

**“CONNECT: BUILDING UP OUR LIFE TOGETHER”**  
**“Connecting at the Table”**

We finish our sermon series, *“Connect: Building up our Life Together.”* We have been focusing and examining our life together and what connects us to one another and to God. To help with our focus and our prayer, each week we have been given a “building block” in a particular color. This week our color of building block is yellow. Yellow is the color of hope and new ideas and thoughts. This final Sunday of our sermon series is also World Communion Sunday. This particular ecumenical event has been celebrated since 1936. The Federal Council of Churches (the predecessor of the National Council of Churches) adopted it in 1940. It has become a celebration of ecumenism and Christian unity. As our building blocks represent how we connect through our work, our relationship, through scripture, through creation and our animal friends and through mission, we now focus on our connection as brothers and sisters, beloved children of God. We may worship in different ways, but we still have a common love of Christ and a longing to transform the world. As we celebrate Holy Communion, may Jesus’ prayer *“may they all be one”* be fulfilled.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Connecting at the Table”**

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**Daily prayer:** *God of all our connections and colors, thank you for the adventure of our work; for the stability and support of our family and friends; for the gift of Your Word and the time to study; for the renewal and depth of love we have with our animal companions; for the opportunity to share Your Love in mission and outreach; for the time at Your table that connects us with all the world. Thank you, O God, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen*

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This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

## Study Guide

### **Monday, October 7, 2019** Philippians 2: 1-2

Philippians is one of Paul's prison letters. He works hard to stay connected to the people he loves and the churches he has planted. This letter is filled with verses well known and loved. The second chapter has a "hymn" or poem used during Holy Week on how Christ poured himself out for all. The verses from Sunday, concentrate on what Paul wrote before that poem. These verses are a reminder that people who claim to be followers of Jesus are challenged to live like Jesus; *"Being of one accord" or "united in spirit."* This is not easy for anyone but certainly not for Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Trying for unity in the midst of diversity is a wonderful goal, but as we know in the United Methodist Church it is hard to achieve. The color yellow is for hope, new ideas and thoughts. *Take your yellow building block in your hand and say a prayer for our local congregation and the whole church to find ways to connect in the midst of change and differing opinions.*

### **Tuesday, October 8, 2019** Philippians 2: 3-4

Paul pushes his understanding on unity by saying *"Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."* Like any institution, sometimes the church gets divided into factions and sometimes those factions are over fairly minor things. If we are looking to unity, not uniformity, but unity, then seeing others who may disagree with us, as beloved children of God pushes us to acknowledge their needs and wants. Unity is never easy. As Christians, we are challenged to show the world a new way of being connected. We are not about coercion so that everyone is identical, we are called to really see each other's gifts and how we are built together through the love and grace of God in Christ. *Today hold both green and the yellow blocks together and ask God to help you discern how you can grow in your faith and hope for a renewal in the community of faith.*

### **Wednesday October 9, 2019** Luke 17: 4-5

Just before these verses Jesus is warning the disciples about how bad it is to cause someone else to sin or fall away. In verse 3, Jesus says if someone sins tell them to stop and if they do, forgive them. He follows that statement with we need to forgive again and again. Of course, the disciples exclaim, *"Increase our faith!"* Forgiveness, I believe is at the heart of connection and unity. Forgiveness allows followers of Jesus to connect in a deep and spiritual way. *Today, as you contemplate forgiveness and connection, take the brown, the blue, and the green blocks along with the yellow and say the connection prayer. Ask God to lead you as you grow in faith, find stability and support in your relationships and contemplate more deeply how God is increasing your faith.*

### **Thursday October 10, 2019** Luke 17: 6-10

*"If you have the faith the size of a mustard seed,"* this statement of Jesus has challenged believers from the very beginning. A mustard is small, not the smallest seed, still quite small. That little bit of faith, according to Jesus could make a difference. That little bit of faith connected to a lot of other bits of faith, well, that could transform the world. Each working together doesn't boast, just notes we have *"done our duty" or "done what we can."* Think about connections, how things are built together and are stronger from the connections. Over the last six weeks we have used different colors to represent all the ways we can build life together as a community of faith. *Today, take all the colors of your blocks, put them together any way you like, take them apart and change the way they are built together. Then say a prayer for our community of faith and the church universal and ask God to bless our life together and to transform the world with our little seeds of faith.*

### **Friday October 11, 2019** Philippians 2: 1-4

We are re-reading our Philippians passage: *"If there is any encouragement, sharing of love, be of one accord, find a unity of the Spirit, be humble, look out for others and their interests."* These four verses are important not just for the church, but for all relationships. Sunday, we begin a new sermon series, *"Lifecycle of Giving."* While this is our stewardship series, it will also encompass All Saints Sunday and Confirmation Sunday. Trees and plants begin as seeds, grow into seedlings and then into a flowering stage, then a fruit bearing stage and then regenerate into seeds again for a new generation. *AS we end this series on connecting, pray for the church, for the past, present and future and for the gifts to keep us connecting.*