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*Let free-flowing love flow.*

### *No Greater Love*

Luna, a yellow lab, throws her whole dog-self into saying hello. I spotted her from a distance yesterday, way down the causeway, on a leash. Gradually, her tail came into focus. Wagging. And then—she must have caught my scent—she broke free of the leash and bounded toward me! Wriggling all over, she yipped and jumped, whined and trilled, and then rolled onto her back for a belly rub. Now that's love!

Every animal expresses love in its own way—we might admire a cat's dignity or precision, or a dog's steadfastness or exuberance. We can learn from them about love. Not falling-in-love love but sustained, over the long haul love. In them we can see what fully accepting someone looks like, what it is to be blissfully and trustingly all in, all the time. Uncomplicated, unfettered, unwavering, unconditional love.

It's a tall order for humans to keep big, wide-open unconditional love alive. As often as not, we can let our history of loving—our hopes, expectations and disappointments—complicate the flow of our love. It can feel amazing to receive it—and realize just how much someone has always been there for you. And it feels amazing, to give it, too...when someone's breathtaking dependence and trust awakens in us a sense of loving that deeply.

Sometimes life comes along and turns loose the flow of love. A sick young father, his days numbered, spends the time left playing with his little girls. A woman in middle age develops early-onset dementia, and everyone in her extended family leaves home and work to be near her while she lives out her days. Such life-changing events can heal years of dysfunction and open the floodgates of love.

World events can open up the flow of love, too. After 9/11, strangers on the street smiled at and talked to each other for weeks. It felt good to see someone smile at you and really good to smile back.

Which suggests that the free-flowing love we feel with our animal friends is always present in us. How far-fetched is it to let it flow? Imagine feeling like Luna, giddy with excitement, at meeting a friend for coffee, saying good morning to your partner or even driving to UUFES for a committee meeting! Finding the sweetness of connection is part of what church is about, after all—not only accepting but affirming what makes us different, and coming together week after week out of hope and belief in something more compelling than just our own spiritual growth.

Imagine a reservoir of love within you. Love you can let loose any time. Who'll be the surprised, lucky one to see your smile? Who'll delight in hearing your voice on the phone? Who will smile to find you at their door? Go ahead, let it flow.

May it be so.