

Christian Care Communities

Fifth Sunday Worship Materials

(Growing from John 21:15-17)

Call to Worship

People of God, look about and see the faces of those you know and love -- neighbors and friends, sisters and brothers -- a community of kindred hearts.

People of God, look about you and see the faces of those we hardly know -- strangers, sojourners, and forgotten friends -- the ones who need an outstretched hand.

People of God, look beyond these walls and see the faces of those who need our love and care, especially those we serve through Christian Care Communities.

People of God, come. Let us worship together.

Invocation

Almighty God, may your presence here today, inspire us to live out our name – Christian. As followers of Christ, help us to be like him. Help us to share his love with all people regardless of their condition or circumstance. Help us to be his voice and hands of caring. O God, be with us as we worship you. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Children's Moment

The theme of the Children's Moment/Activity is caring for others. It begins with the ways we care for pets, and leads to ways we care for each other and those in need. To make the time more interesting for the children you may want to have a guinea pig or other small animal in a cage with a bag of items needed to care for the animal (food, water, toys, shavings, etc.

If you have a small animal, begin by showing the animal to the children and talking about it. Does it have a name? What are some things it can do? What are the items necessary to care for the animal? Pull the item out of the bag as it is mentioned.

If you don't have a small animal, begin or continue the time by asking the children if they have a pet. Let the children tell about their pet and share the pet's name. How do you care for your pet? What items do you need? What can you do with your pet? – talk to it, pet it, take it for a walk, play with it, etc. How do you show love for your pet?

Just as pets need our love and care, so do all of God's people. Jesus' last words of instruction to his Disciples in John 21 were "Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep." Of course, Jesus was talking about persons like us taking care of each other and those in need. How can we care for each other? What are ways we can show our love? – With a hug, a smile, by sending a card, by taking time to talk to someone, etc. What does Jesus want us to do when we see someone in need?

Through Christian Care Communities, we take care of elder adults, many of whom are lonely and weak and need our help. Our Fifth Sunday Offering helps provide the care these elder adults need. Our gifts help provide a safe and affordable place for these persons to live. Our gifts provide nurses to care for individuals who are sick. Our gifts provide chaplains to help elder adults deal with loss and change. The chaplains remind them to always remember God's presence and love.

Our Fifth Sunday Offering for Christian Care Communities is important. Your pennies, nickels and dimes are one way we have of caring and sharing God's love.

Prayer - We thank you for the wonderful pets you have created for us to care for and enjoy. We thank you even more that we have each other, and can care for each other just like Jesus asked us to do. Thank you that through Christian Care Communities we can help care for so many who need our love and support. In the name of Jesus, who was always reaching out to care for someone. Amen.

Offertory Thought

The Gospel of John ends with one of Jesus' final instruction that we should take care of each other and anyone in need. Today we will receive our Fifth Sunday Offering for Christian Care Communities. Through this offering we partner with Christian Care Communities to care for over 3,300 individuals each year, most of them older adults. Some are bedridden requiring skilled nursing care, some are frail and weak and some are deeply forgetful. Many are self-sufficient and simply need the support of a caring community. Your Fifth Sunday Offering will help provide these older adults a safe and secure place for their senior years. We joyfully present our offering remembering Jesus' instruction -- "Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep."

Offertory Prayer

O God, we know that all gifts come from you. So we gladly return to you a portion of what you have first given to us. Grant that our Fifth Sunday Offering will be a blessing to those served by Christian Care Communities. Bless them as they help us live Christ's great call to benevolent care -- "Take care of my sheep." We pray that you will bless our gifts and our lives to Your Glory. Amen.

Communion Invitation/Meditation

The world tends to label people, to categorize people -- he's old, she's lost it, he's retarded, she's frail, she's a problem child. By these names we sometimes dismiss people, shut them out. Christ teaches us to take them in and care for them. His final words of instruction were, "Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep." This Table reminds us that God's love is for all. It reminds us that Christ's sacrifice and salvation is for all. This is Christ's Table! All are invited! So come, gather around the Table. Eat and drink and be with our Lord whose name we have taken in baptism!"

Benediction

May the God who knows us by name and has given us a new name in Christ, abide with us and use us to touch and bless the lives of others. Amen.