Some scholars have denied that the 18th-century theologian and revivalist Jonathan Edwards had a
notion of agape, while others insist he had a well-developed sense of the concept that reached into his
doctrines of God, the church, and the nature of the Christian life. This course will involve an intensive,
critical reading of Edwards’ famous sermon series, “Charity and Its Fruits,” based on I Corinthians 13,
delivered to his congregation at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1738. Along with being introduced to
the textual issues associated with this text, participants will read supporting primary and secondary
materials that address the historical context and Edwards’ pastoral and theological concerns at the time.
Participants will also engage with Edwards’ ethical thought, and recent scholarly reappraisals of it, for
which the “Charity” series forms an important foundation.

Monday
• Introduction
  • The historical context of 1738
  • The exegetical and homiletic background of I Cor. 13
    o Protestant and Roman Catholic sources (16th and 17th century)
  • Edwards’ sermons: corpus and structure.
    o Reading (completed) Editor’s Introduction WJE 8:1-121.

Tuesday
• Textual issues
  o Reading (completed)
    ▪ Joseph Bellamy’s copy of the Charity sermons, fragments, examples WJE 643-89.
    ▪ Sermon 1 - 4 WJE 8:129-217.

Wednesday
• Edwards’ Pastoral concern
  o Reception and Scholarship on Charity
    o Reading (completed)
      ▪ Sermon 5 - 8 WJE 8:218-32.

Thursday
• Edwards’ Theological concern
• Charity and Its Fruits: editions and translations
  o Reading (completed)
    ▪ Sermon 9 - 12 WJE 8:283-338

Friday
• Edwards’ Ethical thought (Scott Fennema)
  • -situating Charity within Edwards’ larger ethics
  • -correlations to Religious Affections
    o Reading (completed)
      ▪ Sermon 13 - 15 WJE 8:339-77