

From the Corner – *Love is a Choice!*

I have a love hate relationship with my computer. Part of my irritation is that my computer knows more than I do. While setting up sermon notes this week my computer (let's just call him Paul, since he's a thorn in my side) decided that changing the font and type size was not possible. I spent more time than I care to admit trying to make Paul do what I wanted. Finally, I said to myself out loud (since no one was around), "This is ridiculous! Just let it go Keith and move on!" The wall seemed to say, "O thank goodness, he gave up. I was afraid he was going slam Paul into my side."

I decided to change my relationship with Paul. I've decided that even though I don't like Paul, I'm going to love Paul for who he is. I decided I would get to know Paul better; try to understand how he works and what features he offers.

I'm glad Jesus didn't command us to *like* people. But he did command us to *love* our neighbors.

Paul has been my closest neighbor for 12 years now and I'm still learning more about him. There's only one problem. They're going to replace Paul with a new Paul. I'm told the new Paul is updated with new features. Then, I was told that I *should* get a new Paul every five years to keep up with technology. Great, I get to start all over again! Every 5 years! This is exhausting!

It reminds me of Sarah, the Church phone system that was installed when the church was built in 1932. After 65 years of service with "Ma Bell," Sarah, and the old black rotary phones were yanked out. Then they ordered (listen to this) "a new, discontinued phone system, with no tech support." We spent months putting pieces of instructions together from manuals as thick as a 1977 phone book. Finally, we figured things out and saved the instructions with Paul. Sarah's gone, bless her heart. But, the new system, Rosie, has taken us into the future just like the Jetsons. She was alien at first, but now we know her like a neighbor who's lived next door for years. She's a hard worker and does whatever she wants.

God has given us lots of neighbors. Our next-door neighbors, our neighbors at work, our neighbors overseeing our cities. Our neighbors we vote for to govern our country. Our neighbors who grow food, move food, stock food, and prepare food. Our neighbors all around the world.

We all have neighbors like Paul who knows it all, or Sarah who's in a 65-year rut, or Rosie who's strange, unfamiliar, and from another planet. Then there's Walber. Remember Walber, the wall in my office? Walber's a strong supporter of loving all our neighbors. He's a laborious defender keeping the Church house standing so that we, the Church, may help neighbors in need or speak up for our neighbors who are oppressed and pushed to the margins. It's important that the Church be known as a body of God's people who work together and love neighbors – as we love ourselves.



Love is a choice! The great capacity of love that God has given us, can bind us all together, united for the common good, not all the same, but all the people. What the world needs now is love. Love that will keep us together, and love that can change us – for good. The Church has a great responsibility to love every neighbor – for it is through our witness that the world will know God's love.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another." -John 13.34a

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." -Matt. 5.44

Journey well!

Pastor Keith Pastor@StJohnChurch.net