

The Manor Highlights

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Celebrating February

Worship with Pastor Henry

February 2

Worship with Pastor Joas

February 9

Music with Wilma

February 11

Valentine's Day Social

February 14

Worship with Pastor Carson

February 17

Worship with Pastor Balicki

February 23

Mardi Gras Mixer

February 25

Leap Year Day

February 29

A Real Love Connection

Valentine's Day brings good news because—whether single, married, divorced, separated, or any other sort of status—people can connect to the best kind of love, God's love. And Valentine's Day recognizes a holiday of taking time to show affection, to bring a little more meaning into everyday actions.

Instead of mentioning romance in 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter teaches about the love of God: agape love, everlasting love, unconditional love, unselfish love. God's love is wide open. His love is available to any people who will yield their hearts and lives to Him.

On one popular reality TV show, a single man meets several single women. As he gets to know them a little better, he eliminates the women he is not interested in. Sounds cruel, right? It is. But it's all done in the name of "love"—and entertainment.

As the women on the show are publicly rejected, one by one, they feel awful. One woman expressed her hopelessness, saying, "If I could have opened myself up to him, I think, if he saw the real me, he would definitely reconsider."

Another thought if she were more beautiful or charming, then he would have chosen her.

But God does not line people up, inspect them, and then reject the ones He doesn't like because that is not what real love does. Sometimes cultural expressions and ideas about love are so cheap that it's almost impossible to fathom, in contrast, the wonderful extent of God's love.

The Bible confirms this, saying, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

God knows people very well, and He loves us. He knows the strengths and weaknesses, the secret sins and personal joys. God desires to save us from ourselves. His love gives us a second chance, and really, more chances than we deserve.

Billy Graham says, "No matter what sin you have committed, no matter how dirty, shameful or terrible it may be, God loves you. You may be at the very gate of hell itself, but God loves you with an everlasting love."

A Giant Leap for Humankind

This month we will enjoy an extra day, transforming 2020 into an extraordinary year. Every four years, an extra day, called *leap day*, is added at the end of February. This extra day is built into the year to ensure that our calendars remain aligned with Earth's movement around the sun. Our modern calendars have 365 days, but Earth takes 365.2421 days to make it all the way around the sun. The ancient Egyptians were the first civilization to calculate that our cycle of days and nights did not align perfectly with the calendar year, but it wasn't until Julius Caesar's reign during the Roman Empire that anything was done about it.

For millennia, calendars were loosely based on human observations of the lunar cycle. Extra days, weeks, and even months were added at random to make up for seasonal discrepancies. Julius Caesar was fed up with the inadequacies of such calendars based upon a 10-month solar year. In 46 BC, he enlisted astronomer Sosigenes to modify the calendar to include 12 months and 365 days. January and February were added as the final two months of the calendar, with the leap day added as the final day of the last month of February once every four years. Julius Caesar named this the *Julian calendar* after himself.

The Julian calendar was hailed as a tremendous improvement, but it was still not perfect. The solar year is only .2421 days longer than the calendar year, not .25. Adding an entire day every four years added 11 extra minutes to each year! After hundreds of years, the Julian calendar veered weeks from the solar year. Like Caesar before him, Pope Gregory XIII decided to fix this problem. In 1582, the Pope created his *Gregorian calendar*. It was still a 12-month, 365-day calendar with an added leap day every four years, but the Pope went further. He decreed that leap years would not occur on years evenly divisible by 100, excepting those divisible by 400. For example, the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years, but the year 2000 was. Pope Gregory XIII's calendar is still in use today, but it is still not perfect. Mathematicians note that after another 10,000 years, someone will have to create a new calendar once again.

Honeymoon Capital of the World

Any guesses..? Join us for our Travelogue program on Tuesday afternoon on the 18th as we travel to the "honeymoon capital of the world," Niagara Falls!

We have amazing natural wonders here in the United States! Come travel with us, feel free to bring pictures and memories to share!

Valentine's Exchange

We will be exchanging valentine cards with the second grade class at Zinser Elementary. If you would like to make some valentine's for the students, we are gathering on Tuesday the 11th at 3:30 in the afternoon in Yorkshire dining room.

