



The Good Tidings

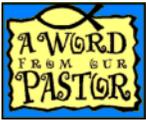
Arena Congregational Church

February 2018

CELEBRATING OUR PAST-EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

Affiliated with the Wisconsin Congregational Association

Thoughts from here and there...God Loves You and So Do I.



Dr. Robert Schuller liked to say. "God loves you and so do I."

Herbert and Lois Brokering wrote a Sunday School song: Love, Love, Love.... That's What It's All About

"Love, love, love
That's what it's all about.
'Cause God loves us we love each other
Mother, Father, Sister, Brother
Everybody sing and shout!
'Cause that's what it's all about.
It's about love, love, love."

What a difference there is in the way love is used in our culture and the love that is described in the scriptures.

Advertisers tell us that we can love anything. Even our pets can love the food that we feed them.

This is a gross distortion of love. It is confusing especially when we transfer the meaning of love from advertising to the church.

I use the word, "love," only for my relationships with people. I do not love Culver's custard. I like Culver's custard, especially the caramel pecan.

We love each other because he loved us first, (1 John 4:19, NLT).

We would not know what love is without the example of Jesus.¹

It was the season of Lent and little three-year-old Paul was listening attentively in Sunday school. For the first time he began to understand the story of the crucifixion. That evening at supper he unexpectedly said: "Jesus died on the cross!" Needless to say, his Christian parents were very pleased to hear such a confession come from their little guy. But then his mother asked him a crucial question: "Why did Jesus die on the cross?" After a

¹Thomas H. Trapp, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, Madison, WI

moment of silence and excited anticipation on the parents part, the three-year-old rolled his eyes upward, thought real hard and answered, "Because he couldn't get off!"

The parents looked at each other with surprise. It appeared their son believed that Jesus was physically stuck on the cross and unable to free himself. His answer seemed far from the truth. But the more his mother and father reflected on it, the more accurate, even profound the little fellow's statement sounded to them.

Jesus died on the cross because he couldn't get off.

In a sense, little Paul was right, they concluded. Even though Jesus could have come down from the cross because of his divine power, he could not get off because he had so much love. Without knowing it, the preschooler summed up the depth and width and height of God's love with just one phrase: "He couldn't get off."

Jesus demonstrates true love that goes on and on, available to everyone who will except it.

We come to worship because we love the one who called us to be his followers.

Love in the scripture is not defined. Love is described, especially in 1 Corinthians 13.4-8a.

Because we love Jesus, we are enabled to love one another. Our love for one another is expressed in our meeting together and sharing life in worship and the activities of the congregation.

It is only love that will keep us together. This may be difficult at time but it is always possible.

Granny Lindsay was pushed around all her 97 years by racial hatred. A few years before she died, Nancy Hastings Sehested asked how she kept from being eaten up by anger and resentment. Granny said, "I never was much good at loving everybody, but I got pretty good at loving the Someone who knew how to love them. And that was the beginning of healing."²

"Love, love, love
That's what it's all about.

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²Sojourners, Feb.-Mar. 1993, by Nancy Hastings Sehested, p. 35.

'Cause God loves us we love each other
Mother, Father, Sister, Brother
Everybody sing and shout!
'Cause that's what it's all about.
It's about love, love, love."

"God loves you and so do I." Pastor Shultz

SERMON



SCHEDULE

Sermons for February

The Sermon On the Mount has much to teach us about life and relationships. "Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the world's. If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you."¹

February 4: Lesson: Matthew 5.1-2, 7, Sermon Title: Caring People

"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

February 11 Transfiguration Sunday, Scouting Sunday: Lesson: Matthew 5.1-2, 8, Sermon Title: Inside Out

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

¹ Life Application Study Bible, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1545.

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February 14 Valentines Day, Ash Wednesday Service, Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Sermon Title: Do You Get It?

