

**6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER****ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**<sup>1</sup> Acts 17:22-31 / Psalm 66:7-19 / 1 Peter 3:8-22 / John 14-15-21**Theme: *"Making Our Home With Him: Living Christ's Love in a Fractured World"***

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**Acts 17:22-31**

<sup>22</sup> Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. <sup>23</sup> For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup> From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup> so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said,

'For we, too, are his offspring.'

<sup>29</sup> "Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

**Psalm 66:8-19**

Bless our God, O peoples;

let the sound of his praise be heard,

<sup>9</sup> who has kept us among the living  
and has not let our feet slip.

<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have tested us;  
you have tried us as silver is tried.

<sup>11</sup> You brought us into the net;  
you laid burdens on our backs;

<sup>12</sup> you let people ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and through water;

yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.

<sup>13</sup> I will come into your house with burnt offerings;  
I will pay you my vows,

<sup>14</sup> those that my lips uttered

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and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.  
<sup>15</sup> I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatted calves,  
 with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;  
 I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah*  
<sup>16</sup> Come and hear, all you who fear God,  
 and I will tell what he has done for me.  
<sup>17</sup> I cried aloud to him,  
 and he was extolled with my tongue.  
<sup>18</sup> If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,  
 the Lord would not have listened.  
<sup>19</sup> But truly God has listened;  
 he has heard the words of my prayer.  
<sup>20</sup> Blessed be God,  
 who has not rejected my prayer  
 or removed his steadfast love from me.

### **1 Peter 3:8-22**

#### *Suffering for Doing Right*

<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse, but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For

“Those who desire to love life  
 and to see good days,  
 let them keep their tongues from evil  
 and their lips from speaking deceit;  
<sup>11</sup> let them turn away from evil and do good;  
 let them seek peace and pursue it.  
<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
 and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup> Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, <sup>16</sup> yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## John 14-15-21

### *The Promise of the Holy Spirit*

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

## SERMON

In recent days, John’s Gospel has repeatedly drawn us into Jesus’ teaching on love—love that is not sentimental but sacrificial, abiding, and active. On the eve of his departure, Jesus offers his disciples this promise: *“Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them”*<sup>2</sup>.

In a world increasingly shaped by conflict and fear, where success is measured by the power one person has over another and dealing with the realities of our day-to-day lives is becoming more difficult for many, these words point us toward a radically different way of living.

Paul standing in the Areopagus<sup>3</sup> is surrounded by competing philosophies and monuments to human control and certainty. His and so in his mind, Jesus words and teaching are being challenged. Rather than attacking or withdrawing, Paul responds with respect. He listens, observes, and then gently proclaims a God who is not contained in temples or political systems, but who gives “life and breath and all things” and is “not far from each one of us”<sup>4</sup>. Paul reminds us that Christ’s love is not imposed through dominance but revealed through presence, humility, and truth spoken with care.

In times of division, it often appears that the loudest voice, the biggest army or the wealthiest individuals win the fight. Christians, however, are called not to shout louder than others, not to abuse authority or the power it bestows, but to witness faithfully to the God who seeks relationship rather than control<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> John 14:23

<sup>3</sup> Acts 17:22–31

(The Areopagus, or "Hill of Ares," is a historic rocky outcrop in Athens that served as a supreme court and council, overseeing serious crimes and political matters in ancient times.)

<sup>4</sup> Acts 17:25–27

<sup>5</sup> Schade, 2026

The Psalmist reminds us that love for God naturally overflows into testimony and thanksgiving<sup>6</sup>. Calling the community to remember how God has sustained them through trial, refining them like silver, and bringing them into a place of abundance. Crucially, the psalm ends not with private gratitude, but with public witness: “*Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul*”<sup>7</sup>. In a society weighed down by anxiety and scarcity, gratitude becomes an act of resistance. When we share stories of God’s faithfulness—when we serve meals, offer shelter, and open our doors—we proclaim a God who listens, sustains, and remains steadfast in love<sup>8</sup>.

Peter<sup>9</sup> addresses a community, which, like our own, is under pressure, he offers guidance that feels almost counter-cultural today: unity, sympathy, humility, and the refusal to repay evil with evil. Peter calls believers to be ready to “give an answer...for the hope that is in you,” but to do so “with gentleness and respect”<sup>10</sup>. This is love embodied in everyday conduct—holding fast to Christ while responding to hostility not with fear or aggression, but with steady hope and ethical integrity<sup>11</sup>. Such love does not ignore suffering; it transforms it into a witness grounded in Christ’s own self-giving life.

This brings us back to John 14:15–21, where Jesus ties love directly to obedience—not obedience born of fear, but of relationship. Love for Christ finds expression in keeping his word, and his promise is astonishing: God chooses to dwell with those who live this way. The presence of God is made known not just in worship, but in lives that mirror Christ’s compassion.

This is where ministries like the WARM winter shelter, food and other support for Anglicare, pastoral outreach, and just being present for another, become living theology.

When the church offers warmth to those without shelter, meals to those who are hungry, and dignity to those who feel invisible, the love of Christ takes flesh once again. These acts do not solve every problem, but they make God’s nearness tangible. They proclaim that power is found not in domination, but in service; not in self-preservation, but in self-giving love.

In keeping Jesus’ word—*loving as he loved*—we become places where God makes a home. And through such lives, the world catches a glimpse of a different future: one shaped not by fear, but by love that endures.

Let us pray,

Faithful God, sustain us in your mission. Strengthen our hands, soften our hearts, and guide our steps. Where love is costly, give courage; where hope feels thin, renew us, that whatever our circumstance or place on the path, Christ’s presence may be known through us, this and every day. Amen.

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 66:7–19

<sup>7</sup> (Ps 66:16)

<sup>8</sup> Chapman, 2026

<sup>9</sup> 1 Peter 3:8–22

<sup>10</sup> 1 Pet. 3:15

<sup>11</sup> Bible Hub, 2026

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