

The St. John Lutheran Church
Volume 72 – Number 02
February 2025 Jottings



“We lift up Jesus Christ in our lives, our church, and our community.”

Pastor Michael’s Musings

February 2025

“And now abide faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
--- 1 Corinthians 13: 13

February is the month in which we celebrate Valentine’s Day. February 14th is the day of celebration complete with red hearts, hard candy with sayings on them like “Be Mine”, and precious little cards that let us know whether we are loved, or at least liked, by whoever sent them. Steeped in initially religious meaning and experience due to the moniker of ST. Valentine who was a saint after all, over the years the holiday has taken on more romantic tones as it ties in with kisses and hugs and candy and the precious cards before mentioned. I don’t necessarily think this is an “end-of-the-world” kind of thing, but it does awaken within me the need to once again describe the kind of love that Paul is writing about in our Lesson above, and the kind of love that St. Valentine was experiencing while he was serving his term in prison (hence the cards, the well-wishes and prayers, snuck in through the cell doors.) What can now be a flippant or trivial holiday has roots in a type of love that is much deeper than the “sweetheart” level, and that kind of love is very eloquently written about in 1 Corinthians 13.

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does

not parade itself; it is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity; but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 8.) When we read these words, we can immediately see that we are not talking about the typical Walgreen’s greeting card Valentines Day kind of love. There is something almost sacrificial in this way of thinking about love, and that might make us quite uncomfortable. If we stop and think for a moment, though, it doesn’t take us very long to realize that the essence of love is a kind of vulnerability in which we dare to care about another person and ponder the sense of being open to their thoughts and feelings. In Ephesians 5, when Paul talks about a proper kind of relationship between a husband and wife, the clumsy English word comes out as “submit” (both are called to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ), but the more eloquent Greek word in which the New Testament is mostly written means something closer to “be willing to put the interests of the other person first.” There we go, back to the meaning of love that St. Valentine would have been more comfortable with, and the kind of love as Christians that we are called to share with one another in a more spiritual sense.

Valentine’s Day can be a really fun holiday, and the 1 Corinthians version of love that we read about in the Bible might be a bit too heavy for the average person who celebrates the holiday, but it is good to keep in mind that this type of love is something that we can shoot for, we can TRY to get closer to it as we share life and experiences with one another. Ultimately, it is this very type of love that Jesus has for us, and that is a love worth celebrating as we contemplate his real, and deep love for us.

God is Love!

Ash Wednesday is late this year. Lent doesn't start until March 5th, so what's happening in church this month? We're still in the "Sundays After Epiphany" season all month...and Epiphany is the season of LIGHT. What other "L" word comes to mind for February? LOVE of course! Even though Valentine's Day is not an actual "Church" holiday (more of a "Hallmark" holiday), celebrating LOVE is certainly proper for Christians. Why? Because GOD IS LOVE:

*⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for **God is love.** ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. **God is love,** and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. 1 John 4:7-21*

We won't hear those verses read in church this year, BUT, on February 23rd, we WILL hear this in our Gospel Reading from Luke:

Jesus said: ²⁷ "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them...³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great...

So, there we have it. GOD IS LOVE; that sums it up in three simple words. As a child growing up, we often sang those three words because there was a nice song in our hymnal titled "Come

Let Us All Unite To Sing”...subtitled: GOD IS LOVE! I did some online checking, that song has appeared in 120 hymnals, going back over 100 years. I didn’t find it in any Lutheran hymnals, but it did make a Methodist, a Presbyterian, several Salvation Army, many Gospel and Sunday School hymnals, and those of the Mennonite church where I grew up. Given the Gospel for February 23rd, I might have to teach this to the choir so we can sing it on that date. It would make a nice “Call to Worship”. Here’s a preview of the first verse; something to think about, not only on Valentine’s Day but EVERY day:

*Come, let us all unite to sing, God is love.
Let heav’n and earth their praises bring,
God is love.*

*Let ev’ry soul from sin awake,
let ev’ry heart sweet music make,
and sing with us for Jesus’ sake, for God is
love.*

Refrain:

God is love! God is love!

*Come, let us all unite to sing that God is
love.*

Martin Luther understood this concept, and said this in a sermon in 1682, almost as if he were designing the first Valentine’s Day card:

“God himself is Love, and his being is nothing but pure love. Therefore if anyone wanted to draw and picture God in a telling way, he would have to draw a picture that showed nothing but Love, as though the divine nature were nothing but the intense fire and fervor of a love that has filled heaven and earth.”

Happy Valentine’s Day to you all!



Coming in March...

LENT starts March 5th this year. We will once again offer Ash Wednesday services at 10:30 AM and 7 PM. The services will be identical except for the special music, so if you don’t like driving after dark, come to the morning service and start the Lenten Season with Lenten worship and imposition of ashes.

After Ash Wednesday, we will have Lenten services every Wednesday during Lent at 7 pm, with Pastor once-again using his dramatic talents during his “sermon”. Come early for a light pot-luck supper before each service, probably starting at 5:45, Watch for details next month!