Calling All Volunteers!

We are currently in the process of hiring a new Life Enrichment Director, with the vacancy in the department, we would love two or three volunteers to come and lead an afternoon or evening activity for one hour per week.

We have flexible scheduling and can cater to different activities and interests of our volunteers.

Please contact Epiphany for more information and volunteer applications.

From Your Valentine

On February 14 each year, sweethearts celebrate Valentine's Day by exchanging cards, chocolates, and other tokens of love. But do these sweethearts know who they are celebrating? The true identity of St. Valentine is murky and there are differing stories detailing his role in the church and the acts that inspired the popular holiday bearing his name.



Competing stories depict St. Valentinus (the Latin version of the name) as either a priest from Rome or the Bishop of Terni during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Legend has it that Valentinus aided Christians who were persecuted under Claudius II's reign. Eventually, Valentinus, too, was put under house arrest at the home of Judge Asterius. It so happened that Asterius had a blind daughter. The judge asked Valentinus to prove the power of Christ by restoring the girl's sight. When Valentinus performed the miracle, the judge thanked him by freeing him and all the Christians he had imprisoned. But Valentinus did not remain free for long. He was again arrested and brought before Emperor Claudius II himself. When Valentinus attempted to convert Claudius to Christianity, he was executed on February 14, AD 270, but before his martyrdom, he is said to have written a note to the daughter of Asterius, which he signed "From your Valentine."

Another story details how Claudius II outlawed marriage for young men in the belief that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families. Valentine defied Claudius and performed marriages in secret, purportedly cutting hearts of parchment and gifting them to the couples as a sign of God's eternal love. When Valentine's secret was discovered, Claudius executed him.

These stories are different yet they both illustrate Valentine's devotion to his faith and his people. As these legends spread, so did Valentine's reputation for heroic love and devotion, inspiring a holiday dedicated to the ideals he died for.

A Real Love Connection

Continued

The Bible teaches that God is love. In the language of mathematics, that means *God = love*.

Unlike a lovesick admirer, God does not simply profess His love in words. God proves His love in action. The Bible says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Jesus Christ's sacrifice represents the ultimate act of love because it shows God's grace. Christ is not just a good person who did good things for people and then was willing to die for His actions. Christ died in order to bring people closer to God.

Billy Graham says, "The fact that God is love does not mean that everything is sweet, beautiful and happy and that God's love could not possibly allow punishment for sin. God's holiness demands that all sin be punished, but God's love provided a plan of redemption and salvation for sinful people. God's love provided the cross of Jesus Christ by which we can have forgiveness and cleansing."

Besides, what good is it to die for someone if the act accomplishes nothing? Or if the motives are impure? The Bible says, "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3).

In speaking of love, 1 Corinthians 13 challenges people to do everything out of love, specifically the kind of love that God has shown through Jesus. Love is the motive. That means loving friends, enemies, neighbors, co-workers, spouses, children, parents, and even strangers with the merciful and selfless love that comes from God.

What a great challenge! There should be a holiday that celebrates love. Oh, and there is. But while Valentine's Day focuses, for the most part, on romantic love, people can be sure that there's so much more to that dreaded four-letter word. There's a lifetime of days to connect to God, the Source of love, who teaches us, by example, to love with patience, faith, generosity, wisdom, and grace.

By Ann Marie Chilton

Happy Birthday!

Alice Love 2/4

Lois Sytsma 2/13

Rita Defouw 2/15

Patricia Beckon 2/20

Barbara Termeer 2/22

Douglas Callaghan 2/24

WELCOME

Patricia Beckon

Ruthe Graves

Thomas Suchocki

Elizabeth Wert

Edythe "Gerri" Heath

Marjorie Streb



Eric Smith

Edith DelRaso

Mary Pierce

Chrystal Harrington

Floyd Bradley

Your Leadership Team

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Spiritual Care

Chaplain Ryan Hoekstra &
Chaplain Val Wykstra

How many Words can you make only using the letters:

FAT TUESDAY

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____