**CHRISTIAN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JUNE HARRIS**

Hello everyone!! I want to thank (**Name your pastor or the person who asked you to speak**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for inviting me to say a few words this morning in honor of our annual Family and Friends Day service. While we all know each other fairly well, I have to say this service is really a special **occasion**... one that brings us together, one in which we acknowledge our connection to one another, and of course, it’s the perfect time to reaffirm our faith. The **OCCASION**... that’s our theme today.... and I have to say, although it’s quite a simple and a very open ended topic, it **REALLY** started me thinking.

Those of you that really know me, know that I’m curious... I have a thirst for knowledge and clarity... and when I speak, I like to know the meaning of my message. So I went to the dictionary and looked up the word... one of the definitions tells us that occasion means, “a special or important time, event, ceremony, celebration, etc”.... **BINGO**!!! That’s exactly why we’re here today... to celebrate each other....to acknowledge the specialness of **OUR** congregation, and realize there are **NO** mistakes... we are **all** friends and family. It’s an honor to break bread with you!

In John 15:12-13, we learn, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” ... It’s wonderful to know how many friends we all have here in this room... it’s comforting to know that we are there for each other in good times and in challenging times.... but honestly... knowing we’re about to share this terrific meal is the best part!!! (**Say that with enthusiasm and wait for the laugh**).

Today gives us the opportunity to come together with our families, friends, and guests. Hopefully our guests will become more permanent friends and see the value in belonging, especially with **us**. In life, we take so much for granted, but I want to suggest that we take a moment, look around, and really feel the brotherhood... and sisterhood... and “childrenhood” that fills this atmosphere. I once heard a quote from a famous poem. I don’t remember all of it, but to me, the most important line is, “I am part of all that I have met.” As I look out at all of you and think about that statement, that makes me feel pretty good!!

When I think about the lessons I’ve learned in life from my own family, of whom I am very proud to be a part, those lessons not only stayed with me all of these years, but I find the meaning grows more important every day. They taught me right from wrong. They taught me to be honest and to have respect for everyone. They instilled in me good, strong, traditional family values, and, of course, they showed me the power in the love of God.

We are all each other’s “church family” and to greater or lesser degrees, we each have a part of one another that we carry with us, and whether it’s to share humor or to give some wisdom, I am happy to know you’re there. Just as my own brother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and his family are here today to share this occasion, so are all of you... and that makes me feel very blessed indeed.

May we continue to support this wonderful congregation, and may our church “family” grow and thrive!! Thank you all!!