### Grace and Peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### How many have been watching the Mandalorian on Disney+? The Mandalorian is a bounty hunter. His sidekick is adorable Din Grogu (meaning the child) and has been called baby Yoda, sine he is the same species as Yoda, while many of the villains are remnants of the Empire, for Star War fans. The Mandalorian are able to use metallurgy to create very desirable armor. There is a group of Mandalorians that are fanatic and hardcore and never remove their helmet. (They can make up for that by bathing in water on their planet). The are called the Way. This caught my attention because early Christians were not called Christians but were called the Way. They were also fanatical and hardcore in following Jesus. Today we hear Jesus with one of his most powerful “I am” statements. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” No one comes to the Father except through me.” When the leader of the Way of the Mandalorians gave a ruling every one would say “This is the way.” Each of them worked together to carry out what their leader wanted. The same is true about Jesus. When he talks his is telling his followers we are to work together to carry out what he tells us. He tells us to love one another as he has loved us and to serve others. He is the way. Now that we are down to earth I would like to talk about the differences. We do not need the highly desired armor that the Mandorlorians use to protect themselves as they battle their enemies. . The armor we have is much more powerful. When we follow the Way God’s very Spirit gives us the armor of God. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians Chapter 6:10-18 we put on the whole armor of God.

*10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power; 11put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, 12for our[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A10-18&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29333a)*] struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A10-18&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29333b)*] darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A10-18&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29333c)*] 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having* *prevailed against everything, to stand firm. 14Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness 15and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace. 16With all of these,[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A10-18&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29337d)*] take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.****17****Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.****18****Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.*

Our armor is not made of earthly metal. Today as a faith community, we believe we are to live our lives as "called" and "sent" ones who express by actions and words the good news of Jesus Christ among the people of Mid-Michigan. We are not simply committed to a cultural practice or obligation, but we live in fervent devotion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the way. We are committing our ministry to the understanding that we want to be followers of The Way. As followers of Jesus we live out our identity of BEING the faith community instead of just ATTENDING a church.

We put on the full armor of God so we can take oour stand against the evil one. It is the way. We can be prepared in any challenge, by making sure that you are a person sharing God's truth. This includes sharing the gospel news about our Lord Jesus and why you believe in Jesus.

When we look at the creation of the church in the New Testament we see that people were called by God to Live the Way; so that they may Learn the Way from fellowship with Christ; and then they were sent by Christ to lead the Way for others to hear about Christ and fulfill the Great Commission, to baptize others. The one who is the way, and the truth and the life offers hope is that God would use us to bring restoration of all things to God the Father. We believe that as followers of Christ we miss out on the fullness of the Gospel when being a Christian is reduced simply to attendance at church. It is too easy to use the walls of the church as a way to keep others out, those who live on the margins. But it is the Way to instead invite them in and show hospitality. We want St Paul to be part of a movement where being a follower of Jesus Christ is a new identity and way of life.

Today’s narrative what Jesus does is a reverse of what he has done in the first half of John’s gospel where he enacts a sign, other writers call miracles, and then he explains its meaning. In the second half of his gospel, often referred to as the Book of Glory, the order is reversed. Here he starts out explaining the meaning of the sign in later chapters which is his death and resurrection. Phillip says to Jesus, “Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Phillip did not recognize that by seeing Jesus and being with, and listening and being taught by Jesus that hat he saw was seeing the Father. What Jesus wants Phillip and us to believe is that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. When we experience Jesus in the bread and wine and readings and preaching and song we are seeing the Father. Then we can then go into the world well protected to love and serve others. Amen.