

Week 9 – September 7-13, 2026

Community: *Your Neighbor as Yourself*

(written by Pastor Melissa Pickering)

Gathering Song [*Jesu, Jesu Fill Us with Your Love*](#) (ELW 708, WOV 765)

Daily Prayer *Jesus, Jesus you are with me as I step into this day.*

Let me hear you gently calling, “Precious child, walk this way.”

Jesus, Jesus when I hear you, calling me to follow you,

In that hour, give me grace to love my neighbor like you do. Amen.

Scripture: Mark 12:31 Context: 28-34 Your Neighbor as Yourself

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Devotional Thoughts

My neighborhood is the best neighborhood. We all get along well, help each other out, and show up for each other in good times and in bad times. Not all neighbors are like that. Many are quiet, keep to themselves and don’t leave the lights on for others. I wonder what would happen if we all, in our current neighborhoods, extended that grace and love out a few blocks, or a few towns, or even a few states.

What does it truly mean to love your neighbor as yourself? It’s easy to love the people on my block who look like me, talk like me, even think like me. But it gets harder when our differences get in the way or create a chasm between us. As you look at your congregations, there are likely deep dividing factors just within a small group of people who all believe in the same God, all feel called to share the Good News and all claim to love everyone. How do we learn to love everyone, regardless of those differences? And not just a surface level love, but an understanding love full of grace, and mercy, compassion and overwhelming honesty.

We are one body of Christ, and as we live, work and grow together, we are called to be committed to the work of the Holy Spirit. That work includes standing up for those on the margins, using our voice to proclaim God’s abundance, and getting our hands and feet dirty when the state of our world depends on it.

This Week’s Challenge? I encourage you today to think about how you are using your authority, your passion and your voice to recognize your neighbor. The one across the street, the one in the next town over, the one who doesn’t look like you and the one who needs you and your love. How will you carry your call to love your neighbor into the world today?

Affirmation of Christian Vocation: Make the sign of the cross on your forehead (or if you are doing this devotion with others, make the sign on the forehead of another) while saying...

All that we do belongs to God—our work and our rest.

We follow Jesus with thankful hearts and open hands, serving our neighbor in love.

Morning and evening, at work and at play, our life is in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN