



The Messenger

International Lutheran Church

www.ilcseoul.org

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Issue #903

A NOTE FROM PASTOR CARL

GOD'S LOVE IS *MEAN-ED*

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:10-11 ESV) During this Easter season here at International Lutheran Church, we have been reading through the first letter of John to the churches in Asia Minor. Again and again John shows us just how God's love is revealed to us and through us. Today, we see the love of God by means of His own Son - Jesus.

Years ago, I had a friend in Taiwan who had some stickers made to put in his watch shop. He generously shared them with me, and I was eager to use them. One sticker said, 耶穌愛你, or Jesus Loves You. Another sticker said, 上帝是愛 or God is Love. When I first met my friend, I thought that he was a very religious and a gospel-oriented person. I was so excited to meet someone who shared my passion for sharing God's love with others. He later told me, though, that he was using these stickers as lucky symbols or charms to put in his store to help him sell watches. What I had taken to mean a sign of sharing the good news of God's love, he saw as a means to improve his business.

There is nothing wrong with working hard and finding new ways to connect with customers, but this event made me start to wonder what such stickers communicated to others. My curiosity was even more peaked when an elderly gentleman in the post office took offense at their message. You see, I had put the stickers on my backpack. The elderly man even took time to stop and question me as to how I would know if Jesus loved him. He also seriously wondered how I could honestly claim that God could be love after seeing how even Christians acted sometimes. One thing that was more apparent to me after both these encounters was that what we mean to communicate doesn't always communicate. In fact, what we think is kind and loving might even be taken as mean and offensive.

Maybe this was a bit of the trouble that the Ethiopian Eunuch was having as he tried to understand the words of the prophet Isaiah (see Acts 8:26-40). How could the chosen Messiah of God be the One who would suffer the greatest injustice of all? As Philip stood next to his chariot by means of the Spirit, God

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM	<i>Bible Class and Sunday School</i>
10:00 AM	<i>Divine Worship Service</i> (in-person and live stream)
7:00 PM	<i>Sunday Night Bible Study</i> (online)

OTHER EVENTS

Go to ilcseoul.org > Upcoming for other events

opened the way for this difficult truth to be understood. "God is love" is not just an emotional platitude but a statement of God's use of means to communicate what is otherwise not comprehensible. "Jesus loves you" is the good news of His life given for you and me as an atoning sacrifice for our sin or even simply the means by which our sins are forgiven. While "propitiation" isn't a word we use much today, what Jesus did on the cross is the very way or means by which God's love is shown, given, and delivered to us.

The Apostle John understood the *mean-ed* good news. He records for us those words of our Savior on the night when He was betrayed. As He walked with His disciples, Jesus told them how He is the Vine and that we are the branches (John 15:1-8). Jesus told His followers how abiding in Him was essential to having His love flow into us but also through us. Without the connection to His love, our lives wither and die like a branch cut off from the vine. Without a connection to the Vine, we can accomplish nothing and bear no fruit. All these images emphasize that Jesus is the means by which we are loved by God and how we become in Him the means by which others know His love. Through Jesus, your sin and mine is taken away. God's love for us is also revealed in us and shared with others through us by His Spirit. This love is not *mean*, but *mean-ed* as we abide in Him.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Carl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, you may direct inquiries for any announcement to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Links to online or live stream events will be included in either the electronic version of *The Messenger* or will be sent out on Sunday morning.

SPECIAL GUEST PREACHER

Thank you to our guest preacher, Rev. Steve Mahlburg. Pastor Steve serves in Sri Lanka as an LCMS missionary and we are thankful that he shared God's Word with us today.

CLEAN UP DAY

Next week, after church, we are planning a spring ILC Clean-Up Day. In particular, we will be cleaning out the gutters around the church property, getting ready for the summertime rains. Join in this fellowship event from about 12 - 1:30PM.

BIBLE STUDIES

Bible studies take place throughout the week, including Sunday morning (in-person), Sunday night (online), Wednesday night (in-person), and Friday morning (women's, in-person).

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE GIVING

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY MAKING USE OF ONLINE GIVING.

If you are unable to attend in-person church, we encourage you to make use of offering your tithes and gifts via online giving. Giving in this way will be recorded for your personal end-of-year giving statement.

CITIBANK 260-00497-243-01

READINGS

April 28: Fifth Sunday of Easter

1st Reading	Acts 8:26-40
NT	1 John 4:1-11
Gospel	John 15:1-8

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant, or need to make a scheduling adjustment, please write to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Thank you!

APRIL 28	10:00 AM
READER	Pastor Carl
ACOLYTE	Juwon
GREETERS/USHERS	Michelle & Olivia
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Jordan
LIVE STREAM	Christian & Ethan
KITCHEN HELPER	Chenhsi & Lydia
OFFERING COUNTERS	Joohun & Olivia

