

Today we did something new. I was worried that my crazy idea – was a little too crazy. Singing songs that we hear on the radio in church. I almost called Evan on Tuesday to call it off. We gather together each week for an hour and in that time we sing hymns, read scripture, and pray. All this so we can learn more about the nature of God, who Jesus is, and how the Holy Spirit guides us in our daily living. We listen for that still small voice of God to lead us. I often think that Sunday morning is our shelter, our calm place, our rejuvenation that reminds us we are God's beloved ones and it helps get us through the week whatever it holds.

And then, after church we leave this community and we spend most of our time living world and filling our time with work, family, friends. Each day we are influenced by all the things around us – colleagues at work, family, friends and strangers. Whether it is the songs on the radio or the movies we watch or the people we meet. They all impact how we live. And my question is always – how do we find God in the world around us? How do those stories of Jesus come alive in our work or as we play? How do we learn to find God beyond our Sunday morning worship? Because God is everywhere and God can speak to us in the most unexpected ways. Maybe just maybe if we tune our all our senses we can catch a glimpse of God.

That's why the last activity I do with confirmation classes is something that helps explore ways to find God in our everyday lives. I ask each person to find a piece of music that they hear on the radio that makes them think of God. It can be any song as long as it makes them think of God. Last time we had a variety – Katy Perry's "Fireworks", Bay City Rollers' "Safe and Sound", Rufus Wainwright's version of the Leonard Cohen classic "Hallelujah"; Beyoncé's "Halo".

There are times when I'm driving in my car and I hear a song and it makes me think of God or of a bible story. The first one was a LeAnne Rimes song "I Need You" She sings

"I Need You" She sings:

I need you like water

Like breath, like rain

I need you like mercy

From heaven's gate

There's a freedom in your arms

That carries me through

I need you.

That's how I feel about God. I can't do without that holy presence – like breath, like

water. This week Carrie was singing Cyndi

Lauper's "I See Your True Colours" and I thought that what God sings to us.

But I see your true colors

Shining through

I see your true colors

And that's why I love you

So don't be afraid to let them show  
Your true colors  
True colors are beautiful, Like a rainbow.

God see us and we are beautiful to God. And sometimes, we need that reminder – when things look grim that love is what binds us together and lifts us to that place where we belong. The heart of God's message to us is love. God's love for us, our love for friend and stranger and love for God. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment he says simply, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it, "you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22: 37 – 40)

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians tells us how to live that love day t day. Today we mostly hear this passage of scripture at weddings. But Paul was writing to the gathered church in Corinth. Paul is describing the kind of love we are about as a people faith. One of the challenges facing the church in Corinth was the community was diverse and they didn't always agree on how they should live out their faith. In part, it was because they didn't come from the same socio-economic backgrounds. Some were wealthy and some were considered slaves. They had different backgrounds. Some were leaders in the Jewish community and some Gentiles. Brian Peterson writes "What is often missed, and perhaps actively ignored, is that this text was first written to a community that was having a very difficult time staying together. ... It is in the difficult realities of relationships and communities that the love described by Paul needs to be lived out in costly ways." [https:// www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2734](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2734)

1 Corinthians 13 is an invitation to dig deep into what binds us together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Shiveyly Smith writes, "Make no mistake. The love Paul is talking about here is not passive and fluffy. This kind of love is an up at dawn, feet on the ground, tools in hand, working kind of love. It builds communities." [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2595n](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2595n)

The love that builds communities takes commitment and hard work. It means trusting that our disagreements will not stand in the way of being united as brothers and sisters in faith. Paul writes, "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." (1 Corinthians 13:1 – 8)

The love that binds us means that we must draw our strength for our daily living from God's love. Brian Paterson writes "We are not simply left to our own capacity for

love. We can love because God has already fully known us and loved us anyway, and is working to make our lives and our communities look more and more like this busy, active, tireless love. [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2734](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2734)

The love that binds us together means listening for the still small voice of God, in scripture, in hymns, in art, in music. God is speaking to us today and not just here on Sunday mornings but in all that we do. Stay attuned for that still small voice of God that can come to us in the beauty of this world, in art, in poetry, in music, in friendships, on the radio. We need those reminders so that we can be God's people in the world, so we can live in community, so that we can love God and love others. It is God's love that lifts us to where we belong and calls us to love others. Amen.