

# Candlelight Call for Unity & Civility

6 pm | Sanctuary



FIRST BAPTIST KNOXVILLE

# A TIME TO WORSHIP

## **Congregational Hymn 267**

*Blest Be the Tie That Binds* | DENNIS

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,  
It gives us inward pain;  
But we shall still be joined in heart,  
And hope to meet again.

## **Congregational Hymn 269 (stanzas 1 & 4)**

*We All Are One in Mission* | COMPLAINER

We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,  
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.  
A single great commission compels us from above  
To plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.

Now let us be united and let our song be heard.  
Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word.  
We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,  
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.

## The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

## Congregational Hymn 290

*Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace* | O WALY, WALY

Lord, make us servants of your peace:  
Where there is hate, may we sow love;  
Where there is hurt, may we forgive;  
Where there is strife, may we make one.

Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;  
Where all is gloom, may we sow hope;  
Where all is night, may we sow light;  
Where all is tears, may we sow joy.

Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek  
To be consoled, but to console,  
Nor look to understanding hearts,  
But look for hearts to understand.

May we not look for love's return,  
But seek to love unselfishly,  
For in our giving we receive,  
And in forgiving are forgiv'n.

Dying, we live, and are reborn  
Through death's dark night to endless day;  
Lord, make us servants of your peace,  
To wake at last in heaven's light.

# A TIME TO PRAY

## **Jesus: The Light of the World | Susan Tatum**

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."  
(John 8:12)

## **The Church: The Light of the World | Tim Boone**

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (Matthew 5:14-15)

## **The Christian: The Light of the World | Pam Neal**

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

# A TIME TO LEARN

## **Bible Study | Brent McDougal**

### **"Respectfully, I Disagree: How to Be Civil in an Uncivil Time"**

Thank you for praying for our country. We need to bring everything before the Lord in prayer, including our local and national leaders, the direction of our country, and that God's kingdom will become a greater and greater reality in our nation. Now let's turn our attention to some Biblical teaching and practical action.

### **Is civility a problem in America?**

The Oxford dictionary has thirteen different definitions for civility, including "behavior or speech appropriate to civil interactions," "orderly behavior," "good citizenship," and "propriety and decency." In a document called "Civility in America 2019: Solutions for America," public relations firm Weber Shandwick found that 68% of American adults said lack of civility is a major problem. 25% said it is a minor problem, while 7% said it is not a problem at all.

Furthermore, the study found that most Americans believe that there are (or have experienced) real consequences to the lack of civility in America. It listed the top ten consequences to incivility, with the percentage of Americans who say they agree a lot or a little.

Online bullying/cyberbullying 89%

Harassment 88%

Violent behavior 88%

Hate crimes 88%

Intimidation 87%

Intolerance 87%

People feeling unsafe in public places 87%

Discrimination against certain groups 84%

Less community engagement 79%

Loneliness and isolation 78%

Of those who say they experience incivility, the number of negative interactions average 10.2 a week. Only 27% say they politely push back. Civility is a real problem, but not a new one. If we look throughout history, we see so many examples of both the positive power of civility and the destructive power of incivility.

### **What can we do about incivility?**

Let's look at a Biblical example of conflict and how the church handled that conflict.

*“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (Galatians 2:11-14, ESV).”*

# **The Gospel's Answer to Incivility**

## **1. Remember your identity.**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19, ESV).”

## **2. Recognize that civility is at the heart of your witness to others.**

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life (Philippians 2:14-16a, NIV).”

## **3. Commit to being a peacemaker.**

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9, NIV).”

Deitrich Bonhoeffer said, “The followers of Jesus have been called to peace. When he called them they found their peace, for he is their peace. But now they are told that they must not only have peace but make it. And to that end, they renounce all violence and tumult. (from *The Cost of Discipleship*) We're called to not just have peace, but to be peacemakers. And in doing so, we reject any violent solution, because Jesus rejected violence as a solution to any problem. How did Jesus make peace? Simply put, he loved them. Even when they ridiculed and harassed him, he loved them. He did good for them when they wished him ill. He hung on the cross because he loved the people.”

## **4. When it's time to speak, check your heart, and speak in love.**

“...speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ (Ephesians 4:15, NIV).”

## **5. Pray for your enemies.**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48, NIV).”

## **A Concluding Prayer for Civility**





## **VISITING?**

Let us know you're here!

