

# Love One Another from Pure Hearts

1 Peter 1:18-22

## Introduction

What motivates you to come to church? One reason we started going to Faith in DeMotte was that we already knew some of the members there. It's always easier to go to a new church if there's someone there with whom you already have a connection. I'd have to say that one of the things that probably motivated you to come to church today is the people.

## LWML

Today, we celebrate the LWML, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. The LWML has members across North America. As the name suggests, they sponsor missionary activities around the world, primarily through their Mite Offerings. I want to draw your attention to two things today—the key verse for this sermon: *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22)*, and the LWML logo on the outside of the worship folder.

## A Heart in a Hand

The main image in the logo is a heart in a hand. Picture holding a real heart in your hand. A heart surgeon does that. He takes out the diseased heart and puts in a new one. The logo also has a cross and a drop of water. The cross stands for Jesus dying for the forgiveness of our sins. The water, of course, represents Baptism, which gives us a new heart. Through Baptism, God has put a new, pure heart within each of us. As we read in *Ezekiel* earlier, *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you (Ezekiel 36:26)*. This new heart will last forever.

## Why a New Heart?

Why did God give us this new heart? Our old heart was diseased, corrupted by Original Sin and the sins we commit every day. This sin continues in us, even with the new heart. The sin nature wasn't removed, and we still sin every day in thought, word, and deed. And the Lord keeps on forgiving us! There will come a time when we stop sinning – when we physically die.

## The Mystery of Baptism

That's the wonderful mystery of Baptism. In it we receive the grace of forgiveness and the grace to live a new, holy life here and now. (Read *Romans 6:4*) St. Paul says that this Baptism is our daily death and new birth. As new life comes to the dying patient when the surgeon transplants a new heart, God has given us a new life by giving us a new, pure heart.

## Purified By Faith

In the first part of our verse, it sounds like Peter's saying we have made ourselves pure by keeping the Commandments. But Peter is talking about faith. The new heart, given to us at Baptism, makes us children of God, looking to Him and wanting to live holy lives for His sake. Since "brother"

often means both men and women, we could paraphrase this verse like this: “Now that the cross of Jesus has come into your hearts through Baptism, love one another.” Look once again at the logo. The cross comes into our hearts through Baptism. And each new, purified heart is surrounded by a much bigger heart. That’s the church, a big-hearted place, where all our hearts are together in His hand.

## A Big-Hearted Place Filled with Love

During this last year and a half, we learned that we could hear the Word on the Internet and TV, but being together, in person around the Word, is the truest reason we come together. Together (that is, in person, not virtually) we receive the transforming Word as we hear it spoken and sung and receive it physically in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Of all the reasons to come to church, the main one is that we come together with one another in His hand. There’s something special about that type of coming together that can’t be replaced or manufactured. And we can’t get it in any other group, organization, or club. It’s specific to the church.

## Overflowing Love

Jesus doesn’t only hold us in His hand, He reaches out His hand to the rest of the world. Jesus reached out His hand to raise a dead girl, cleanse a leper, and save Peter from drowning. Then He reached out His hands to the whole world as He died on the cross. Today, He reaches out His hand through us to those who don’t yet know His love, who still have spiritually diseased hearts.

## The Pure Heart

Martin Luther explained what a pure heart is.

“A pure heart is one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing its ideas with the Word of God. This alone is pure before God, yes, purity itself, which purifies everything that it includes and touches. ... Note that he is pondering the Word of God in his heart ... if he attains the highest purity so that he also takes hold of the Gospel and believes in Christ – without this, that purity is impossible – then he is pure completely, inwardly in his heart toward God and outwardly toward everything under him on earth” (**LW 21:33**).

## Keep Loving One Another Earnestly

May this be true of all our hearts. To the LWML, I say thank you for your example and encouragement. Let us take this logo home and remember the forgiveness and transformation we have received in Baptism and that, coming together, God makes us a big-hearted church that extends His hand of love to everyone.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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