him over his views. Love for such a person, weak in faith though he is, must continue.

In that love, we must extend liberty to each person to hold fast to his own conscience on what Christ has commanded (Rom. 14:5); but how far can that liberty be extended? Apparently, it would extend far enough to include vegetarians and those who maintained that Christians should continue to honor the Jewish feast days. But would it also include baptists receiving into church membership people with paedobaptist convictions, or paedobaptists receiving members with baptist convictions? Should believers who hold to a corporeal presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper admit to the table those who believe the real presence of Christ in the Supper is spiritual and not corporeal? After two thousand years of church history, Christians are still divided on many key doctrinal issues, even on the very signs of our unity in Christ — baptism and the Lord’s Supper. How, then, can we be one in Christ and demonstrate the communion of saints? It would seem that either we must ignore our doctrinal differences and treat them as inconsequential, or we must remain permanently divided and in opposition to one another until Christ returns. Is there not a more excellent way? (1 Cor. 12:31).

Charity

Love for Christ must include a love for His truth, and so we can never treat as inconsequential anything that Christ has commanded. Only those who abide in Jesus’ word are truly His disciples (John 8:31), and disciples are to be taught to obey all that He has commanded (Matt. 28:19–20). So the route that we might call doctrinal minimalism is not open to us. We cannot simply reduce the number of doctrines to be taught and believed to what we can all accept as important and ignore the rest. Movement in that direction always seems to lose its brakes and eventually nothing distinctive of Christianity remains.

But neither can we lock ourselves up in very small groups with maximal agreement on doctrine and morals, and then separate from others and refuse to acknowledge as Christians those who do not embrace all our distinctives. The multiplication of small groups who pride themselves on purity but who denounce and despise those who fall short of that standard does nothing to express the truth of “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church” for which Christ died. The love we must have for all of Christ’s disciples has no expression in this path. Where, then, is the more excellent way?

As we have observed above, the unity that we have is by the Spirit of Christ baptizing us into Christ and into His body, the church (1 Cor. 12:12–13). Our expression of that unity must therefore be a unity of the truth “as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21). Ultimately, that will be all the truth that is in Jesus, but our unity with Jesus does not wait until that perfection is achieved. Salvation comes to us by faith in Christ, so there must be a defining core of truth that is ours in faith, sufficient to unite us to Christ even if not yet complete in all its detail. Defining this core precisely might prove to be as difficult as living out the whole truth faithfully, but it will surely include that God, the creator of heaven and earth against whom we have all sinned, was in Christ, reconciling to Himself all who believe in Him, not counting their sins against them, but forgiving them through the redemption that is found in the sinless life and atoning death of Christ and received by faith alone, calling for obedience to Christ as Lord under the authority of His Word in the Holy Scriptures. Where Christ is truly preached, there is the gospel; and where the gospel is truly believed, there is the church.

Yet as we have seen, the church that is in Jesus is a diverse church. This diversity among Christians is due to our lack of conformity to Christ. He has chosen to sanctify us gradually in this world. As the progress we make in sanctification varies both in doctrine and in practice, there will always be a need in this world for those who are united in Christ to live in love with one another while dealing with differences. Sometimes these differences result in the formation of different churches and denominations in order to maintain a good conscience toward God. But such divisions need not be a defeat of unity among us, so long as we do not permit them to destroy our love and welcome for one another in Christ. Some divisions are of practical necessity anyway, for not all Christians in the world can meet together at the same time in the same place.

Many distinct gatherings of Christians spread throughout the world can actually serve the purposes of God, by sprinkling us among the lost to shine the light of Christ. Our multiple groupings can also serve us well, encouraging us to be faithful to what we believe Christ has taught us, bringing us together with those with whom we can

cooperate most fully. But if we allow our divisions to become breaches of love and occasions for pride and rivalry, then we will have failed in our calling, and our witness for Christ will be marred.

The saying of Rupertus Meldenius strikes the right balance. It calls for unity on the essential things, the core of truth in our union with Christ. In non-essentials (not the unimportant, but those things that if lacking do not prevent our union with Christ), it calls for liberty so that all might follow their consciences under the Word and Spirit. In all things, however, there must be love (“charity” from the Latin *caritas*, or “love”), “which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Col. 3:14).

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God (Rom. 15:5–7).

Dr. Mark E. Ross is associate dean and associate professor of systematic theology at the Columbia campus of Erskine Theological Seminary in South Carolina. He is also director of the Institute for Reformed Worship.

