

# Journeys

A PUBLICATION OF CARVERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



February 2022

WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, WE WELCOME YOU HERE.

## THOUGHTS FOR THE SOUL

from Pastor Fogal

### **Valentines and Love**

An anonymous wag once observed, “I don’t understand why Cupid was chosen to represent Valentine’s Day. When I think about romance, the last thing on my mind is a short, chubby toddler coming at me with a weapon.”

Valentine’s Day is a pretty big deal in our culture. The National Retail Federation reports that Americans spent more than \$27 billion on Valentine’s Day in 2020. And according to the Federation, 27 percent of shoppers bought gifts for their pets, which resulted in a record-high \$1.7 billion spent on gifts for animals.

A bunch of that money also buys roses. About 250 million roses are grown each year just for Valentine’s Day. Since Valentine’s Day is in one of the coldest months of the year in the United States, roses have to be shipped in from other countries. Most roses sold in the United States during February come from Ecuador, Kenya, or Columbia. Making sure all these flowers are delivered within 24 hours of being cut, one rose stem at a time, costs money—money that retail customers ultimately pay.

All this got started as a religious holiday. The pope established the Feast of Saint Valentine in 496 CE. He chose February 14<sup>th</sup> in honor of Saint Valentine of Rome, who died on that date in 269 CE.

Only in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, when notions of courtly love flourished in western Europe, did the Feast of St. Valentine become associated with the "lovebirds" of early spring. In 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, it grew into an occasion for couples to express their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering sweets, and sending greeting cards they called "valentines."

Our modern American Valentine's Day minimizes – perhaps even damages – what love is in its fullest meaning. One theologian observes that “the secular holiday reveals a very unsustainable notion of love as romance, infatuation, . . . impassioned sex, sentimental words, romantic gift giving, etc. For too many, it eventually creates cynicism and disillusionment because the promise [of such love] is so high but incomplete.”<sup>1</sup>

Ancient Greek culture identified four kinds of love, which we've likely all heard about:

- *eros* (romantic love or courtship, passion)
- *philia* (non-romantic love between equals, friendship)
- *storgé* (natural affection that exists between parents and children, familial love)
- *agape* (spiritual or charitable love, infinite or divine love)

While the *eros* kind of love undergirds the business of Valentine's day (as well as many other kinds of businesses), “love talk” in the bible is the *agape* kind of love. God chose the ancient Israelites to show the world what God's love was like. The 10 Commandments sealed the relationship between Israel and Yahweh. Centuries later, Yahweh “loved” the Jewish people into their return from captivity and exile in Babylon.

In our Judeo-Christian tradition, Jesus' Great Commandment draws on the oldest Jewish laws. While the Great Commandment appears

in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the version in Mark 12:30-31 was the earliest written down for the 1<sup>st</sup> century followers of the Jesus Way:

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength [derived from Deuteronomy 6:5]. The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ [derived from Leviticus 19:18]. There is no other commandment greater than these.

It could be argued that all four kinds of love are taking a beating in the current political and medical culture of our country (and beyond). People of hope and faith cannot escape the consequences of these failed forms of love.

In spite of the challenges we face, however, God still calls people of faith to persevere in making God's love real for all people.

Diana Butler Bass is one of America's most trusted commentators on religion, spirituality and culture. She recently encouraged church leaders with these words, which I believe are apt for all of us who strive to be people of the God of love.

Keep doing what is right. You aren't broken; you're just worn down, sad, and tired. Even in the midst of it all, there's still love, a healing God, good people, and a beautiful purpose for your life and theirs. You are being called to be your best self as leader, friend, and neighbor. Tell the truth with intelligence, assurance, integrity, and insistent resolve. Act with compassion and courage. That's our path to real hope.

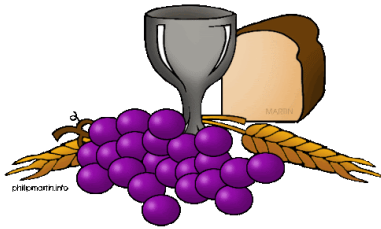
We can lead people along paths of hope only as we have hope. And our hope depends on being open to receiving God's love in our own lives – an essential aspect of being our best selves. Then we must muster the courage to return God's love by loving all those who need *philia* or *storgé* or *agape*.

The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminds us that our “ordinary acts of love and hope point to the extraordinary promise that every human life is of inestimable value.”<sup>3</sup> That’s an everyday kind of love – not just on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Rohr. Downloaded from <https://cac.org/god-is-humble-enough-to-be-anonymous-2016-03-14/>

<sup>2</sup> Diana Butler Bass, from *The Cottage* for January 5, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Downloaded from [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/desmond\\_tutu\\_454152](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/desmond_tutu_454152)



## COMMUNION

As of this writing in mid-January, we are not sure whether we will return to in person worship in February or simply continue with livestreaming only.

Our Communion service will be held on February 6. If you are participating from home, be sure to have the elements ready prior to the service.

May we all be grateful for our ability to have livestream services. Even if we are not together in body in our sanctuary, we are able to worship together in spirit.

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*“Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.”*

*-Mother Teresa*



Articles for the March newsletter should be sent to Sue Wulf at [slswulf@comcast.net](mailto:slswulf@comcast.net) and Cathy Price at [cathyprice2@verizon.net](mailto:cathyprice2@verizon.net) by Tuesday, February 15. Thanks!

