

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

February 16, 2025

Epiphany VII

There is a book at the Sanctuary entry where prayer requests may be entered.

There is also a Square device at the Sanctuary entry if you would like to make your Offering Donation via credit card.

Spirit, Community, Action – Inside & “Out” Celebrating 43 Years of Being Out in Northern Virginia

Like Life, The Order of Worship is Subject to Change

Gathering Music

Jorge Martinez

Welcome & Announcements

Rev. Emma Chattin

Centering

At the sound of the singing bowl,
please take a few moments to prepare yourself for our worship together

Illumination

Tee

Prayers of the Community

Dale Bradshaw

First Reading ~ Luke 6:27-38 *from The Message Translation*

Genevieve Walker

Jesus continued, “To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person. If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

Here is a simple guiding principal for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for *them*! If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that. If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that. If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that’s charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that. I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You’ll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God created identity the way our God lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we’re at our worst. God is kind; you be kind.

Don’t pick on people, don’t jump on their failures, don’t criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don’t condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you’ll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you’ll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity.”

Second Reading

Lee Shadwick

~ adapted from Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray in “Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of an American Pilgrimage”

While I could not always suppress the violent and angry thoughts that raged inside of me, I would nevertheless dedicate my life to seeking alternatives to physical violence, and I wrestled constantly with the problem of transforming psychological violence into creative energy.

Everything was so sweet at church, the singing, the kindness, the plain old grief, and then the pastor had to go and ruin it all by giving the sermon — on loving our enemies. It was like being in the Twilight Zone. It was a nightmare. It was clear that the pastor was speaking directly to me. She said that Christians have a very bad reputation in the world, because we have earned it, with our hate and self-righteousness. We speak in reverent terms of grace, justice, equality, mercy, and then we go and despise people who were also created in God's image, who are God's children too. She said that [*the person I despise the most right now*] is God's child too and God loves them. This drives me crazy, of course. God seems to have no taste, and no standards. Of course, on most days, this is what gives some of us hope.

Still, I try to live into what I heard that day, that to love your enemy means trying to acknowledge them as a person. It means identifying with their humanity and their weaknesses. It doesn't mean unconditional acceptance of their crazy behavior. They are still accountable for the atrocities they perpetrate, just as I am accountable for mine.

Response Your Ways Are Not Our Own No. 170

Reflection A Different Way
The Complicated Way

Rev. Emma Chattin

Community Dialogue

Offering Invitation Cornelius Butler

Offertory We Are An Offering MCC NoVA Choir
by Dwight Liles

❧ Welcome To The Table! ❧

Kurt Jaeger

Sung Words of Institution:

"Let Us Be Bread"

By Thomas J. Porter

The Leader will sing the verses. Please join together on the refrain:

Let us be bread, blessed by our God, broken and shared, life for the world.

Let us be wine, love freely poured. Let us be one in our God.

© 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

Invitation to the Table

Sharing The Open Meal of Christ

Community Blessing Kurt Jaeger

Closing Song Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed No. 537

Benediction and Sending Forth Rev. Emma Chattin

Postlude

❧ Go in Peace ❧