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Rev. Lynda Hepler

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Good Morning and welcome to Memorial's 10 @ 10 on this quiet Monday morning. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Lynda Hepler and I am the minister of children and families here at Memorial. One of the blessings of being a part of a church with multiple clergy is that we each bring our own unique personality and thoughts to share with you each day. I appreciate greatly the words of Danny and Rodney last week. Both gave us words of comfort and glimpses of hope in this time of challenge for us.

This morning I'd like to begin with a prayer that I use each day before I begin my devotional.

Father, you created us and put us on earth for a purpose.

Jesus, you died for us and called us to complete your work.

Holy Spirit, you help us to carry out the work for which we were created and called.

In your presence and name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we begin our reflection.

May all our thoughts and inspirations have their origin in you and be directed to your glory.

Amen.

Our scripture today is from 1 John 3:18. "Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." I love how the Good News version writes this verse. It goes: "Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action."

I wonder how many of you have been doing a little tv binge watching? I have, a little while staying around the house in our self-imposed quarantine. Something my family loves to do together is watch movies. We love family movies with lots of humor. My youngest daughter loves slapstick humor. We recently watched a movie called *Nine Lives*. It's about a business guru who is obsessed with his business. He has a family—wife, son, and daughter. But he spends all his energy in promoting and building his company, his name, which coincidentally is "Brand." In the movie he goes to buy his daughter a cat for her birthday, and he gets into an accident and wakes up inside the cat. The pet shop owner tells him he has one week to reconnect to his family or he'll stay a feline forever.

Over the week he spends a lot of time trying to convince everyone of who he is, but cats can't talk. His antics are very funny to watch but exasperating for the family until he finally sees how much his little girl is hurting over his accident and needs a friend. He finally decides to be a cat and be the friend that she needs. Over the course of the next few days the family begins to see glimpses of the man in the cat through his acts of love and companionship. I won't spoil the end of the movie for you if you haven't seen it, but I share this as an example of letting our love show through our actions.

Our scripture says that our love should not just be words and talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action. I once heard a preacher say that the opposite of love is not hate, but fear. The more I think about that, the more I believe it is true. Fear manifests itself in many ways. It can make us hate; it can make us greedy and selfish. Many people are living in fear of scarcity. We've all seen the news and Facebook videos of people hoarding toilet paper and standing in lines at the local meat markets. **I want to remind us that we should live in love not fear.** The Bible shows us over and over again how God so abundantly loved us first.

God is always showing his love through action. I think back to the Exodus story where the people of God are following Moses out into the wilderness and they get thirsty for water. They whine and complain, and Moses prays to God; and God instructs him on how to get water by striking a rock with his staff. Then the people get hungry and God provides again by sending manna and quail each day. Here's the interesting part of the story. God wouldn't allow the people to hoard extra food for their family. It would immediately spoil. They could only take what they needed for that day. The people had to learn to put their trust in God to provide. And God did provide, faithfully showing his love for his people. I think of the passage from Luke 12, "Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

God does and will provide for us because he loves us. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world at this time. We are to show true love, agape love, through acts of selflessness.

This is a lesson the children's choir has been learning over the last couple of weeks as they prepare and continue to prepare for our spring musical called "Unselfie." The premise of the story is that rather than taking selfies of ourselves that are self-serving, we should take selfies of ourselves helping others. Let's put our love into action this week. Call and check on a friend or family member. Share what you have with someone in need. Maybe God has given us this time to learn what it means to be in community, what it means to show real love in our actions. Maybe this is our time during this season of Lent for our own transformation into a new creation in Christ.

Will you pray with me the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread, as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Thanks for joining me today! Bye