The annual “Food Share Canathon” is also held in March. Watch for details next month. This community-wide food collection helps support our food pantry, with the bags of food you bring on the designated collection date (again, watch for details next month).

Until Next Month...

As we prepare to offer gifts to our loved ones on Valentine’s Day, remember the best gift ever given:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16 (NRSV)

Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the Glory)

Donald L. Bauer Director of Music

Look what is happening in Sunday School.

3 years old-K
1st-3rd grade
4th grade
Middle School

Kathy Ellis/Becca Smith
Becky & Shannon Sanders
Patti Riley
Fred Rosenbohm

Starting Sunday, December 1st and throughout the winter months, our lessons will follow the Year C Lectionary to connect with Pastor's sermons.

February 2nd
February 9th
February 16th
February 23rd
March 2nd

Jeremiah
The Disciples
The Beatitudes
Joseph Feeds His Family
The Transfiguration

In addition to following the stories covered in Lectionary "C", our 4th-8th grade students are studying the stories in the Old Testament and how they are still relevant in today's world. As always, all Sunday School age children are welcome and we would love to have new faces join us on Sunday morning. If interested, please contact me to register your child.

John Wetterauer
christian.reichert@att.net
691-0434-home
678-1736-cell

Homebound List (as of January 27, 2025)

Jim & Nadine Bartell	2705 S. Hilton Ln. Bartonville, Il. 61607	Barb Dickerson	2422 S. Daycor Divide Bartonville, Il. 61607
Jay Baumgardner	Swan Special Care Center 109 Kenwood Champaign, Il. 61824	Pat Janssen	12615 Lancaster Rd. Hanna City, Il. 61536
Art Campen	4169 King St. Denver, Co. 80211	Joyce Jones	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 24 Peoria, Il. 61607
% Carrie Campen			
Jeffrey Campen	Lennox Guest Home 2875 W. 33 rd Ave. Denver, Co. 80211	Debra Look	Timber Ridge 2125 Veterans Rd. Morton, Il. 61550
Millie Carlson	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 48 Peoria, Il. 61607	Jane Look	Heartis Village Peoria 8201 N. Il. Route 91 Peoria, Il. 61615
Sally Catterall	Villas of Holly Brook 5301 W. Dirksen Pkwy. Apt. 28 Peoria, Il. 61607	Jerry Pitzer	Independence Village 1201 N. Northmoor Rd. Rm. 242 Peoria, Il. 61614
Evelyn Cool	Lutheran Hillside Village 6901 N. Galena Rd. Acorn Way Apt. A1 Peoria, Il. 61614	Sharon Resler	The Loft 1500 W. Northmoor Rm. 415 Peoria, Il. 61614
Shirley Cramer	7815 W. Plank Rd. Peoria, Il. 61604		

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Confirmation: Confirmation this month is on Sunday, February 9 and the 23 starting at 6pm.

Offering Envelopes: There are still a few offering envelopes in the Reception Room that have not been picked up yet.

Thank you, Patti Thornton

Adult Bible Study: The Wednesday night Bible Study for the month of February is the 12th and the 26th. Thank you!

Jane Rosenbohm (309) 645-9009

Sign-Up Sheet: There is now a Greeter sign-up sheet located at the back of the church. Please consider signing up to be a greeter at a service.

Help: Sewing ladies need help. Can you tie a knot, iron, and any other help you can give us, like putting squares together for a top. We meet about 8:30am on Thursday mornings. We would enjoy your company.

Church Altar Flowers: Altar Guild flowers are \$36. & make checks payable to Becks Florist & give to Jo Ann Brooks or the Altar Guild mailbox which is located in the Reception Room by the elevator. Sign up calendar for the flowers on the bulletin board in the West Entrance. Thank You, Altar Guild

Readers:

Feb.	02	Tom Tate
Feb.	09	Marilyn Hartseil
Feb.	16	Mike Wabel
Feb.	23	Pat McGrew

Ushers:

Feb. 02 (8:00) John Grafelman
(10:30) Dave & Teri Sammis

Feb. 09 (8:00) Teri Sammis
(10:30) Eric Jones

Feb. 16 (8:00) Pepper Bauer
(10:30) Shirley Schmitt

Feb. 23 (8:00) Ken & Sheryl
Bruninga
(10:30) Pat & Sally McGrew

Greeters:

Feb. 02 (8:00) Danette Grafelman
(10:30) Shirley Schmitt

Feb. 09 (8:00) LaVonne Sammis
(10:30) Sue Jones

Feb. 16 (8:00) Jim & Kathy
Rindfleisch
(10:30) Marilyn Hartseil

Feb. 23 (8:00) Ken & Sheryl
Bruninga
(10:30) Nick & Mary Bruletta

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Year Round Worship Schedule :

8:00 a.m. Worship With Holy Communion
9:15 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

UPCOMING EVENTS THIS MONTH

Leisure Group will meet on February 19, 2025 at 12:00 noon.

Sewing Group meets on Thursday morning at 8:30am. Come and sew or cut patterns with them.

Choir Rehearsal is on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm. Bring your voices!

Confirmation this month is Sunday February 9th and Sunday February 23rd from 6-8pm.