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Here is a letter to the congregation from Americans for Native Americans.

December 31, 2021

Barbara Burger  
3622 Buttonwood Drive  
Doylestown, PA 18902

Dear Barbara,

Oh my heavens! What an incredible gift from the Carversville UCC Missions funds! The 125 boys’ briefs and 258 briefs for girls could not have arrived at a more timely moment! Dee Dee Bitsilly recently connected us to a new school- Aneth Community School in Aneth, UT. They sent us a request for coats and clothing for 72 children. Janet and I just lined up all your underwear and went right down the order filling each and every one! We could not be more grateful for this incredible gift! For each child who is benefitting from your generosity we say THANK YOU!

With every good wish and God’s blessings to each one in your amazing and very caring congregation in the New Year.

Warm regards,  
Mary Lee Reiff  
ANA Board Chair



## TOHAALI STOCKINGS

Mary Lee also reports that Tohaali School has been swamped with covid. However, their principal, Dee Dee Bitsilly, wrote: "Please tell Carversville the children loved the stockings! They were excited and it made Christmas so joyous for them! "



*A heart-felt thank you to the Women's Fellowship for their recent and very generous Christmas gift. The two restaurant gift certificates and the New Hope Photo gift certificate are greatly appreciated. You may not know this but as of this month, I have been your secretary/office admin for the last nine years!! Time does fly when you have fun and love what you do. And I do. You are a wonderful, kind, caring and thoughtful group of women and I am honored and humbled to be an honorary member.*

*Chris Ochadlick*



## PRAYING HANDS

Here is a list of those who would benefit from receiving cards. We encourage you all to reach out to these people as it will mean a lot.

### Card List for December

- Pearl Howard - c/o Future Care  
Chesapeake, Room 208, 305 College Parkway, Arnold, MD 21012
- Jim & Sally Seeton- 1850 Lower Mountain Road West, Furlong, PA 18925
- Gordon Keckeissen- 555 N. Broad St., #508A, Doylestown, PA 18901
- Jack King- 503 Windrush Bay Dr., Tarpon Springs, FL 34689



## FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Food insecurity still remains a serious problem in our community. In 2021, CUCC donated over 1,600 pounds of much needed food to the Doylestown Food Pantry.

We're thinking February is a LOVELy month to think red and donate a jar- or two- of red spaghetti sauce (they have the pasta) to the Doylestown Food Pantry.

Your donations may be left outside the church office during office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9 AM-1PM, OR Sue Wulf would be happy to pick it up at your home. Give her a call at 215-801-9142.

Thanks, little church with the BIG heart!

### **THE DASH-**

by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak  
At the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on her tombstone  
From the beginning to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth  
And spoke the following date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all  
Was *the dash* between those years.

For *that dash* represents all the time  
That she spent alive on earth.  
And now only those who loved her  
Know what the little line was worth.

For it matters not how much we own;  
The cars, the house, the cash.  
What matters is how we live and **love**  
And how we spend *our dash*.



### **CONTACT US!**

Rev. Robert E. Fogal, Ph.D., Pastor  
- Tues. & Thurs.: Office- 9:00 AM-1:00 PM  
and by appointment  
Cell: 610.945.4955  
Email: [pastorfogal@gmail.com](mailto:pastorfogal@gmail.com)

Chris Ochadlick, Office Administrator  
- Tues. & Thurs.: Office- 9 AM-1:00 PM

Catherine Halper, Church School Supt.  
Cell: 215.285.0551

Email: [carversvilleucc@gmail.com](mailto:carversvilleucc@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.carversvilleucc.org](http://www.carversvilleucc.org)  
Church Phone: 215.297.5166



AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN;

*Faith, Hope, Love,*

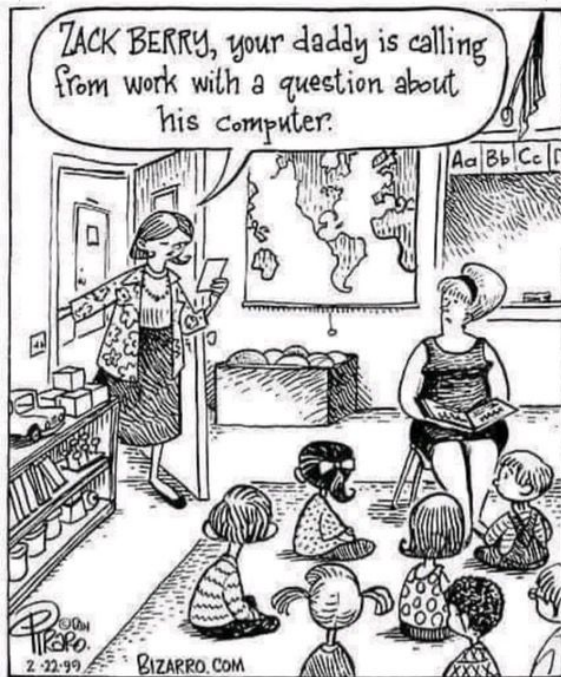
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS

**LOVE**

1 Corinthians 13:13



## NEED A GOOD LAUGH???



I said I was good at making decisions. I didn't say the decisions I made were good.

A guy walks into a lumberyard and asks for some two-by-fours. The clerk asks, "How long do you need them?"

The guy answers, "A long time. We're gonna build a house."



Being a little older, I am very fortunate to have someone call and check on me everyday. He is from India and is very concerned about my car warranty.