

Call to Worship: " Anxiety (心配) in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." **Proverbs 12:25**

A small act of kindness (親切な行為)

Hymn: When There's Love at Home, pg.4

<p>Romans 15 30- 33</p> <p>I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹ Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there, ³² so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. ³³ The God of peace be with you all. Amen.</p>	<p>ローマ 15:30～33</p> <p>30 兄弟たち、わたしたちの主イエス・キリストによって、また、“霊”が与えてくださる愛によってお願いします。どうか、わたしのために、わたしと一緒に神に熱心に祈ってください、³¹ わたしがユダヤにいる不信の者たちから守られ、エルサレムに対するわたしの奉仕が聖なる者たちに歓迎されるように、³² こうして、神の御心によって喜びのうちにそちらへ行き、あなたがたのもとで憩うことができるように。³³ 平和の源である神があなたがた一同と共におられるように、アーメン。</p>
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As maybe some of you know, I often walk to school. Because of that I sometimes get to see some of the people that live in my neighborhood (近所). If I walk past the person, I usually try to greet (挨拶) them (in Japanese of course). Some people greet me back, others just nod their heads (うなづく) and some don't say anything at all. There is however, one elderly (年配の) woman who always greets me back in a loud and friendly voice. In the morning she usually says something like 「おはようございます。気を付けてね」. If I see her on the way home she will say something like 「こんばんは。今日も頑張ったね」. Even though she always wears a mask, I can see she is smiling when she says it. I don't see her that often, but every time I do, my day is a little bit better and a little bit

brighter. It just feels good when someone greets you like that. Of course, you all know that greeting someone is a good thing to do. At school too we are often told that it's important to greet in a loud voice. Have you ever thought about why that is? I'm sure you all know greeting someone is polite (丁寧), but there are other reasons too. Today I want to talk about why something as small and easy as saying "good morning" is so important.

To explain the importance (大切さ) of greetings, I think it's first important to think about love. "Love" is a word that we can often see in the bible. There are many bible passages that talk about love for god and love for other people. We can even see this in our school's motto 「神を畏れ、隣人を愛する」 ("fear god and love your neighbor" in English). So, let me ask you a question. What is the opposite (反対) of love? Think about it for a few seconds. So, what do you think? Maybe your answer is, "That's easy. The opposite of love is hate (憎しみ). Everybody knows that." It seems very easy, doesn't it? However, there are people who give a different answer. Let me explain (説明する). Love and hate are both very strong emotions (感情). If you love someone you think about that person a lot and if you hate someone you also think about that person a lot. The interesting thing is, it is in fact possible to love and hate a person at the same time. In dramas on TV you see it a lot. Two people fight all the time, but in the end they confess (告白) their love to each other. If love and hate can exist (存在する) at the same time, are they really opposites? That is why some people say the opposite of love isn't hate, it's actually indifference (無関心). I think that's an interesting way to think about it. Although it is possible to love and hate a person at the same time, it is absolutely (絶対に) impossible to love someone when you don't feel anything for them.

Indifference is a bad thing. It can hurt (痛い) just as much as hatred. For example, when you message someone you think is your friend, and they don't send a message back, it hurts. When you like a person, but they don't even see you, it hurts. When you greet someone, but they don't say anything back, it hurts. One of reasons why indifference hurts so much is because it makes us feel alone. Indifference is not just bad when it comes from people we know. You can also feel the same pain when there are many people around you, but everybody ignores (無視する) you. When there are many people, but you don't feel a connection (つながり) it feels very lonely (寂しい). Famous writer and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel wrote about this in an interesting way. He said "To be unseen is

to be invisible.” What he means is that, if everybody ignores you, it feels like you don’t exist (存在する). When that happens you lose self-confidence (自身). That is why greeting someone is so important. When you greet them it shows that you see them. It says “I see you. You are not invisible. You are a person.” That is the opposite of indifference.

