

"Love your enemies."

What does Jesus mean?

In this class, we will focus on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:43-48 on loving enemies, but also cover other relevant passages. How do you treat someone who cuts you off on the road? A neighbor who harasses you? Someone who threatens to kill a loved one? Your country's enemies in war? The case will be made that we cannot both love and kill an enemy. We will also examine what loving enemies looks like in real life and objections to this teaching.

Our primary focus will be biblical, but we will also look at the history of how this has been interpreted in the early church and at the time of the Reformation. Come with your curiosity and questions.

This course is part of a broader series of classes being developed on Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and practice. Classes will meet on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:05, with a five-minute break in the middle. The classes will run from March 4th through April 8th.



Class 1 - March 4

- 6:30-7:15 - An introduction to our topic
- 7:20-8:05 - An exposition of Matthew 5:43-48 (pt. 1)

Class 2 - March 11

- 6:30-7:15 - An exposition of Matthew 5:43-48 (pt. 2)
- 7:20-8:05 - Enemy love in the rest of the New Testament

Class 3 - March 18

- 6:30-7:15 - What if someone comes to my house and wants to hurt my family?
- 7:20-8:05 - What did the early church believe about loving enemies? Can't there be a just war?

Class 4 - March 25

- 6:30-7:15 - Doesn't Jesus just mean love our personal enemies? Can't you love someone and still kill them? Isn't Jesus' teaching just for certain Christians?
- 7:20-8:05 - Can God's mind change from the Old Testament to the New Testament?

Class 5 - April 1

- 6:30-7:15 - What about soldiers and rulers in the New Testament? What about Jesus cleansing the temple?
- 7:20-8:05 - How can we overcome evil with good? Didn't Jesus tell the disciples to "buy a sword"? Didn't he say "I have come to bring a sword"?

Class 6 - April 8

- 6:30-7:15 - Can we be good citizens while loving our enemies?
- 7:20-8:05 - What about Hitler?

Location: If allowed, local students will be able to attend in person at the LMC offices in Lancaster, PA (2160 Lincoln Hwy E). [Google classroom](#) will be used for this class (handouts, videos, instructions on how to prepare for class). If you do not have one already, you will need a Gmail address to access this material. **Anyone can attend via Zoom.**

Expense: This class is offered to you based on the generous giving of LMC churches to the ministries of LMC. A \$20 dollar donation is requested (from those who can) toward the STEP scholarship fund to train current and future leaders/pastors for LMC.

Expectations: Attend class. Prepare for and participate in class discussion.

To register: Please contact William at whiggins@lmchurches.org.

Please register by February 18th.

Registration is limited to 15 students. This class will be offered again.

Instructor: *William Higgins* is an LMC staff in the area of theological education and Anabaptist Christian identity formation. He is also an associate pastor at New Danville Mennonite Church. He holds a PhD in theology from Drew University and graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Vennard College. He has pastored for many years and has taught in various roles in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, Franklin Mennonite Conference and is currently a Course Instructor in the STEP program of LMC.