

**Sunday, January 30, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13  
“The Greatest of These”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, discuss: “When I think of love, I picture...”

**1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Context.** The Christian community at Corinth seems to have been frequently marred by strife and competition among its members: some thought themselves better, or possessing greater gifts, than the others. Throughout this letter, Paul writes to correct various manifestations of these shortcomings. In chapters 12-14 he sets out his vision of how the members of the church should live with one another. In the midst of that discussion he describes the quality that is the essential glue of all the rest: love. Not a romantic love, but a love that comes from God, that transcends all other gifts that we might receive from God, a love that is stronger than death.

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 again.**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- As a group, come up with as many definitions of the word “love” as you can in five minutes. Write them on a large Post-it note or find some other way to display the definitions for all participants to see.
- When do we usually hear 1 Corinthians 13 recited? In light of the context of this passage, that of a church fight about gifts, is 1 Corinthians 13 fit for weddings? How so?
- Compare and contrast love as often romanticized in movies and novels versus how love is displayed by God and written about in 1 Corinthians 13.
- How has God demonstrated love?
- What makes love a “better way” (12:31)?
- Complete the worksheet below for 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Then discuss the following questions:
  - Which attribute of love comes most easy for you?

- Which attribute of love is most difficult for you?
- Are there any specific Scripture passages that come to mind where God has demonstrated these attributes?
- What might it look like for you “put an end to childish ways” (13:11)?

**Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of love, you have shown us a better way. We confess that we often fall far short of this standard. May we be reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit such that our ability to love you and love others expands. Empower us to love all those you have called us to love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

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 trespasses,  
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom, the power  
 and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.