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UPCOMING SERMON SERIES: Overcoming Spiritual Adversity			
February 4	Dealing with Spiritual Failure: A God Who Picks You Up	Proverbs 24:16 Jude 24-25	Gene Heacock
February 11	Dealing with Bitterness: A God Who Renews Your Spirit	Exodus 15: 22-27 Ephesians 4:30-32	Gene Heacock
February 18	Dealing with Disappointment: A God Who Renews Your Hope	Matthew 11:1-6; 3:1-12	Gene Heacock
February 25	Dealing with Futility: A God Who Promises Great Reward	Malachi 3:13-18	Gene Heacock
March 4	Dealing with Unforgiveness: A God Who Gives Fresh Mercy	Matthew 18:21-35	Gene Heacock
March 11	Dealing with Spiritual Dryness: A God Who Meets Us in the Desert of Our Soul	Isaiah 41:17-19	Rick McDonnell
March 18	Dealing with Needs and Loneliness: A God Who is Our Shepherd	Psalms 23	Rick McDonnell



TRAINING TIME – FEBRUARY 1

Massachusetts Family Institute presents a *Regional Advocacy Training Session* on **Thursday, February 1 from 7 to 8 pm at West Church**. During this time attendees will learn how to reach out to state representatives and senators on issues impacting families throughout the states. Issues include

recreational marijuana law, bathroom and locker room law, and Planned Parenthood in schools.

Please RSVP to Michael King at Massachusetts Family Institute if you plan to attend:

➤ michael@mafamilly.org or 978-204-9131

Massachusetts Family Institute Contact Info: 781-569-0400 | www.mafamily.org | info@mafamily.org

WEST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 2018 BOARD MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND STAFF

Please pray for the following volunteers as they serve the LORD this year through their ministry to our church.

*And Jesus called them to Him and said to them,
"You know that those who are supposed to rule
over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great
men exercise authority over them. But it shall not
be among you; but whoever would be great among
you must be your servant, and whoever would be
first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of
Man also came not to be served but to serve, and
to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Mark 10:42-45

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FAQ's

Each week Pastor Gene answers 7-10 common questions about the transition time here at West Congregational Church. These FAQ's are emailed out in an All-Church email and paper copies are available in the office. Below are a few sample questions from the January 25 FAQ's.

What are we learning about West Church future needs? We are learning that the next Senior Pastor will need to possess great pastoral competencies and great leadership competencies.

How can we pray for West Church during this transition?

- God's revelation Ephesians 3:18
- God affection Ephesians 2:7-8
- God's love for His community Ephesians 3:17-19
- Gods promises to do more than we can imagine Ephesians 3:20-21
- God protection Ephesians 6:10-11, 18

Who can I talk with from the leadership if I have more in-depth questions? Pastor Gene has been called here to focus on Church Unity and Structural changes specifically dealing with our Constitution, Polity and Leadership challenges.

You may contact him using the information below:

- Email: gene.heacock@westchurchpeabody.org
- Church Phone: 978- 535-4112

TRANSITION TEAM

On January 21, 2018, the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees approved the formation of a Transition Team.

The Transition Team is a task force implemented to prepare the church for the future and to partner with the new Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor to ensure a smooth transition. They will satisfactorily address the Intentional Interim Pastor's (IIP) action items, and to ensure a healthy change process is initiated and implemented. Additionally, the transition team will research, evaluate, and make recommendations and implement, when appropriate, the IIP action items approved by the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, Associate Pastor and the Congregation.

The Transition Team will be members of West Congregational Church selected by the Intentional Interim Pastor and the team members will be approved by the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees and the Associate Pastor. The Transition Team will be introduced to the Congregation and answer any questions about their role and purpose.



CARDS, CAKES, AND CONCERNS

Sunday, February 11 at 6:30 pm in Lyons Hall

The Missions Committee is now planning for another night of ministry for the encouragement of our missionary family around the world. All are invited as the adults will sign Easter cards and the children will create their own cards that night to be sent out.

This Easter ministry complements our long-standing Christmas card ministry in helping us maintain vital contact with our missionaries. It helps them to know that we really do care about them.

You are asked to bring a cake (or cupcakes, homemade or store-bought) to share with the group. The Missions Committee will provide the ice cream.

MISSIONS PRAYER WATCH

Sunday, February 18 at 7:00 pm

Plan to come and join us on February 18 as we intercede for our missionary families around the world. The David and Diana Weber will be sharing with us about their ministry Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Children are invited to Meet Your Missionary Kids during the meeting. This time will be in the 2's and 3's Pre-School classroom. During this time kids will be introduced to Kate, a Wycliffe missionary kid, and her faithful friend, Mack. They're on an adventure to learn about different cultures, languages, and countries! Join them on their adventures through international crafts, games, recipes, activities and more. Lessons and activities are from Wycliffe's children's book, *Praying Around the World*.



PIONEER GIRLS NEWS

The month of January flew by at Pioneer Girls! We're excited to begin the month of February with a special outreach opportunity. The girls will be baking, crafting, and preparing gift packages of love to be delivered to the families residing at Citizens Inn in Peabody.

Just a reminder that we won't be meeting on February 21 during School Vacation Week.

Thank you for praying for the Pioneer Girls ministry. It is a blessing to serve God by loving these girls!

