



The Methodist

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST
AND SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OUR NEIGHBORS

February 2023



From
the
Pastor's Heart

Memo

Right now, stores are chock-full of red and pink tchotchkes, chocolate of every variety, fancy cards gushing love-themed rhymes, and a host of other Valentine's Day stuff. Somehow, this commercial holiday has become the normative cultural expression of love. Popular manifestations of "love" can prove problematic for the faithful Christian teacher or preacher. How does one effectively proclaim Jesus' vision of love and the church's mandate to love prodigally and completely in a culture that reduces that love to commercial industries and commodities? One thing's for sure, you sure won't find answers on a greeting card!

Instead, let's read Apostle Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, as an expression of stewardship:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

We may have the best theological education, the most majestic or modern facility, and even an incredibly strong faith—but Paul says if we don't express these things, in, with, and through love, we are nothing. We can even be incredibly generous, yet if our generosity is not covered in love, it misses the mark.

The love God gives and asks us to share is so much bigger and more all-inclusive than our pitiable human commercialization and sentimental versions.

"Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving."

~ Mr. Rogers



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What if, for example, our Christian congregations really took to heart the "more excellent way" of being the Body of Christ? Imagine the differences we might see and experience! What if our life together was marked by a spirit of patience and gentleness, a lack of self-interest and envy, and a spirit of hope and endurance? Would church committee work and congregational leadership look different? I say "yes" indeed, if everywhere we're looking (in every moment) for the good in each other.

Imagine how church outreach would be shaped as we bear one another's burdens, as we endure challenges and hardship, as we welcome newcomers with trust, love, and kindness. Truly, others would know us as Christians by our love, rather than by our *isms and schisms*. Together, we can practice love and help usher in the kingdom of God—right here and now!

May God's abundant love be with you and shared through you,

Pastor Mark



Pastor Mark's Sermon Series

February 5

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Holy Communion

"Salty Luminescence"

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20



February 12

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

"Restoration & Reconciliation"

Scripture: Matthew 5:21-27

February 22

Ash Wednesday

Homily

Imposition of Ashes

Holy Communion

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

February 19

Transfiguration Sunday

"Hidden & Revealed"

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

February 26

First Sunday in Lent

"Engage the Darkness"

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11



LOVE

by Shel Silverstein

Ricky was "L" but he's home with the flu,
Lizzie, our "O," had some homework to do,
Mitchell, "E" prob'ly got lost on the way,
So I'm all of love that could make it today.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ~ February is Black History Month
- ~ Valentine's Day is Tuesday, February 14
- ~ Transfiguration Sunday - February 19
- ~ Tinley Park Village Hall will be closed Monday, February 20 in observance of President's Day.
- ~ **Ash Wednesday is February 20. Service is at 7:00 p.m. with Holy Communion**
- ~ **Church Council Meeting Sunday, February 26 following worship service.**
- ~ Pastor Mark's Bible Study February 28 through April 4 at 7:00 p.m.

Join Pastor Mark in a six-week Lenten Season Book Study each Tuesday beginning February 28 through April 4.

The group will read Amy-Jill Levine's book, *Witness at the Cross*. With her wit, wisdom, and vast knowledge of the Scriptures in their historical context, Amy-Jill Levine has brought to life the characters who the Gospels tell us witnessed Jesus at the cross. Each Gospel has its own story to tell, all the witnesses have their own memories, and every reader comes away with a new insight—and we come away transformed. Place yourself as a witness of the cross and determine what your own testimony will be! Pastor Mark has ordered ten books. Please purchase your book for \$13.49 (no tax or shipping cost). Make checks payable to Mark Gilmore.

Test Your Brain Power & Solve the Riddles

Jimmy's mother had three children. She named the first Monday. She named the second Tuesday. **What is the name of the third child?**



Answers can be found somewhere in this newsletter.

I am a ball that can be rolled but never bounced or thrown.

What am I?



I am a seed with three letters in my name. Take away the last two and I still sound the same.

What am I?



"The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves."



~ Victor Hugo



February Birthdays
Chereline McCarty—11
Doris Bertinetti—15
Nancy Conner—17



Continued prayers for:

Doris Bertinetti, Bill Gillooley,
 Joanna Medrow, Kathy Row,
 Scott (Mary Steeve's son),
 Joyce Wiabel & Joanne Yepsen
 Brian Lisula



The Holy Season of Lent

by Nancy Conner

The Season of Lent will soon be with us. It seems as though we are still unwinding after the festivities of Christmas and the New Year; nonetheless, we are about to enter the holiest time of the year.



Each Christian denomination welcomes Lent as a time to fast (abstain from that second piece of cake or bypass the cake completely); repent (express sorrow for our sins); reflect (on our lives and how we can improve our behavior), and focus on the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us. The focal point of Lent for Catholics is to center themselves on the Three Pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Presbyterians use the Lenten season as a time to center themselves "specifically on their baptism into the faith and what it means to them. Each congregation may observe the season in its own unique way, following the traditional church calendar" (Landis). Many pastors of the Methodist church encourage their congregations to practice "self-examination and repentance" through prayer and fasting and "by reading and mediating on the Bible."

