

Rev. Gary M. Morello
April 22, 2018
We Are One
Acts 2:1-11

Something EXTRAORDINARY happened on the day of Pentecost (Pause)! Phileo LOVE, was **unleashed!** This type of God's love, through the Holy Spirit, penetrated race, language, religion, culture, tribalism and the **bone-crushing juggernaut** of self-centeredness.

Ultimately, on this Holy Day, what took place is that people became ONE!!! Phileo AKA brotherly love manifested through the **Divine!!**

People from ALL walks of life put down their **prejudices**, engrained **judgments** and bias **opinions** so they could witness the Godliness within their neighbor.

This Divine intervention is what scripture teaches us. That WE ARE **ALL MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD!** (pause)

And Jesus confirms scripture when He teaches us a Prayer in the Gospel of John for **All** Believers (you and me) to follow... The words that come out of His mouth are **telling**, Jesus says:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their (our) message, that **all of them may be one**, 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.

John chapter 17 verse 21 "that **all of them may be one**" is the central verse of The United Church of Christ...

As a matter of fact, I'm **bold enough** to say that this verse from the gospel of John regarding ONENESS is the foundation The First Congregational Church of Darien **was built on!!!**

We don't have to look any further than the 4 walls of this church to see the impact and **profound power** of this type of God's love!!!

As clergy of this church we often get asked the question: What is SO **enticing** about the history of FCC of Darien? Well... Let me explain.

The history of this church is **admirable** and one that I'm proud to associate myself with as should you **be!!!** It is an honor and privilege to share the truth of our church's history with you and our brothers and sisters from Uganda!

Our **very own**, The Reverend Dr. Moses Mather, 275 years ago was preaching boldly against the British and standing up for his brothers and sisters!!!

During the Revolutionary War, Darien was one of many towns on the Connecticut Shoreline that was in constant danger of being raided by British troops who were trying to wipe out

the ammunition reserves of the Continental Army and steal the valuables of residents who lived in the towns.

To add to the confusion, spies were everywhere. There was always the possibility that your neighbor was a Tory -- a colonist who sided with British -- and would turn you in.

Let's Go back to 1738, when there was no Darien -- just Norwalk and Stamford. In the pre-Revolutionary period, colonists usually looked to the local minister for leadership and he generally held the clout that a mayor or president would have today.

Moses Mather was a young, outspoken, enthusiastic minister (my kind of guy!!!) who attended Yale Divinity School, and in 1744 he was hired as minister of the Middlesex Parish Church until 1806.

Mather's sermons against the British made him a target **(pause)**.

In 1779, he and three of his sons were captured and held for **five weeks** because of his sermons encouraging colonists to rally against the British. **Reverend Mather knew discipleship had a cost. He was willing to do whatever it takes for what was right!!!**

Friends, Moses Mather was **preaching phileo love!**

The Spirit of brotherly love would continue in a **BIG WAY** at this historic church (long pause)...

The First Congregational Church of Darien is **known** as a station for the Underground Railroad...

A station for the The Underground Railroad was a network of people, African American as well as white, offering shelter and aid to escaped slaves from the South.

The Quakers, which are of the Protestant Tradition, are considered the first organized group to actively **help** escaped slaves. George Washington complained in 1786 that Quakers had attempted to "liberate" one of his slaves.

In the early 1800s, Quaker abolitionist Isaac T. Hopper set up a network in Philadelphia that helped slaves on the run. At the same time, Quakers in North Carolina established abolitionist groups that laid the groundwork for routes and shelters for escapees.

The **earliest mention** of the Underground Railroad came in 1831 when slave Tice Davids escaped from Kentucky into Ohio and his owner blamed an "underground railroad" for helping Davids to freedom.

In 1839, a Washigton newspaper reported an escaped slave named Jim had revealed, ("under torture"), his plan to go north following an "underground railroad to Boston."

Vigilance Committees—created to protect escaped slaves from bounty hunters in New York in 1835 and Philadelphia in 1838—soon expanded their activities to guide slaves on the run. By the 1840s, **the term** Underground Railroad was part of the American vernacular.

This building, this church, our people are **known** to be apart of this historical movement. Some have **even said** that we hid slaves in order to protect them!!

WE have stood, **do** stand and **will continue to** walk with those oppressed, marginalized or rejected in the world... **THIS IS WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID!!!!!!**

Phileo love is distinguished from Agape love (unconditional love) in that it is better described as **tender mercy or affection**.

Phileo love **is** deeper level of connection. This connection is a powerful bond that forms community and offers multiple benefits to those who share it.

7,000 miles across the globe to Uganda
3,000 miles across the country to California
40 miles across the highway to New York
5 miles across the post road to Norwalk

LET GOD'S LOVE REIGN!!! For **without it** WE HAVE NOTHING....

May it be so Amen...

Sources:

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