ROCK SOLID NEWS

Sunday, February 11 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Our Rock Solid Youth Ministry will be joining the youth of the Branch Church and Calvary Baptist Church for First Sunday Night (FSN), a monthly gathering of youth, on February 11 (note the date change) from 6:00-7:30 pm. First Sunday Night exists to provide a place for students to connect with friends and deal with real-life issues. We have great music, memorable activities and biblical teaching that meets/challenges real life issues. First Sunday Night is for youth in grades 7-12 and meets at Covenant Christian Academy (83 Pine Street, Peabody).

COLLEGE AND CAREER PRAYER WALK

Sunday, February 25

There will be 'prayer walk' in Lyons Hall after the Worship Service. We will have an opportunity to pray for various needs: ourselves; the congregation; the North Shore Community; our transition time; and the world. We will have a time of worship and light refreshments. For more information contact Jenya and Nathan Neff.

SNOW POLICY

There will always be a worship service on Sunday morning at 10:30 am for those able to come to church.

Sunday School is canceled from time to time due to inclement weather and poor road conditions. Cancellation notices will be posted on:

- West Church's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/westchurchpeabody)
- WBZ-TV
- My TV38
- www.cbsboston.com
- 7NEWS (NBC)
- Channel 56(CW)
- www.whdh.com

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, March 11 at 2 pm

West Meets East: Piano Concert

Dr. Joo Hye Kim and Dr. Eunhae Grace Lee will present a piano four-hands concert, "West Meets East" on Sunday, March 11 at 2 pm. The concert will include works by Dvorak, Kreisler, Mendelssohn, and Ravel. Piano four-hands is a format in which two pianists play a single piano together. This presentation produces an even fuller sound than solo piano and requires an extremely high level of collaborative spirit between the two pianists.

Following the Sunday morning worship service, the Potpourri Committee will host a brunch in Lyons Hall for those attending the concert at 2 pm.

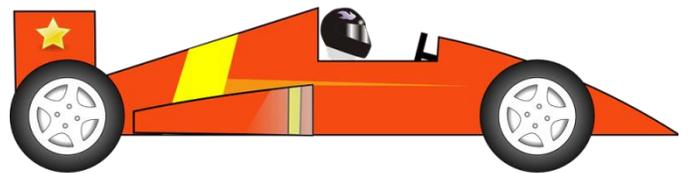
The Outreach Committee will advertise this event to churches and media outlets on the North Shore. This is a great opportunity to invite an unsaved friend, neighbor, co-worker, or family to a quality musical event. Please begin praying and thinking of who you might invite!

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 17 from 8 am – 2 pm

StockKar Derby

The Christian Service Brigade Stockaders have designed and are building their cars for the upcoming StockKar Derby race. Each boy has been diligently working to take a small rough block of wood and turn it into a fast StockKar ready to race down the track at the derby. Many other Stockade groups from other local churches will be at the derby too. This race will take place on Saturday, March 17 at Grace Chapel (3 Militia Drive, Lexington). Each Stockader will be racing their own car. Families are invited to attend the race.



LOOKING AHEAD

- Daylight Savings Time: March 11
- Pioneer Girls Sunday: March 18
- Holy Week: March 25-April 1

FEBRUARY 2018 WEST WINDS CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
				7:00 pm MFI – Lobby Training Lyons Hall	7:30 pm Home Fellowship Group at the Roy's	8:30 am GAiN Sewing Ministry 2's and 3's Classroom
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COMMUNION SUNDAY 8:30 am Prayer 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	Haven From Hunger •3:15 Prepare Meal •5:00 pm Serve Meal 7:30 pm Pulpit Committee Upper Room		9:15 am Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm •CSB: ALL 3 Groups •Girls' Growth Group: Roy's •Pioneer Girls	6:30 pm Music Committee Upper Room		9:00 am – noon Pulpit Committee Upper Room 7:00pm Marriage Builders At the Teal's
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:30 am Prayer 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship *Décor Committee 6:00 -7:15 pm Rock Solid First Sunday Night at CCA 6:30 pm Cards, Cake and Concerns	7:30 pm Pulpit Committee Upper Room	7:30 pm •Board of Deacons •Board of Trustees	9:15 am Women's Bible Study 7:00pm •CSB: Stockade & Battalion •Girls' Growth Group •Pioneer Girls	7:00 pm Mission Committee Upper Room	7:30 pm Home Fellowship Group at the Roy's	6:30 pm SALT Lyons Hall Upper Room
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30 am Prayer 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship *Worship Team Rehearsal 7:00 pm Prayer Watch Guests: Webers	7:30 pm Pulpit Committee Upper Room SCHOOL VACATION WEEK →		9:15 am Women's Bible Study No Evening Programs			
25	26	27	28			
8:30 am Prayer 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship *College and Career Prayer Walk	7:30 pm Pulpit Committee Upper Room	7:00 pm Community Outreach Upper Room	9:15 am Women's Bible Study 7:00pm •Christian Education Cmte. •CSB: Stockade & Battalion •Girls' Growth Group •Pioneer Girls Pioneer			