

Thoughts from the Heart by Pastor Katie Hopper

The traditions and history of St. Valentine's Day are too lengthy to detail in The Tower, but there are some neat web sites which detail both the history and legends of this special day, including Christian appropriations of an ancient Roman tradition that occurred the middle of February each year. So just use your favorite search engine and type in "History of St. Valentine's Day."

The question for us this month is: *Will we remember to send God a valentine, too?* Obviously, we're not talking about the kind which you can send by mail, e-mail, overnight delivery, or through a florist. But the heavenly store for valentines which we can send to God is open with many options for your choosing; and further, this special store is open all year! The items below cost very little in monetary terms, but need our commitments of care, time, compassion, and energy. In fact, the only payment asked for is a desire to love and serve Jesus Christ by serving others.

So if you are interested in giving God a valentine this year, cruise on over to your Bible and browse through Isaiah 58, Romans 12, and Colossians 3:12-17. Here you will find a list of different kinds of valentines that are always available for us to send to God:

- making our whole life an act of daily worship for God;
- renewing our minds through worship, Bible study, and healthy activities – spiritual, physical, and mental;
- having an attitude which is not conceited or judgmental towards others;
- seeking and making use of the gifts of discernment, encouragement, material giving, teaching, interpreting, and
- showing mercy;
- honoring others as we would like to be honored;
- loving others as ourselves;
- being an example to others through being faithful in prayer, being joyful and hopeful, and being patient in affliction;
- share with those in need and practicing hospitality;
- blessing and praying for those who have wronged you;
- being happy for those blessed with good fortune and grieving with those who grieve;
- associate with those whom the world does not love;
- not seeking revenge – even if we are in the right;
- forgiving as God has forgiven us;
- feed, give drink, and being kind to enemies;
- fighting evil with good;
- wearing compassion, kindness, and grace as we would our favorite clothes.

These are valentines which God would love to receive at anytime during the year!
Happy Valentine's Day and may God's gracious and merciful love rest upon you throughout the entire year.

Lovingly, Pastor Katie



Lent

Ash Wednesday Service

*We would like to challenge the whole congregation to attend the **Ash Wednesday service** this year. On the **13th of February the Season of Lent begins** with our personal meditation on the brevity of this life and the depth of the meaning of Christ's sacrifice that purchased our salvation. It is difficult for us to fully grasp the meaning of Easter and the empty cross, unless we spend time in repentance, in reflection, in mourning that the sins of the world demanded such a cost.*

*Ash Wednesday services are meditative and this year will be done in a Taize form which has very simple meditative music and lots of candle light. **We will gather at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary** to receive our ashes and enter Lent in prayer and meditation. Join us for this deeply spiritual service.*

Lenten Wreath Devotional Leaders Needed

Beginning Sunday the 17th of February, we will be adding something very special to the worship services for Lent. Like the advent candles and devotions that are done by families and clusters of good friends each Sunday of advent, we will be using a crown of thorns-like wreath and 5 purple, one red, and one white candle for Lent. Instead of lighting them each week., we will extinguish one each week with appropriate readings. Please see Pastor Katie or call the office to sign up and be given the readings.

Church Officers

Examination of officers

At the **February 20th session meeting**. Pastor Katie will be leading our officers new and nominated in two past ordination exam questions. This group discussion of worship and polity will serve as our examination before their installation on February 24th.

Officer Training Retreat February 23

Pastor Katie will be leading all our deacons and elders current and those to be installed/ordained the next day in a day of training. We will be taking a Spiritual Gifts Inventory, doing asset mapping for our church, and studying the results of the Holy Cow Assessment so that we can together plan for a productive year with solid goals and objectives by which to achieve them. Lunch will be provided. Bring your favorite snacks.

For Women

Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday

March 3rd we will be having worship in the sanctuary and the women of our church will be leading worship. If you are interested in a part in the service, please call Pastor Katie. Details for this special day will be forthcoming in the bulletins

All Church Women's Retreat

Set your calendars now for a women's retreat on the **first Friday and Saturday of May**. We will be staying at a local home, complete with slumber party on Friday night and fun girl time. Saturday we will have crafts and games and a Bible study led by Pastor Katie on "Being a Mary in a Martha World." More details will be coming. But put it on your calendar now so you don't miss the fun.

College/Youth

College/Youth Breakfast


Our college age folks will be meeting with Pastor Katie for breakfast and fellowship and prayer at Red Wheel on **Sunday February 24th**. Come share the happenings and plan other fun and spiritual events.

Children's Corner By Betty McFarland

February is known as the month of LOVE. Do something nice for someone you love. It could be a friend, neighbor, family or classmate. Be creative and make him/her feel special.

Children's Choir will sing in the 10 am Worship Service on February 10th. The children love to sing so children invite your family or classmate to come on this day. There will be love in the air!

Summer will be here soon so please inquire about camps. If you would like to go to Camp this summer, please talk with Mrs. McFarland or Pastor Katie. If you need a scholarship, please let me know.

	<p>Save These Dates for Vacation Bible School June 24-28 Theme is Sun West Round-up.</p>
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Kairos School By Betty McFarland

February is a month to celebrate with people you LOVE. The children of Kairos will have a Valentine Party where the children can bring valentines for all their classmates. The children will have a special snack for their party, it can be a sweet treat. All the children will have a lot of valentines to take home. At Kairos, we love letting all friends know how special they are to us.

The children in the two four-year-old classes will be taking a field trip to the Children's Museum in Decatur on February 1. This is a fun place to go! if someone from the church would like to go along with Kairos on this field trip, please call me at 762-5151 for more information. At Kairos, we are always having activities that are fun and exciting. Please come join Kairos on this day of the week. The children love to have visitors who can play with them. Hope to see you in February.

New Policy for Kairos School is that the outside doors will be locked at all times when the children are attending school. If you need to come to the school one day, please call 762-5151 and someone will let you come in. If you are needing to see Anita or go to the church office, then you need to call the office number 762-7861. The policy will help keep the children and the adult workers safer. Any questions, please talk to Betty McFarland.

The Clown Report (Jesters for Jesus)



FLASH—breaking news! It is almost here! The clowns are getting excited! So what is coming? Well, of course. . .CLOWN SUNDAY!! This year it will be observed on Sunday, February 17th, one week earlier than in the past. On that date, the “Jesters for Jesus” will serve as greeters and ushers, and will participate in the morning worship service. We will present some clown skits, as well as, the benediction. Following the service, our “coffee hour” will feature some of our favorite goodies for the congregation. We hope all of you will attend church that day. Please invite your neighbors and friends. The “Jesters” will be looking for you!!

Butterfly, the clown

“FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO DRINK, I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU TOOK ME IN.”

MATTHEW 25:35

CELEBRATE THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3 DURING THE 10:00 SERVICE. BRING CANS OF SOUP OR OTHER CANNED GOODS FOR OUR AREA FOOD PANTRIES. WE WILL DISTRIBUTE THEM TO PANTRIES IN MONTICELLO AND BEMENT THIS YEAR.

SOUPER
BOWL
OF
CARING



• . .no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him. . .

1 Corinthians 2:9