There isn't one particular way to honor the Lenten season; we need to discover our own way of confronting our faults and shortcomings and of giving thanks to God, so regardless of the denomination we follow, it's important that we partake in this holy season and pay reverence to Jesus for the extreme sacrifice he made for us.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

~ John 3:16

Sources:

Landis, Lindsey. "Does the Presbyterian Church Celebrate Lent?" 29 Sept. 2017.
<https://classroom.synonym.com/>

Lovino, Joe. "40 Days of Lent: Find your own spiritual path." 8 Mar 2022. www.umc.org.

*"The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot
be seen or even heard, but must be felt with the heart."*

~ Helen Keller



"How do you spell love?"
Piglet asked.

"You don't spell it; you feel it"
replied Pooh.



by Nancy Conner

Although Valentine's Day is not an official holiday, it's a day we look forward to because it breaks the monotony of winter's bleakness, and it encourages us to celebrate those we love. Valentine's Day is celebrated in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Argentina, France, Mexico, and South Korea. Valentine's Day is also a day to extend expressions of affection to all family members and friends. School children often exchange Valentines with their classmates.

In the mid-1800s, commercial valentines were printed in the United States. The traditional valentine gifts are flowers—especially red roses, which symbolize love, and chocolate. It's a perfect day to embrace the people in our lives who we depend on and who bring us joy, so before February 14, take the time to write a note or send card to your friends and family members. Just a simple note of love is sure to put a smile on a person's face, and don't forget to sign it, "From Your Valentine."

Source: www.britannica.com/topic/Valentines-Day

Love's Philosophy

by

Percy Bysshe Shelley

(1792—1822)

*The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?*

*See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?*



Important Black History Facts

by Nancy Conner

During the month of February, we pay tribute to African-Americans and honor the contributions they have made. “Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) dedicated his life to educating African-Americans about the achievements and contributions of their ancestors” (Pruitt). Woodson was born of humble origins in 1875 in New Canton, Virginia. He was the fourth of seven children who worked as a share-cropper and miner to help support his family. Although he didn’t begin his high school education until he was a teen, he completed a four-year program in two years and went on to graduate Berea College in Kentucky. After Berea, he attended and earned a PhD from Harvard University—the second African-American to do so after W.E.B. DuBois.

A prolific author and advocate for African-Americans, Woodson persuaded colleges to incorporate African-American history courses; this began in 1926, and was known as “Negro History Week.” This program broadened and became Black History Month, and February was selected for both programs to honor the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

The legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson continues as we study and learn about the contributions African-Americans have made. Let us never forget the work of Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Toni Morrison, and many, many others.

Sources Used: www.history.com and www.biography.com

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”*

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Elijah the Prophet

Even though he left no written works, the prophet Elijah was one of the greatest prophets in Israel. He lived about 800 years before Christ.

Elijah was noted for his emphasis on God as the one and only God. Because he was loyal to God, he fell into disfavor with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. When Jezebel, who was a pagan, introduced rituals to the god Baal into the court of Israel, Elijah strongly objected.

As a result, the queen forced him to flee for his life to Mt. Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai. The second Book of Kings describes how Elijah left the earth in a fiery chariot, which gave rise to the belief that he did not die but would return before the end of the world.



Source: The Little Black Book: Six Minute Reflections on the Passion According to Mark. (2017).

Financial Status at December 31, 2022

Our cash balance at December 31, 2022 was \$30,276. this is very good news to start the new year and far beyond what was expected!

Revenues for 2022 were \$142,041, while expenses totaled \$138,178. there were a number of surprises in revenues, which finished the year \$17,066 above budget:

<u>Income Source</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Excess</u>
Regular Envelope Contributions	\$81,996	\$78,000	\$3,996
Holiday Contributions	19,690	15,000	4,690
Special Contributions	3,100		3,100
Christmas Cookie Bake Sale	1,427		1,427

Reflected in the above numbers is a very strong financial effort in December for regular contributions and holiday contributions.

The way we ended 2022 puts us on solid financial footing to begin 2023. Please keep up the good work for the new year.

If you have any financial questions about the church, please call me at 708-337-8601.

Chuck Okresik/ncc



Won't You? By Shel Silverstein from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

Barbara's eyes are blue as azure
But she is in love with Freddy.
Karen's sweet but Harry has her.
Gentle Jane is going steady.
Carol hates me, so does May.
Abigail will not be mine,
Nancy lives too far away. . .
Won't you be my Valentine?



And now these
three remain: faith,
hope and love. But
the greatest of
these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

EXERCISE YOUR MIND

Find the food items listed on the right of the puzzle, and circle them.

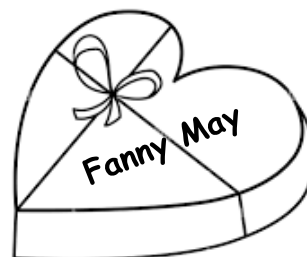


- ONION
- PORK
- BURGERS
- FAST FOOD
- RADISH
- MACARONI
- LETTUCE
- VEGETABLES
- NOODLES
- BREAD
- CEREAL
- HAM
- FRUIT
- TUNA
- SALAD
- SPAGHETTI
- BUTTER
- ROLLS
- TV DINNER
- HOTDOGS
- STEAK



"All you need is love.
But a little chocolate now
and then doesn't hurt."

~ Charles M. Schultz



Answers to Riddles.
Timmy, because Timmy's
mother had 3 children.
Eyeball
Pea