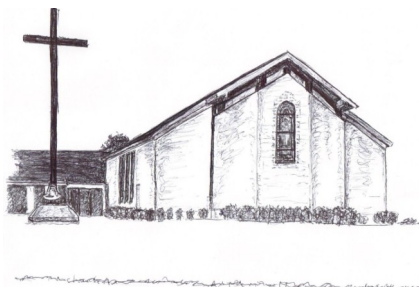


Presby News

February 2018



FROM THE PASTOR . . .

Maybe it's because of Valentine's Day. But I kind of always associate February with the theme of love. How about you?

An interesting thing about Valentine's Day this year is that it occurs on February 14--the same day as Ash Wednesday. So, while we will be celebrating the candies, flowers, and special dinners that go along with this unique day of romance in our society, in much of the Christian community (including our own) we will be ushering in the holy season of Lent.

On the surface, it might appear that the two days have little in common. But further reflection reveals that the theme of love ties both of them together. For as we prepare our hearts for Easter, Resurrection Sunday, what greater love has ever been revealed in the universe!!!

The New Testament seems to be very emphatic that love is the supreme virtue of the Christian life. It matters not where we may choose to read, love seems to always come across as the dominant theme.

Jesus, Himself, said that the #1 thing in life is to love God supremely and the #2 thing in life is to love your neighbor as yourself.

And Jesus once said that the way the world would know that we are His followers is by the fact that we love one another.

And Paul, in the great love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, concludes by saying: "And now abides faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love."

So, maybe during some of the cold, bleak, dreary days of what could be a cold February, you and I could spend more time in the presence of Him who is the most concrete and visible expression of love the world has ever seen, and become a little bit more like Him! It's worth a try--don't you think?

Thanks again for allowing me to serve as your pastor. I will be away on vacation February 15-28 to recharge my spiritual batteries. Thank you for this opportunity twice a year.

In my absence, Dr. Gerry Heard, retired professor from the Department of Religion & Philosophy at Louisiana College will be filling the pulpit on Feb. 18 & 25. He is a close personal friend. I am confident you will be blessed by his messages.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

Jim

Walk in the way of love,
just as Christ loved us

& gave himself up for us as a
fragrant offering & sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:2

BibleVerseImages.com



SPECIAL DATES

February 4	Brookdale Worship Communion Served Souper Bowl of Caring Offering
February 11	Transfiguration of the Lord
February 14	Ash Wednesday/Valentine's Day
February 18	First Sunday of Lent
February 19	Session Meeting, 6:00 pm President's Day
February 20	Healthworx Meal, 5:00 pm
February 25	Second Sunday of Lent

Dr. Heath in office on Wednesdays 10 am to 2 pm

GOD
IS
LOVE

1 John 4:16

Bible Verses
facebook.com/bibleverses

SHARE GOD'S LOVE ON VALENTINE'S DAY

*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."
1 John 4:7*

Ahhh, February 14th . . . It's Valentine's Day once again, and the red roses are pouring out of the doors of the florists, the hallmark cards are flying off the shelves, heart-shaped boxes of stale chocolates are purchased, and restaurants are booked weeks in advance so that people can find ways to express their love on this one day of the year. For those with romance in their life, it is beautiful; for those who are single . . . It can be painful, jokingly referred to as S.A.D. (Single Awareness Day). It seems foolish in many ways to put so much emphasis on one single day to show love when in reality we should love one another every day of the year and not just wait until February 14th. It is nice to think and hear about love instead of all the doom and gloom on the media channels . . . But why DO we focus on this one day? The history of the holiday is shrouded in mystery mixed with historical events about several different men named Valentine from Rome to Africa who were martyred within the 2nd to 4th century during periods of civil and religious persecution. The most familiar story was about a priest in the Catholic Church who ministered during a difficult time in history. Some stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured. Another tells us that valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men so they could serve in his military without distraction. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, chose to ignore Claudius's decree and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Before the sentence was carried out, Valentine sent the first "valentine" greeting thus giving birth to our tradition of sending "valentines." While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl—who may have been his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter on a heart-shaped piece of paper, which he signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a heroic AND romantic figure.

As much as we can admire the courage of this man on this annual event, we must always consider that GOD is the Author and Finisher of Love, and as His children, we must always remember to share His love to others. God showed the world the most amazing example of LOVE when He gave His only Son to die on the cross to take away our sins. John 3:16 is repeated so often that we sometimes speed through those familiar words and miss the intent of God's Heart, so on this Valentine's Day, let us realize that God

sent us a Valentine when He sent Jesus to earth. God loves you so much, and wants to show you His love 365 days of the year, not with chocolates and cards, but with His gift of eternal life so that we can be with him forever in His loving Arms. In the Bible, "love" is mentioned 697 times, so get the message . . . GOD LOVES YOU! Open your hearts and receive His love in a fresh way today, then find ways to share that love with those that God places in your life journey.

Here is a NEW way to look at John 3:16 and remember that it was written as GOD's Valentine to the world, and to you and me!

Jesus said:

"For God so loVed the world

That He gAve

His onLy

BegottEn

SoN

That whosoever

Believes In Him

Shall Not perish,

But have Everlasting life."

Have a blessed Valentine's Day.

Written by B. Lahoma



February Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Monitor	Communion Servers
February 4	Robert Kennedy	Jim Hockensmith	Elder Liturgist: Roger Best Communion Team: Dirk & Annelize Benade
February 11	Annelize & Dirk Benade	Dirk Benade	
February 18	Robert Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins (May-Oct) Roger Best (Oct-May)	
February 25	Jim Hockensmith Robert Kennedy	Jim Smolenski	



February 5 **Fran Wall**
February 20 **Gayle & Frank Hempen**
February 22 **Gil Arnold**
February 28 **Barry Herndon**

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14: Ash Wednesday

February, 18, 25: Lent

March 4, 11, 18: Lent

March 25: Palm/Passion Sunday/Holy Week

March 30: Good Friday

April 1: Easter Sunday

First Presbyterian Church

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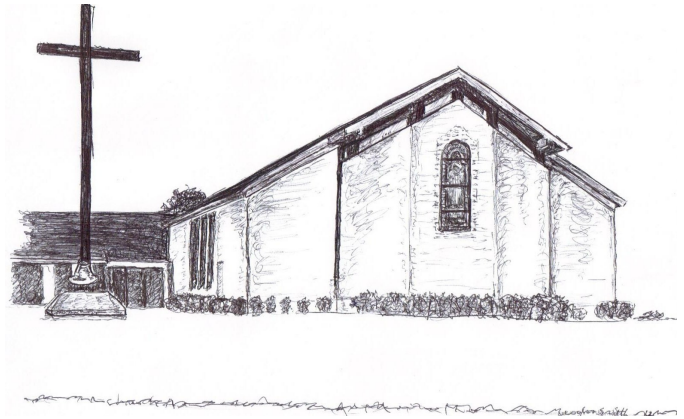
Jim Heath, *Stated Supply Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Choir Director*

Vacancy, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Secretary*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE

3:00 pm Prayer Service

First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.