

A homily preached by the Rev. Robert L. Hart, Easter 6, May 17, 2009, Acts 11: 19-30, Psalm 33: 1-8, 18-22, I John 4: 7-21, John 15: 9-17
+In the Name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Yesterday Nick Galli, a member of this congregation, was confirmed by Bishop Gibbs. Nick will be a senior in high school next fall. The Bishop said in his sermon that he loves peach cobbler. I can relate. I love peach cobbler myself. Bishop Gibbs said, however, that peach cobbler doesn't love him. It can't. Peach cobbler is a dessert. It's a thing, a food. It can't love.

People love one another. Other people listen to us. They respond to us. They help us out when we need them. They show emotional support. Who are the people who love us – spouses, family members, friends, maybe teammates and the people of Christ Church. They love us. They love you.

God loves you. God gave us Jesus to show how love one another.

For the kids of the first communion class this is a big day. What the Gospel for today says to [you] these kids is that you are surrounded and filled with God's love in Jesus. Jesus calls us his friends. Then Jesus asks us to do something. "Love one another as I have loved you." Jesus says this so that we would know joy in our lives. "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

We want only one thing for these kids on this day is for them to be surrounded and supported by an active love so that they will know joy.

To the young people who spoke today and who are graduating from high school: You have spoken so well. And just as we are a community of love and support for the kids in the first communion class, I hope we have been and will be for you. There is only one thing I want to add.

Jesus spoke about loving one another, because relationships are the most important and enduring thing in our lives. We have a relationship with God and one another, one based on doing right by one another. All the advantages of education and income will pale next to this one thing. We must love another and stay connected to family, friends and the community of faith.