



When it comes to Love Ash Wednesday Trumps Valentine's Day

This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10 – EHV)

Valentine's Day, of course, falls in the middle of the month of February—on the 14th as it always does. As it often does, Ash Wednesday also falls in February—this year on the 26th. Which of the two days gives us a better idea of what love truly is?

It may seem like an obvious answer: Valentine's Day, of course! For many, this day is a day of love, on which significant others show their love for each other by giving gifts or going out for a nice romantic dinner. However, does this give us a good idea of what love truly is?

What about Ash Wednesday? Ash Wednesday is a solemn day of repentance. It's a day in which we remember our sinfulness, which led Jesus to the cross to pay for those sins. That certainly doesn't seem like it has anything to do with love, and yet, it most certainly does! Ash Wednesday, of course, marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a time when we focus on the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. It was on the cross that Jesus suffered our eternal damnation when he was forsaken by his heavenly Father. He was forsaken because he took all of our sins upon himself—becoming guilty of everything we have ever done wrong and became a sinner for us. All this Christ did simply because he loves us!

Above, John the Evangelist, describes this work of Christ as an atoning sacrifice. By the sacrifice of Christ's blood on the cross, he made us at-one with the Father. It is sin that separates us from God; and by his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus paid for those sins and removed them far from us. With that which separates us from God removed, we are reconciled to our creator and our relationship is restored. This is an act of love that God has done for us. For us—for us who were born as his enemies, for us who wanted nothing to do with him by nature, for us who even now as Christians, sin against his commands constantly. For us, God sent his son; for us, Christ sacrificed himself. That is what true love is!

One more thing to notice about love: where is the focus? So many people and church bodies want to put the focus on ourselves, and our love for God—they love to talk about how much they love God and how much they show love to others. While there certainly are occasions to talk about our love for God and others (John himself mentions this later in his letter—see 1 John 4:16; 5:3). But that should never be the focal point of love—rather, our focus should always remain on Christ's love for us in that he gave up his life as an atoning sacrifice for us!

Valentine's Day may be considered a day of love—but how much more should we consider Ash Wednesday a day of love! It is nothing but love when the Lord forgives us. It is love that led the Lord to give up his Son to pay for our sins so that we would receive a gracious gift: the forgiveness of sins and eternal life with him in heaven.

Pastor Frey

February 2020

ALTAR GUILD

Marsha Liewergen	202-3804
Rosemary John	734-4324
Melissa Price	735-9223
Katie Voight	572-6337

GREETERS

8:00	Mitch & Ginger Kobussen	2/2
10:30	Nancy Bruhn & Eileen Defferding	
8:00	Dennis & Kristine Neumann	2/9
10:30	Betty Randall & Diane Schabo	
8:00	Bill & Katie Rickert	2/16
10:30	Janice Bates & Sheryl Hill	
8:00	Gary & Kathy Schabo	2/23
10:30	Nancy Bruhn & Eileen Defferding	

WITH THE LORD Our sister in Christ, Phyllis Nelson entered eternal life with her Savior on Thursday, January 9, 2020. A Christian funeral service was held at St. John on Saturday, January 11, 2020. ***"I am the resurrection and the life."* John 11:25.**

LENT Please join us for worship at 10:30 am or 6:30 pm each Wednesday during Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 26 as we follow our Savior to the cross.

This year our theme is: "The Son of God Goes Forth to War." When many people picture Jesus they see him as a Gentle Shepherd, a patient teacher, or on his heavenly throne in his full glory. This Lenten season we will be taking a look at Jesus' role as a warrior. He is the one who was greatly opposed but ultimately won the victory over our greatest enemies.

What a blessing it is each year for you and your children in these services to hear the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Refreshments will be served at 9:45 am. Lent suppers will be served at 5:30 pm.

Note: Confirmation classes for grades 6-8 will begin at 5:00 pm each Wednesday during Lent.

We are looking for volunteers to organize and help with a couple of the Lent Suppers this year. We will coordinate with the groups for planning and purchasing food. The volunteers are to help prepare and serve the meal and clean up after the meal. If you want to help, a sign-up sheet will be in the entryway or you may contact Nancy in the church office at 733-1307.

WOMEN OF FAITH BIBLE STUDY & LWMS All ladies of the congregation are welcome to come for Bible study, LWMS updates and fellowship on Tuesday, February 11 at 1:00 pm in the lower level of church. Moms are welcome to bring their children.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY All men of the congregation are welcome to attend Bible study and fellowship on Tuesday, February 18 at 9:00 am.

NEW MEMBERS Sunday, January 19, 2020, we welcomed the following new members that joined us since January 2019 with a pot-luck meal following the 10:30 am service: *Ann Bruneau and Cathy Seekins, Tom and Betty Edler, Eric and Amanda Laffoon, Parker Nabbefeld, John and Sarah Onorato, and Chad and Danielle Presteen and their daughters Audrey and Brinley.* Welcome these members when you see them.

