

## *President's Note for June 2019*

**"Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not." Samuel Johnson**

I'm writing this column for June on the fifth Sunday of Easter. Pastor Daniel Yoon presented his sermon today which centers on Christ's commandment to love one another, John 13:34-35. Pastor Daniel points out that the message is not a new one and Jesus knows it. Essentially the same command appears in Leviticus 19:18, "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." What is new here in the book of John with Jesus is the commandment is elevated to "Love one another as I have loved you." Oh my, we are called upon to love one another as only God himself is capable of loving. Not surprisingly, we often fall short, but the command stands and we must make the effort to love even the unlovable despite our failings, weaknesses and sinful nature. A Jesuit friend once put it to me as loving those you don't like, that jerk that cut you off in traffic or the scoundrel who stole your lawn mower. We don't have to condone their actions, but we are required to forgive them and pray for their soul, to love them, even as we hold them accountable. Eighteenth century Englishman of letters, quite literally as he almost single handedly compiled the first English dictionary, Samuel Johnson puts it well in layman's terms in being kind to those of whom we are not particularly fond. I turn to Johnson as I've recently read a book titled *The Road to Character* by David Brooks. In this book Brooks uses a series of character studies that show the path of introspection and character building of a number of famous historical personages such as Dorothy Day, Eisenhower, St. Augustine and, yes, Samuel Johnson. Brooks states in his introduction, "It's about how some people have cultivated strong character. It's about one mindset that people through the centuries have adopted to put iron in their core and to cultivate a wise heart. I wrote it, to be honest, to save my own soul." p.xiii.

Okay, okay enough of this month's book report, though as you can see this book has left an impression upon me. This June we will be blessed to have retired Bishop David Mullen with us presenting the homily on the first Sunday of June. Punky Dias,

Pastor Townsend and yours truly attended this year's Sierra Pacific Synod convention in Lodi where Bishop Mullen, Pastor Townsend and a few others were honored and given a few minutes to speak on their fifty years of ministry. As our pastor emeritus and my good friend in Christ "JT" is my proofreader and editor for these articles I'll let him clean up this message he presented at the convention should I misquote him, "We live in the 21st century and while it is important to remain rooted to our past, we must not remain anchored to it." Rev. James E. Townsend. For me those are wise words that reflect how we cannot and should not ever forget those things history and our forebears have taught us, the foundation of our faith, but we should apply what we know and have learned to the ever changing world of today. While God may not be bound by time, we are, and we must live in the present while planning for the future as we attempt to discern where God would have us be. Pentecost falls on Sunday June 9th this year, let's all pray for a special presence of the Holy Spirit on that day to guide us as we continue to worship and serve our Lord striving to live out the great commandment.

The congregation is invited to what has become an annual fellowship gathering and picnic hosted by the Dias family on Saturday evening June 15th. The main course of hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. Guests are encouraged to bring a side dish such as a salad or dessert, check with Punky for more specifics.

Returning to news from the Synod Convention for a moment, Rev. Kirsten Moore of Calvary Lutheran Church in Rio Linda was elected Dean of Capitol Valley Conference Three, our conference. Joseph Paxton of Hope Lutheran in Fresno was elected Synod Assembly Member at Large. Several resolutions and a projected budget of \$2,239,485 were passed. Next year's convention will take place in Fresno and will return to being a three day convention as there will be more business to conduct than this year including the election of a new Bishop. For more details check out the Synod website at [spselca.org](http://spselca.org).

We live in a beautiful, but odd and troubled world. Let us continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who struggle throughout our nation, world and community, particularly for those who are persecuted for their faith in God. Every week, if not daily, we hear of some new horror story of man's demented inhumanity to man. Let's strive to rise above the din of this fallen secular world

and continue to bear witness and give thanks and praise to the Son of Man, our savior, creator and redeemer.

**"The whole being of a Christian is faith and love. Faith brings the person to God, love brings the person to people." Martin Luther**

Your brother in Christ,

*Chuck Prewett*

Council President