The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

February 18 First Sunday in Lent, Brotherhood\Sisterhood Week: Lesson: Matthew 5.1-2, 9, Sermon Title: Cooperation

"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

February 25, Second Sunday in Lent: Lesson: Matthew 5.1-2, 10-12, Sermon Title: Dealing with Put Downs

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

March 4, Third Sunday in Lent: Lesson: Matthew 5.1-2, 13, Sermon Title: God's Flavor

"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your
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usefulness and will end up in the garbage. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)



Special Days in the Secular and Church Calendar

February Black History Month

February 1, National Freedom Day

February 2, Ground Hog Day

February 4 (S)

February 11 (S) Transfiguration Sunday, Scouting Sunday

February 12, Lincoln's Birthday

February 14, Ash Wednesday, Valentine's Day

February 18 (S) First Sunday in Lent, Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week

February 19, Presidents Day

February 22, Washington's Birthday

February 25 (S) Second Sunday in Lent

A Promise and a Prayer

A Promise

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD, Lamentations 3:21-26 (NRSV).



A Thought

During the month of February there is a great emphasis on love. Love is something that we would do well to understand, not in terms of how it is used or abused by human beings, but how it is described and exemplified by God. God's love is unconditional. God's love is unfailing. God's love is demonstrated by God's mercies which never come to an end. You can have the utmost confidence in God's love for you and the benefits of that love that God desires to share with you. It is a good thing to fall in love with God.

A Prayer

When I look at the human family, my God, it is easy to be confused about the meaning and purpose of love. You help me to understand it and apply it to my life and relationships. Help me to grow a love that is as steadfast and unfailing as is yours. Amen.

Spotlight on the Family

Keeping Romance Alive¹

Valentine's Day isn't the only time to express your love to your spouse. Try these ideas to add new romance:



- Build a snowman (person) together.
- Leave flowers on the porch, ring the bell, and run.
- Pray together.
- Laugh at your spouse's corny jokes.
- Fix breakfast for the kids while your spouse sleeps late.
- Have a weekly alone time

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Recipe of the Month

Frozen Peanut Butter Pies

From the recipe files of Helga Shultz

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 cup smooth or crunchy peanut butter
- 1 cup milk
- 16 oz. frozen whipped topping
- 2 (9") *graham cracker pie shells

*You can substitute 2 cups crushed chocolate graham crackers which mixed together with ½ cup butter (melted); Press these into a 13 x 9 pan but you could also press into a 9" pie pan.

Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, peanut butter in mixer until well blended. Add milk and mix well. Fold in whipped topping. Spoon into pan(s). Freeze for 24 hours or until firm. Let stand at room temperature for several minutes before slicing. You can drizzle top with melted chocolate if desired.



- ❑ Fix your spouse's favorite meal, even when you don't feel like it.
- ❑ Listen when you want to talk.
- ❑ Put a valentine personal ad in the newspaper.
- ❑ Talk to each other about the best and the worst part of the day.
- ❑ Rent a funny movie and laugh together.
- ❑ Write a love letter once a month for the next year.
- ❑ Watch the sunset while holding hands.
- ❑ Repeat your wedding vows to each other.

For more growing-your-romance ideas: *The Love Book* by Dave and Claudia Arp, and *Two Part Harmony* by Patrick Morley, Thomas Nelson Publishers.



Officers for 2018 - 2019

Governing Board

President: Jim Favreau, 753.2334

Vice-president: Joanne Brown, 753-2316

Treasurer: Steven Wilkinson, 753.2131

Clerk: Joe Hodgson, 753-2520

Financial Secretary: Ray Johnson, 753-2845

Church Secretary: Steve Wilkinson, 753.2131

Officers

Sunday School Superintendent, Karen Wilkinson, 753-2131

Choir Director, Leslie Shultz, 574-0707

Head Usher Jim Favreau, 753.2334 and Ray Johnson, 753.2845



Meetings

Governing Board: Second Monday, February 12th, 6:30 p.m.

Men's Breakfast: Third Saturday, February 17th, 7:30 a.m., at Grandma Mary's.



Greeters

February 4 - Jeff and Joanne Brown Family

February 11 - Pastor and Helga Shultz

February 18 - Kathy Johnson

February 25 - Jim Favreau Family

March 4 - Joyce Reimann



Adult Study Group

Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

We are meeting at the home of Steve and Karen Wilkinson, 817 Brown St.,

Arena. Our study guide is "John: The Way to True Life" by Douglass Connally.



