

Rainbow Fellowship Service

June 10, 2018

Bill Chadwick:

I merely want to share two stories with you. In our new member classes, we always ask the folks what first brought them to Oak Grove. Close to half mention seeing the Rainbow Flag. Even if they don't have any LGBTQ folks in their immediate family, the flag tells them that this is a congregation that they would like to join. One of our sister churches, Presbyterian Church of the Apostles in Burnsville, has been a More Light (welcoming, inclusive) congregation for a long time, longer than Oak Grove has. But they didn't have a Rainbow Flag on display, and I kept urging their pastor, Gwin Pratt, to get one. A few months ago they finally did. Within two months, they had two new families, one a lesbian couple and one a gay male couple, EACH with five children! This quadrupled the size of their Sunday School (previously three kids). Eight of the ten kids are African-Americans. The addition of these two families has, in large measure, transformed that congregation!

Second story. A few weeks back the Rainbow Fellowship, specifically Morgen Gray and Amy Zsohar, presented an Adult Faith Formation class on Transgender Issues. They did a marvelous job—very educational and very moving. Seventy people attended! About three times as many as usual. At the end of the presentation, those in attendance rose in a standing ovation.

Now, as you probably know, most young people in their twenties in America have not grown up in the church. And what these non-churched twenty-somethings hear from “the church” in the media is largely judgmental, condemnatory statements, reflecting Empire values more than the values of Jesus. Following the Transgender presentation a 25 year-old young man who regularly attends Oak Grove said this to me, “Pastor Bill, you know I'm not very religious. But this church...this church...really sets the bar for what a church should be!”

Give yourselves a hand.

Rich Price

Love is looking at each other, cracking a smile, and giggling together for no reason.

Love is taking care of your partner when they're sick, not being afraid to get close, even if it means you might catch it... and knowing they'll do the same for you when you feel terrible the next week.

Love is going on a trip together without planning - just jumping in the car and going - because you don't care about the destination, just spending time with each other and seeing where you'll end up.

Love is listening to the little things, and showing your partner you care by heeding them and letting them know you DID pay attention when they mentioned that one thing that one time.

Love is realizing you will both make mistakes, apologizing for the ones you make, forgiving for the ones they make, and working together to avoid them in the future.

Love is staring into someone's eyes, seeing your future reflected in them, and realizing you want to spend your life growing with them in every way possible.

Love comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, and combinations; it doesn't care whether you're rich or poor, young or old, male or female, in between or beyond; it doesn't care where you grew up or where you're going; it crosses boundaries to bring us together if we are willing to accept it.

Lord, give us the strength, courage, and wisdom to embrace love in whatever form it takes for us, and to share it freely with those who will share their love with us.

Susan Skovran

What is Love?

Love is when my Mom calls me every year on my birthday at the exact time of day I was born...for me...that is January 28th at 11:47am and each year when I get the call at 11:47am I know exactly who is on the other end of the line. I Love my Mom for that.

Love is when I got my first car – not the car itself – which was a 1971 Green Gremlin...

But the fact that my Dad stocked it with extra oil, extra windshield washer fluid, a flashlight, bucket of sand, scraper, shovel and that all important AAA membership..

Always be prepared. I Loved my Dad for that.

Karen and I moved about 4-1/2 years ago, across the street, 2 houses away. The movers were taking care of all the heavy stuff, but we had a double size garage filled with boxes that had to be moved. As anyone knows, it doesn't matter if you are moving across the street or to Japan, all that stuff has to be out of the house! So..I sent an email out to friends, and 2 days later on a Saturday morning at 830am, we had 18 people in our driveway ready to help out. I would do anything for any one of them.

Love is when you're ill...you've got cancer, and in this case Karen....and you go down that crappy road of the unknown....and your friends come out of the woodwork to help.....mowing the lawn, cleaning the house (better than I could!), running errands so I could keep working and sitting for 5 hours at a time every three weeks for 6 months during chemo to keep company and spirits high. I would do anything for any one of them.

That is Love.