1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. 9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; 10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

These familiar words from I Corinthians were one of the lectionary readings for worship yesterday morning. How often I would read those words at weddings when serving as a pastor! This passage is certainly appropriate for weddings as it defines what love is and sets the tone for love that is deep and abiding. At the same time, this passage provides us with a word of encouragement and hope during the more difficult times of our lives, too. What a wonderful comfort it is to be reminded that love never ends -- our love for one another and the love that we have experienced from God through Jesus Christ.

It is this deep and abiding love that has been sustaining us in recent days. On Wed., January 26, Tim Browning, one of our librarians died suddenly and unexpectedly on campus at the age of only 49. While we grieve his passing and our hearts break for his family, we are comforted in knowing that his journey of faith is now complete and he has experienced fully the love that we have only glimpsed "in a mirror, dimly."

Beyond our campus, our hearts are nearly overwhelmed by the images of Haiti that fill our television screens and our minds. At PTS we have had significant and meaningful connections with the people of Haiti. In February in each of the past three years, groups of students have visited Haiti through the Seminary's World Mission Initiative program. April Leese '07 has spent the past two years working in mission with Comprehensive Development Project (CODEP) of the Haiti Fund. April returned to the states before Christmas and is in a process of discerning where
God is calling her to serve next. Our prayers are with her as a part of her heart is still with her friends and her work in Haiti. Michelle Wahila ’05, currently serving as associate pastor at Third Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, is on the Board of Directors of the Haiti Fund. Michelle’s life and ministry has been shaped by her love for the people of Haiti and through her leadership many others have come to share that passion. Leon Pamphile ’74 was named one of the Seminary’s distinguished alumni in 2008. Pamphile, who was born in Haiti but now lives in the Pittsburgh area, founded the Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti, which operates over 60 literacy centers. The Functional Literacy Ministry has also built a Community Health Center to provide medical care to 25,000 residents in the rural communities. A prayer service on the Seminary’s campus was organized by Pamphile and this organization. (See article below.) Our thoughts and prayers are with each of these graduates, trusting that the “love that never fails” will sustain them and those whom they love.

In just a couple of weeks observances of Ash Wednesday will once again move us into the season of Lent in the life of the church. We will follow Christ through the wilderness, temptation, rejection, and even death. We will remember Christ’s sufferings and take comfort, knowing that just as he was sustained by and demonstrated the love of God, we too are sustained by that love that “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

In all of our days, we give thanks to God for this abiding love.

Yours in Christ,

Bill

The Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III
President

Jerusalem and Samaria: The Royal Cities in Ancient Israel

The significance of the rivalry between the two capital cities of ancient Israel for our understanding of biblical history can hardly be overestimated. Using references from the Hebrew Scriptures and the wealth of discoveries that archaeological research has uncovered, Dr. Ron E. Tappy, G. Albert Shoemaker Professor of Bible and Archaeology and director of the Kelso Bible Lands Museum, will bring Jerusalem and Samaria to life. Join us Mondays in February from 10:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Contact Continuing Education at ConEd@pts.edu or 412-924-1345 for more information. Brochure

Annual Kelso Lecture Addresses MLK’s Dream and the Post-Racial Society

Stephen G. Ray, Jr., Neal F. and Ila A. Fisher Professor of Systematic Theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary will be on campus Tues., Feb. 9 at 7:00 p.m. to present the annual Kelso Lecture in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. This year’s lecture will address “Martin Luther King Jr.’s Dream and the Post-Racial Society”. The lecture is free and open to the public. Contact Continuing Education at ConEd@pts.edu or 412-924-1345 for more information.
Survey Finds Pittsburgh Youth Affected By Violence

The Seminary's Metro-Urban Institute through an informal survey of 455 Pittsburgh area youth ages 9-18 conducted last October, found that 78.9 percent of those surveyed had experienced gun-violence; either a family member or close friend had been shot. Nationally, an average of 61 percent of youth report some form of experience with violence and this figure includes all types of violence, including domestic abuse, bullying, and such.

When asked about their prayer habits, youth who either indicated that they did not pray or were unable to provide examples of prayer in their everyday lives were most likely to provide no solutions as to how to reduce violence or to indicate that they did not believe it was possible to stop or reduce the violence. All youth who identified a practice of spiritually-rooted prayer provided suggestions regarding how to reduce violence and expressed belief that healing was possible.

This survey was prompted by the work of MUI, a program of leadership development for urban ministry, and its collaboration with local organizations. Learn more online.

Seminary Holds Prayer Vigil for Haiti

The Metro-Urban Institute, along with the Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti, held a prayer vigil for Haiti last week. The Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti is a Pittsburgh-based organization that has been working in Haiti since 1983. Originally focused on adult literacy, FLM-Haiti now has a school for 600 children and a community health center, both in Thomassin, about 20 miles southeast of Port-au-Prince. Until the earthquake, FLM also supported sixty adult literacy centers in and around the capital. FLM's director, Dr. Leon Pamphile, graduated from the Seminary in 1974 and received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2008 for his work in academia. We encourage you to continue to pray for the earthquake victims and their families and the country as it rebuilds.