Worship on Compact Disks

The Worship Services are recorded each week on a CD so that you may share in the fellowship and enjoyment of worship. If you would like to listen to a service to share the music, pray the prayers and learn from the sermon call either Steve Wilkinson, 753-2131 or Pastor Shultz, 574-0707 and a CD will be delivered to you. Let us know if you need a CD player.



Missions

We are supporting the Congregational Mission of Jardin America with a gift of \$40 a month through the mission's program of the National Association of Congregational Christians. We also contribute \$50.00 a month to the Arena Food Pantry, and \$25.00 a month to the Food Pantry at the Spring Green Community Church. Thank you for your support of our local and foreign mission projects.



Something to Think About

Often when my children were little, one of them would want something that cost too much, and I'd have to say, "Do you see a money tree outside? Money doesn't grow on trees, you know."

Years later, on a early spring morning, I happened to look out my window and saw a new tree planted right in my yard. I put my glasses on and couldn't believe what I saw. There were dollar bills taped all over the new tree, a hundred of them, in fact.

I live up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where winters are long and cold, and summers are way too short. But every winter now I look out my window and think about what my children did for me, and I get tears, every time. I'm still not sure that money grows on trees. But I know love does!

from Da Mouse Tracks
docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



Humor

Top 10 Reasons to Celebrate Groundhog Day

10. It's on nearly every calendar.

9. Helps relieve cabin fever.

8. Forecast is no less reliable than the National Weather Service.

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7. At least one of them critters is bound to see things your way.
6. Valentine's Day is too depressing for nerds.
5. Unlike the Easter Bunny, he keeps his dirty paws outside.
4. As they used to say on radio: "The Shadow knows."
3. It's fun to say, "Punxsutawney."
2. If a rodent can bring us an early spring, more power to him.
1. In Minnesota, either way we come out ahead.

Received from Mikey's Funnies. The Good Clean Funnies List [20170202] <gcfl-info@gcfl.net>



I had my car in the shop for routine maintenance on Tuesday.

Today, it was back due to the service engine and stability systems lights coming on. After 6 hours, it was determined the computer hadn't been reset.

Doc docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



Garage Opener

My wife and her friend Karen were talking about their labor-saving devices as they pulled into our driveway.

Karen said, "I love my new garage-door opener."

"I love mine too," my wife replied, and honked the horn three times. That was the signal for me to come out and open the garage.

from Da Mouse Tracks
docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



My five-year-old nephew came running into the house, crying and shaking his right hand.

Sobbing, he told me he had been bouncing the basketball and it had bounced into the end of his fingers.

From the way he was crying, I knew he just needed a kiss-it- better cure.

His crying subsided and as he turned to go back outside, he said absently, "...or was it this hand?"

from Da Mouse Tracks
docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



Jonnie had been misbehaving and was sent to his room. After a while he emerged

and informed his mother that he had thought it over and then said a prayer.

"Fine" said the mother. "Did you ask the Lord to help you not misbehave?"

"No, I didn't ask Him to help me not misbehave," said Johnny. "I asked HIM to help you put up with me."

from Da Mouse Tracks
docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



We had invited our friends William and Samantha to our home to watch a video, and William's 94-year-old mother accompanied them. During the show we noticed William nodding off. As his head dropped lower, it startled him awake. He jumped up and told his wife it was time to leave as his mother must be getting tired. Grandma tapped his hand and pointed out to him who was really tired.

She then looked at me. "Dear," she said, "the next time you invite me, I'll be sure to leave the children at home."

- from GCFL docsdailychuckle@freegroups.net



from *The Joyful Noiseletter*
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You are invited to attend the Ash Wednesday Service February 14, 6:30 p.m. We will not receive ashes, but create them. Each person will receive a slip of paper on which may be written something for which you would like God's forgiveness, or a

troublesome area of your life for which you would ask God's help. We will put our requests in the old ceramic pot and burn them as symbols of forgiveness and cleansing.

February is Black History Month.



CELEBRATE
**BLACK
HISTORY**

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.

~Martin Luther King Jr

February is Black History Month. We benefit from contributions in politics, music, theater, art, and dance. Please take a moment to remember and be thankful!

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