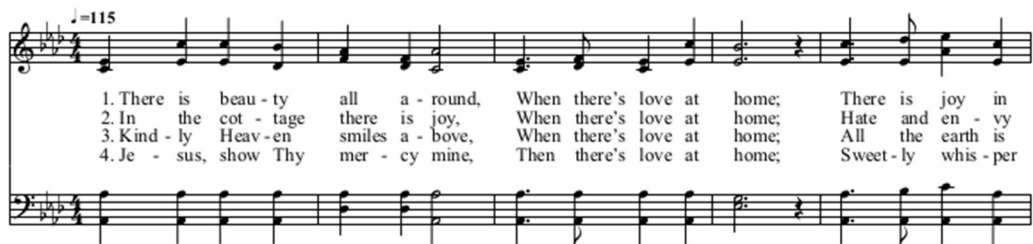
Today there are more people than ever that feel alone. It’s not just elderly (年配) people. Research (研究) shows that almost 70 percent of young people often feel lonely. This is a problem, not just mentally (精神的に), but for your health as well. People that feel lonely have a higher risk of depression (うつ病) high blood pressure (高血圧), heart disease (心臓病), dementia (認知症) and many other illnesses (病気). In fact, some doctors say that being lonely is just as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day! On the other hand (一方で), connecting with other people makes you feel better. It gives you strength (力) and energy. In fact, we can see that in today’s bible passage as well. It says “so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed.” (神の御心によって喜びのうちにそちらへ行き、あなたがたのもとで憩うことができるように). The Japanese version translates “refreshed” as 「憩う」, but actually it also means 「さわやかにする」, or 「再び元気づける」. Greeting other people gives them that feeling of connection. That is why greeting someone is more than just being polite (丁寧). It is an act of kindness (親切な行為). Of course, just saying “good morning” is not the same as really talking with someone. However, it is a good first step. It is a way to show people that they are not invisible. They are not alone and we are not indifferent towards them. So, please greet people kindly in a loud and clear voice, just like the elderly woman in my neighborhood always does. That way you can make their day just a little bit better and a little bit brighter.

Let us pray. Dear lord, please help us remember the importance of connecting with other people. Help us to show others that they are not alone by greeting them. And let us be grateful (感謝) for the people who make us feel connected in our own lives. Amen.

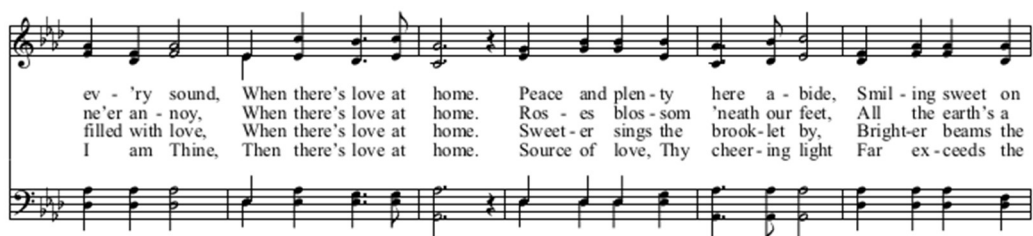
When There's Love at Home

John Hugh McNaughton, 1860

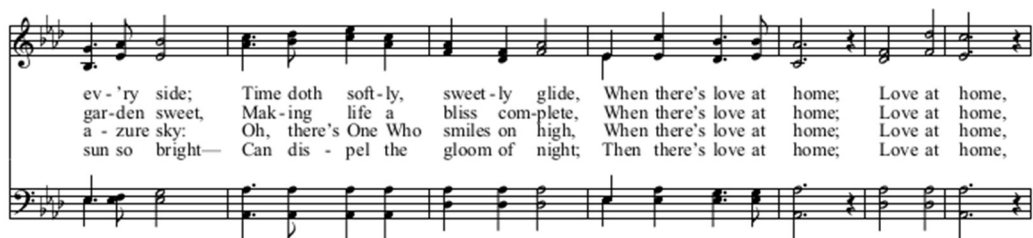
$\text{♩} = 115$



1. There is beau - ty all a - round, When there's love at home; There is joy in
2. In the cot - tage there is joy, When there's love at home; Hate and en - vy
3. Kind - ly Heav - en smiles a - bove, When there's love at home; All the earth is
4. Je - sus, show Thy mer - cy mine, Then there's love at home; Sweet - ly whis - per



ev - 'ry sound, When there's love at home. Peace and plen - ty here a - bide, Smil - ing sweet on
ne'er an - noy, When there's love at home. Ros - es blos - som 'neath our feet, All the earth's a
filled with love, When there's love at home. Sweet - er sings the brook - let by, Bright - er beams the
I am Thine, Then there's love at home. Source of love, Thy cheer - ing light Far ex - ceeds the



ev - 'ry side; Time doth soft - ly, sweet - ly glide, When there's love at home; Love at home,
gar - den sweet, Mak - ing life a bliss com - plete, When there's love at home; Love at home,
a - zure sky; Oh, there's One Who smiles on high, When there's love at home; Love at home,
sun so bright— Can dis - pel the gloom of night; Then there's love at home; Love at home,



love at home, Time doth soft - ly, sweet - ly glide, When there's love at home.
love at home, Mak - ing life a bliss com - plete, When there's love at home.
love at home, Oh, there's One Who smiles on high, When there's love at home.
love at home, Can dis - pel the gloom of night; Then there's love at home.