

**God's love is complete
and open to all!**

July 12, 2020

Introduction

Hi everybody, it's me, Dave Richards, your worship leader this morning, I must admit that preparing for this type of 'online' service is quite a bit different from the usual. When I am leading service at church, I am always uplifted before the service starts by seeing you all, by talking with you, by listening to the various conversations taking place, watching you all greet each other, giving and getting hugs, listening to the music being practiced, seeing the smiling faces smiling back at me. Let's take a moment while I go to that place in my mind, you go to your place, where we have some peace, some joy, some quiet place where we can open our heart to God's love, that vacant place in our mind where God can fill us up with his will for our lives. Breathe! Slowly in, now slowly out. Release your pain, your sorrow, your anxiety, your worry, breathe in that breath of God, open up to new possibilities, new ways of sharing, new ways of caring, new ways of being the Light of God for this community and the whole world.

Let Us Pray

Through dreams and visions, O God, you broaden the horizon and hope of your people, that we may discover the meaning of your covenant, even in the midst of trial and exile. Increase the number of those who believe in your word, so that all people, all people, may joyfully respond to your call and share in your promises. Amen.

Reading the Word

Isaiah 55:10-13

Message "The Light and the Prism"

Dave Richards



SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
Dave Richards
Poem by Nicole Richards

Scripture reading

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Reflection or should it be Refraction

In this passage from Isaiah, God is explaining that just as rain and snow, which he provides, nourish the earth and he doesn't recall that life-giving water to him until it has fulfilled its purpose, so too God sends his word to us. It shall not return to God empty but it shall succeed, the reason God sent it will be fulfilled. The words that God has sent to us, you and me, we need to share and keep sharing until God's word of love and light are shared with everyone.

My daughter Nicole shared this poem with me, I hope that you will be touched by it as much as I have been.

Preamble: I began writing this poem after the decision from the Special Session of General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2019. That decision chose to continue excluding LGBTQ+ people from full inclusion in the United Methodist Church. I am sharing this now, during Pride Month, to remind people that try as we might, God's love is too big, too broad, and too bold to comprehend or explain. God's love is for all [see the next page for poem] thank you Nicole, I love you!

Let Us Pray

Creator God, you call us to love and serve you with body, mind, and spirit through loving your creation and all of our sisters and brothers. Open our hearts in compassion and receive these petitions on behalf of the needs of the church and the world. Lord, we pray for those affected by the Covid virus; we pray for those who are hungry; we pray for those who have a bounty that they may be a blessing to those in need.

