

**Sunday, July 26, 2009**  
**For This Reason**

**Ordinary Time (Proper 12)**

Scriptures: *II Samuel 11:1–15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14–21; John 6:1–21;*  
*II Nephi 2:103–105; Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a*

Prelude Anna

Welcome and Sharing Carole

Instrumental Introit: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” *HS 20* Congregation

Call to Worship *sound a chime* Carole

Come, all ye who love the Lord, come. Come in answer to God’s call. Come from the distant lands. From places near and far, come into God’s presence. Lift up your voice and sing God’s praise. Let joy and rejoicing resound from your hymns. Together sing, and together you will be blessed. In unity glorify God, and in unity you will be lifted up. For the Holy One, who is from all eternity to all eternity, shall walk among you. Come, then. Come, all ye who love the Lord. Come in answer to God’s call.

\*Hymn of Praise: “All Creatures of Our God and King” *HS 72* Congregation

\*[Prayer for Peace](#) Denise

\*Response Anna

Hymn: “You May Sing of the Beauty” *HS 8* Congregation

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:14–21 Ralene, Laura, and Lona

Reader 1: For this reason, my response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent God who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in.

Reader 2: And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives in the fullness of God.

Reader 3: God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! God does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

—Adapted from *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson

Disciples’ Generous Response Sean

Statement  
Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes

Sermon based on Ephesians 3:14–21

Lora

Moment of Silent Meditation

\*Closing Hymn: “Send Forth Thy Light, O Zion” *HS* 317

Congregation

\*Sending Forth

Ralene, Laura, Lona, Lora

*Four readers stand up front with their backs to the congregation. Each one turns to face the congregation as they read their line.*

Reader 1: God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering.

Reader 2: Such conditions are not God’s will.

Reader 3: *For this reason*, open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children.

Reader 4: *For this reason*, do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare. However, it is *for the reason of love* that we turn and face them.

All Readers: (*as they walk out of the sanctuary*) we will go forth with open eyes, ears, minds, and hearts and face the world with love.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a adapted

\*Postlude

Anna

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## Sermon Helps

Scriptures: *II Samuel 11:1–15; Psalm 14;*

**Ephesians 3:14–21; John 6:1–21**

## Exploring the Scriptures

Ephesians 3:14–21 is a beautiful and emotive scriptural passage, sometimes referred to as the Apostle’s Prayer. While likely authored by someone other than Paul, the passage speaks to a general theme found throughout Ephesians. That is, God has a plan of salvation that unites both Jew and Gentile in the Risen Christ. The mystery of this salvation is found in the unity of the church.

The writer places Paul on his knees in deep prayer on behalf of the readers of the letter. He then gives a report on the content of this pastoral prayer where three petitions are made: (1) that the reader will be inwardly strengthened with power through the presence of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of Christ; (2) that the reader will be able to understand the full measure of Christ’s love; and (3) that the reader and the community of believers will receive the fullness of God. In

the final sentences of the passage, the writer delivers a moving doxology that not only praises God (as one would expect in a doxology) but also praises the church.

### **Central Ideas**

1. The Apostle's Prayer is not offered in a vacuum. Rather, it is given for a reason and a purpose. The writer attributes to Paul a fervent desire to see all people united in the body of Christ. And, in that union, the church becomes all the more rooted and grounded in divine love.
2. There are several different perspectives the preacher could develop, any one of which would be faithful to the text.
  - a. As the church grows in unity and inclusiveness of all God's people, it will understand more fully what it means for humanity to be saved—not just in the world beyond this one, but right here and now. Salvation comes when the walls of division by race, nationality, gender, economic status, and religious belief are torn down. Salvation comes when ignorance is replaced with knowledge and injustice gives way to justice for all God's people.
  - b. We are called to fervent prayer on behalf of the body of Christ, petitioning God to help us understand the mystery of grace as exemplified in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This mystery of grace is not to be left in the abstract, but, instead, is to be understood as we study the behavior and activities of Jesus.
  - c. The community of believers is always called to be more than it currently is. The church is to be a confessing body, fully aware of its shortcomings and willing to change. The community of believers is to ask for forgiveness and to ask for God to grant the wisdom to know how to change and the courage to stand bravely as a countercultural movement.

### **Questions for the Speaker**

1. What would happen in your life if the words of the Apostle's Prayer filled your heart and mind? What if the three petitions in the prayer were to be granted?
2. Do you believe the church is actually worthy of praise, as the end of the passage suggests? If not, what would it take to make it that way?
3. What would the Community of Christ look like and how would it act if there was global unity throughout?
4. How would it look and feel to have everyday life rooted and grounded in the love of Christ?