

Welcome

Announcements: Giving Options: Online, QR CODE on screen, back of chairs, website etc.; Special offering for this month-Verde Valley Sanctuary: The Sanctuary offers a safe haven for victims of family violence and sexual assault, providing shelter, community outreach, lay legal advocacy and education and prevention; Chick Flick Friday Nights at 6PM-Legally Blonde (Friday 5/9)

Fellowship of Love Song

Call to Worship

L: Rejoice in the Lord.

P: Praise God's holy name.

L: Worth is the Lamb of our praise.

P: Worthy is the righteous one of blessing, honor, and glory.

L: Rejoice in the Lord.

P: Praise God's holy name.

Unison Prayer

Lord of Life, you meet us on the road, challenge our prejudices, and upend our lives.

**Remove the scales from our eyes--
that we may see the breadth of your love,**

**the diversity of the ones we are called to love, and the joy of
extending your welcome.**

**Fill us with your Spirit, that we may love one another as our shepherd
loves us. Amen.**

Offering/Song

Scripture: Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 4:10

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.

¹⁰ Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

L: The word of God for the people of God. **P: Thanks be to God.**

Meditation: Better Together (Movie: My Big Fat Greek Wedding)

There is a bit of advice that I am giving to 8th graders right now. You see they are almost done with the year, and many of them are starting to have their minds turn toward thinking of their high school career. As you can imagine for many of them it is worrying. They do not know how they are going to fit in or even where they are going to be when they get there. Now I know for many of you the pressure of transitioning from middle school to high school is a long time ago, but I think the idea of not knowing where you fit in, that is something all of us can identify as an issue we have faced. The advice that I have been giving to the kids is that they will find a group to fit in with, they will find their place or their clique, and if they do that their entire high school career will be better for it.

The kids usually follow up by asking where I found my group, so I have started telling them right away. My group was theater and music. I found my group of friends involved in those circles and it made all the difference in the world for how my high school journey was.

This still rings true for many of us today. Anytime we go into new situations we wonder where we will fit in. One of the great things about the movie “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” is that the real transition point of the film is not the love relationship, but when the daughter, Toula, decides to go to college and change the course of her future. The next turning point in the film I think happens during the wedding, when Toula’s father gifts them a house. That is the moment she realizes that she will never leave this family she has been with.

When I picked this movie and started looking at scriptures I was reminded how too often our religious practices are used to drive a wedge between us and others. Paul reminds us in Romans not to carry ourselves above others. This is critical. In the movie when Toula went to college she kind of did start carrying herself above her family, but at the end of the movie we see her affirming her heritage and affirming who she is. We often use our faith as an excuse to separate ourselves from people.

Now this is not to say sometimes we need to separate ourselves, in fact sometimes our faith can be a positive motivator in separating ourselves from negative influences. It is when we become so separated from people that we do not interact with them, not part of the church is when it becomes problematic. In fact, one of the key attributes to seeing if you are in a cult is if they encourage you to cut off all of your contact with others. When that happens, you need to worry.

Paul encourages us here to be with others in our world. To find our place of belonging. In essence what we learn is what Toula learns, that all of us are better together. We learn from one another and can improve each other in ways that are amazing. Being a part of the family of God, being a part of this church is about being the people who God called us to be. Amen.

Katherine's Communion Liturgy (On Screen)

Communion-Song, Song

Benediction

Good bye