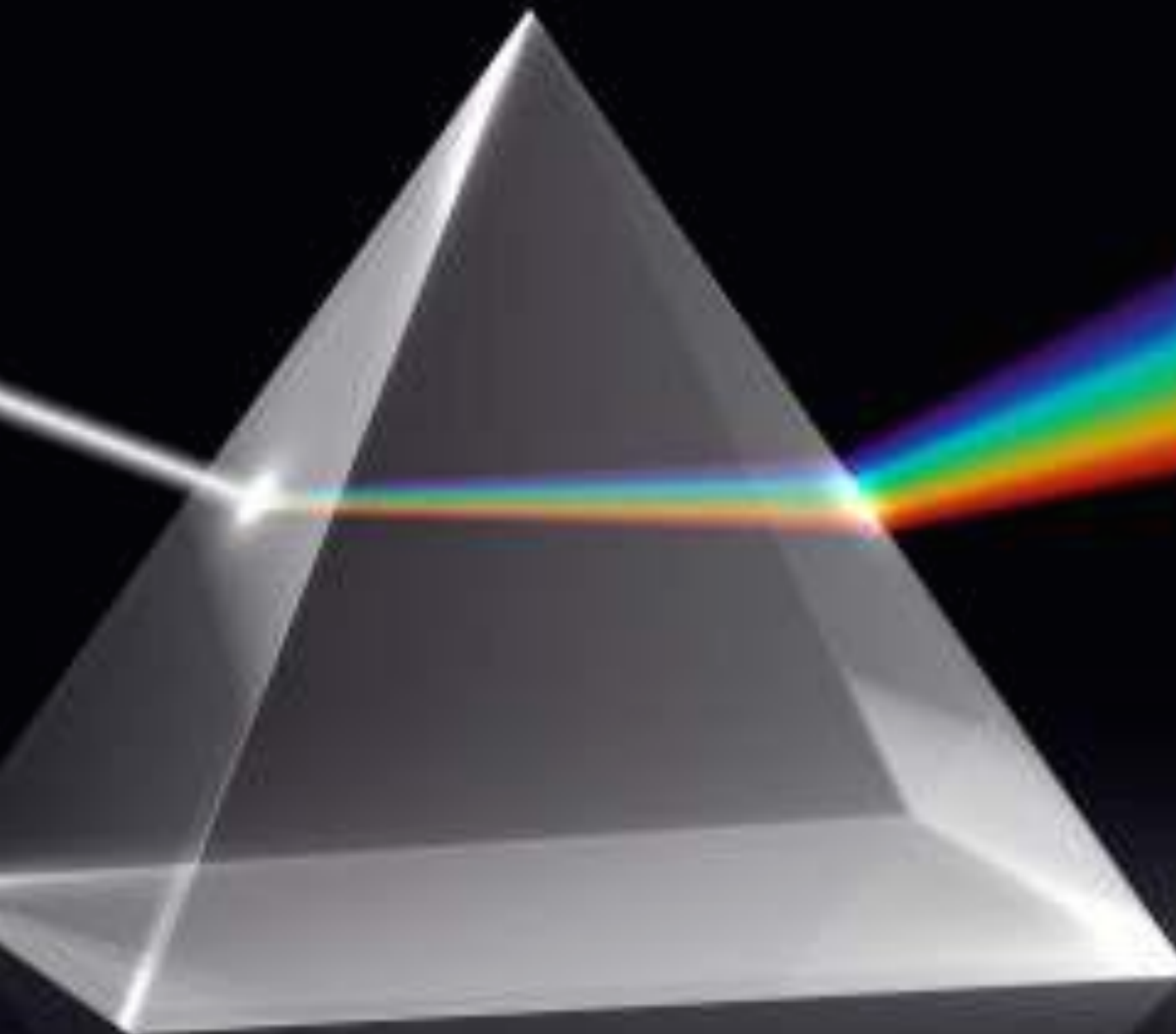
Lord, we pray for those whose lives have been affected by bigotry, racism, hatred, help us all to see that Your love is too big, too broad, and too bold to comprehend or explain. Your love is for all.

Lord, we pray for those who you have taken from us to be with you in Heaven, give us the courage to face each day, and each one of earthly life's challenges knowing that with you all things are possible. Holy One, hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards of the fragile bounty of this earth, so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

Let us close by saying the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Remember to be the light, now blow out your candle! If you liked this, share it!



The Light and the Prism by Nicole Richards

God's love is like the light that goes through a prism.

The prism scatters the light, and we, as humans, can only see a portion.

Some see blues and greens; others see yellows and oranges; some even see from the reds all the way to the blues. Yet none of us can see the whole spectrum from infrared to ultraviolet; we see only a portion.

Even our names for the colors lack a basis in truth. What does "yellow" truly mean? It means something to us, but we have created this word for this thing we experience as "yellow". There is no yellow in nature.

Indeed, what I see as yellow, you might see as yellow-orange. And where do yellow end and orange begin? We could say the change happens at a certain wavelength, but this is only an attempt to explain something that is beyond our complete grasp.

This is how it is with God's love.

We seek to understand and explain what God's love is, but we are stuck trying to understand the whole from the sum of its many parts—leaving us far short from understanding the mystery of the whole—how big, how broad, and how bold God's love is for us.

Before it reaches a prism, white light is invisible to us. After the prism transforms it, there is a beautiful spectrum of color. The red cannot exist without the blue nor the green without the purple.

If we shine a light with only red and blue wavelengths back through a prism, do we return to the white light? No, not even close. Why then, do we persist with our convictions that God's love is only red or only blue, when God's love is all colors—and no colors simultaneously?

I choose to appreciate the colors I see - the proof that God's love is big and broad and bold. I choose to appreciate that others see different colors than I do. I choose to believe in the oneness of all the colors, that God's love is complete and open to all.

God's love is too big, too broad, and too bold to comprehend or explain. God's love is for all.