

Be  
joyful  
in hope,  
patient  
in affliction,  
faithful  
in prayer.

**ROMANS 12:12**

August 30, 2020

Introduction

Invitation

Call to Worship:

As we gather together to worship today, let us look to Jesus for guidance and direction in our lives. Let us live faithfully as children of God so that we may make a difference in this world.

Hymn: "They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love"

Reading the Word: Romans 12:9-21

Message: "The Big Picture"

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

Prayer:

Gracious God, you call us to live in the example and teachings of Jesus. Guide us and lead us as we seek to be faithful disciples. Lead us as we seek to be your Church in the world, and may we bring the presence of Christ to others through our words and actions. Empower us to find our hope in you, to know patience and perseverance, to practice humility, offer grace, and peace to others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

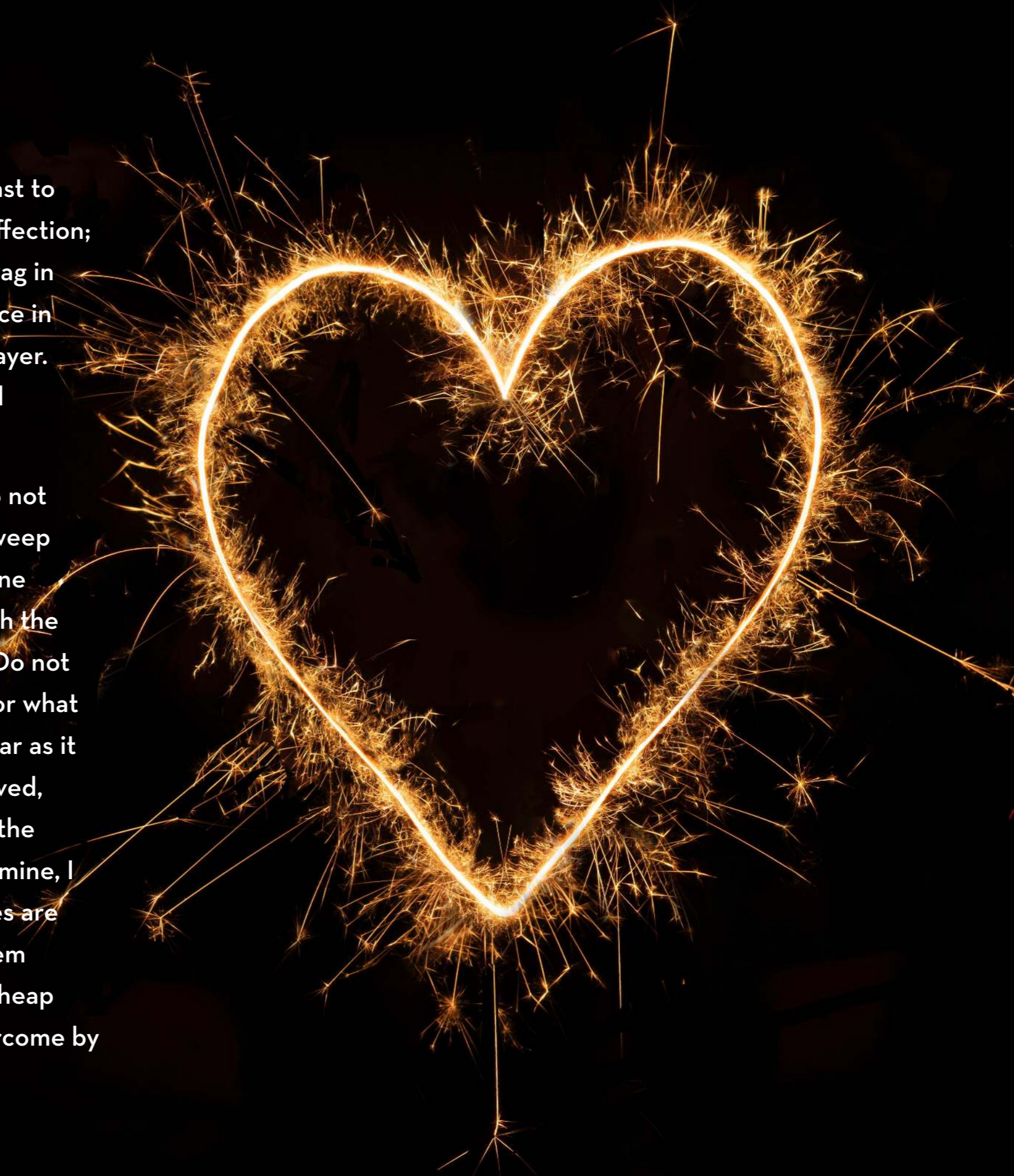
Hymn: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

Blessing

Romans 12:9-21  
Marks of the True Christian

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.





**SERMON TRANSCRIPT  
GIVEN BY  
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson**



## Message “The Big Picture”

Rev. Dr. Debra Hanson

Last week’s lesson from Romans 12 was a reminder that we are called to be the Church of Jesus Christ in the world, using our many and varied gifts in order to be the voice, hands, and feet of Christ to others. Yet, even when we bring all those gifts together as the Church, we need a reminder of what the love of God is in our lives and how to live as Christians together.

Today’s passage continues from Romans, chapter 12, verses 9-21 and reminds us of what it means to live following the teachings and example of Jesus. This passage, if read every day, would be a great way to remind ourselves of how we are called to live as Christians with each other and in the world.

The big picture includes practicing honor, respect, kindness, compassion, and love toward others. It truly is a practice because, as human beings, we are imperfect and unable to live this way consistently. However, the more we practice, the more we take on the mind and heart of Christ and live it. In this passage, Paul offers reminders about living for Jesus and in Jesus’ ways.

Verse 9 begins by introducing the overall theme, which is living in God’s love and sharing it. In verse 10 we read, “. . . love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” Paul continues through the rest of the passage by describing how a follower of Jesus would behave toward others.

Romans 12:9-21 contains a model for Christian interaction and a description of what non-hypocritical love looks like in all circumstances of living a Christian life. Much of what Paul writes here ties in with 1 Corinthians 13, often called the “love chapter” of the Bible. It describes God’s perfect love for us, and it offers an additional model for our lives as Christians.

When I reflect on these passages, I’m reminded that it is so difficult to put our own needs, desires, and wants aside in order to treat someone else, especially our enemies, with respect. I could never count the number of instances when someone has told me how hurt they were by a church member who treated them with disrespect. Unfortunately, many of those who leave a church under such conditions never go to another church. They believe that churches are full of hypocrites who talk about love, but don’t practice it.

As I studied today's passage, I was reminded by a story that I read somewhere a long time ago about a parishioner who was often opinionated, pushy, critical, and arrogant with the pastor and members of the congregation. One Sunday, the pastor had prepared a sermon about how to treat others and live the Christian's life. The message was aimed right at the parishioner, and the pastor delivered with gusto! After the service, the pastor stood at the back of the sanctuary to shake hands with people as they left, and the parishioner for whom the sermon was intended said to the pastor, "That was a great sermon, Reverend. It's too bad the people who needed to hear it weren't here today!" (source unknown)

So often, we think we are doing pretty well, but maybe we don't realize that we need reminders to stop and do a "self-check." How are we doing in living for Jesus? How are we honoring and respecting others? How well are we listening, showing compassion, and really caring about the other person? How are we bringing the love of God to someone else?

"Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (verse 10). We all need regular reminders about living for Jesus and sharing God's love. It's part of the human condition, and it is part of following Christ. As we begin to take on the heart of Christ through practicing our faith, may we grow in compassion, care, acceptance, and kindness. Amen.