

October 4, 2026

Paul Purdue preaching

Today, we are so blessed to worship together with our Golden Triangle Congregation, a group of our members who worship most weeks in the chapel at 10:30 am in the Karen language. I am grateful for Pastor Sandy Sakrapante, who founded and leads this community and for Hia Htoo who will translate the sermon. Hai Htoo and Wisnee Lwe recently earned their United Methodist Church Lay Ministries certification! I will preach a line and then Hai will share the words in Karen.

John's Gospel alone includes Jesus giving a long speech we call the High Priestly Prayer. This 5 chapter prayer comes during the Last Supper.

What was Jesus' last sermon?

Jesus prays that *"Just as I love you love, love one another... so everyone will know that you are my disciples by the way you love each other."* (John 13:34-35)

Jesus prays, *"My prayer is not only for this (first generation of Christians). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message"*. What is Jesus' prayer for us trying to follow Christ in 2026?

Jesus prays *"that they, (that we), might be one!"* Jesus prayed that Christians in 2026 might be united.

How can 2.2 billion Christian around the world be one?

How can 45,000 denominations around the world be one?

How can United Methodist from over 130 nations be one?

What is the source of Christian unity? What might make us one?

How can one congregation be one?

Do we need to dress alike, enjoy the same foods, share the same worship styles, or say the same creeds to be one?

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism preached a beautiful sermon about Christian unity called "Catholic Spirit". John Wesley roots unity in our humility to remember *"that*

*we only know in part*" (1 Corinthians 13). Wesley says since we *"know only in part"* we all make mistakes in theology and practise without even knowing it. So, we will not find unity by arguing about who is right.

How can we be one? Wesley invites us to "think and let think".

The path to christian unity is to love God with our all, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Wesley preached *"If your heart is right as I believe my heart is right then give me your hand and let's walk together."*

Unity is relational more than theological. *Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. May they be in us"* .

As we dwell in God's love and practise loving others, we move towards unity. Love connects, heals, and creates community.

I once had a family member who was always judging me. Judging always divides. One day, I silently watched them playing with my children, laughing and full of joy and love. As I prayerfully watched the scene I suddenly realized how much they loved my children. I found it much easier to love them knowing they loved my children.

I may argue about your ideas and beliefs, but how can I refute your love for me? If I love God, and understand you are a child of God, it is easier to find common ground.

*"If your heart is right and I believe my heart of right then give me your hand and let's walk together"*

Jesus continues his prayer: *"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity."*

We have God's glory within us. The word glory is *Doxa*, from which we get doxology. It means the shimmering light, glory and presence of God like Mose's face shining on Mount Sinai or Jesus' radiance on the Mount of Transfiguration.

God has put that glorious light in us, but not just in us, God has placed this light in all of us. Jesus said *"you are the light of the world. Let your light shine, so that others might see the good you do, and be drawn closer to God"* (Matthew 5)

Why does Jesus pray that we might be one? Why does unity matter to God? Why does God care if we love God's other children?

Jesus tells us *to strive for unity so that our neighbors will see Jesus coming into the world through us.*

At our 8:10 service, the Rev Dr Robert Kohler invited us to the Lord's Table saying, *If there is anyplace we can all come together it is around God's Table, where we remember God's great love for everyone...*

Let us be humble about what we know, forgiving in spirit, and seeking unity, so that the world might see Jesus in us. Amen.