SCHOOL OF OUTREACH Saturday, February 8, a School of Outreach will be hosted at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Schofield, WI. A School of Outreach is a one-day WELS workshop to assist churches with putting together a plan on how to reach out with the Gospel in their communities. Since we just established a Board of Evangelism here at St. John, we have decided it would be a good start for us to attend this School of Outreach. We would like to invite anyone from St. John to join us in attending this workshop. If you are interested in reaching out to the lost with the Gospel or want to learn more about Evangelism and Outreach, please sign up on the signup sheet and plan to join us on February 8. If you have any questions, please talk to one of the Pastors or to Andy Pevonka, our new Evangelism Chairman.

FLOWER CHART A 2020 flower chart has been placed on the bulletin board. If you would like to bring flowers for a special occasion, please sign for that date.

ST. JOHN REPRESENTATIVES At the October 22, 2019 voters' meeting, **Ken Klemp** and **Pat Gowey** were confirmed as the FVL representatives and **David Dahl** was confirmed as the WLIM (Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries) representative for 2020. A complete listing of the representatives for St. John teams/committees is enclosed.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS St. John is contributing to:

- Mission to the Philippines World Mission - \$3,500
- MLC Equipping Christian Workers project - \$3,000
- Shepherd of the Hills Mission Church, Las Vegas, NV - \$3,500

February 2020

GREETING CARDS Did you know there are individual greeting cards for purchase in the church narthex? They are being sold by our Women of Faith as a service to you.

The cards are self-serve on a spinner rack near the library and are only 50 cents per card. Check the rack often as cards are added for special holidays and occasions.

APPLE VALLEY FOOD PANTRY The pantry collection will be Sunday, February 2. Shampoo and conditioner, laundry soap, canned fruit, jam, cookies, all crackers, rice, rice & pasta side dishes, peanut butter, boxed and canned potatoes, canned pasta, all helper meals, and canned tuna are needed. Thank you for your continued support.

ORGANIZATION OF WELS LUTHERAN SENIORS (OWLS) The OWLS is a national program for the enrichment of WELS seniors. The first Fox Valley OWLS meeting for 2020 will be on Tuesday, February 11 at 1:00 pm. Our host will be Bethel Lutheran Church, 829 Appleton Road, Menasha. When you arrive, you may enter on the south side through the center set of doors.

Our guest speaker will be Pastor Raasch. He will inform us of the outreach ministry being done at Bethel for the Hispanic in the area. All seniors are invited to join us for an afternoon of Christian fellowship.

CAMP BIRD FOR LUTHERANS Registration is now open! Registrations are now being accepted for Camp Bird. Camp Bird for Lutherans is a youth camp for children in grades 5-8. It is located near Crivitz in Marinette County on Sand Lake. The price is \$175 for the first child in the family and \$135 for the second and each additional child in the family. Bible discussions and music periods in the morning and swimming, hiking, nature study, games, handicraft, volleyball, archery, boating and swimming in the afternoon are waiting for you this year! Three weeks are available in July:

Sunday July 5 – Friday, July 10

Sunday July 12 – Friday, July 17

Sunday July 19 – Friday, July 24

For more information or to download the registration form, visit www.campbird.org.

CAMP PHILLIP 2020 Summer camp registration is open for Camp Phillip, W9944 Buttercup Ave., Wautoma, WI 54982. Go to www.campphillip.com to learn more about Camp Phillip.

SISTERS IN CHRIST Join us for the 20th Pathways to Christ Retreat on March 13-15 at LaSure's Hall in Oshkosh. The 2020 theme is "A Friend Loves At All Times", Prov. 17:17a. Friday evening's opening session will consist of a guided round-table discussion and Bible study on friendship followed by *Thirsty Soul* – Praise Band.

On Saturday our three speakers; Rachel Fritz, Linda Gumm and Jenni Schubring will focus on our friendship with Jesus, on journey of life and friendship and on our calling as Christ's disciples. *His Witness* will then share their gift of music with us.

Sound intriguing? On Sunday Pastor Leon Ehlert will share with us a Bible Study and then lead us in worship. Additional information can be downloaded from our website: <http://pathwaystochrist.org>. If you don't have internet access, the church office will be happy to provide you with a brochure.

2019 ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS If you have not picked up or received your annual contribution statement, please pick it up at your earliest convenience. The statements are on the counter in the narthex.

SCHEDULES The 2020 usher schedule (January-June), the greeters' schedules and the cleaning schedules are available on the counter in the entryway. Please take the schedule with your name highlighted.

LOOKING AHEAD

Make plans to join your fellow members of St. John and their guests for an evening of roller skating/blading on Sunday, March 15th from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Skate City in Kimberly. The cost will be \$6.00 per person including skates. To reserve the rink, a minimum of 60 people need to attend.

St. John and Eternal Love are scheduled to work at the **Apple Valley Food Pantry on Sunday, March 8**. The Apple Valley Food Pantry is located at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 129 S. Mason Street, Appleton. You will be contacted about helping if you chose to volunteer at the Apple Valley Food Pantry when you completed your fellowship service sheet last fall. ***If you did not sign up to help and you'd like to help, please contact Diane Schabo at 920-733-4337.***