

THE CRUSADER

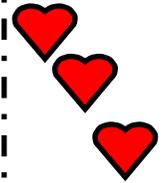
Web Site: christchurchhome.com

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FEBRUARY, 2021

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LOVE YOUR
NEIGHBOR AS
YOURSELF.



Letter of Love—February

written by

Rev. Braden Parks

Scripture is a story of love. During the time of the Scriptures being written, people understood love in four different ways; they even had four different words for love. These four ways are: romantic love, friendship love, familial love and lastly sacrificial love.

We see the romantic love of God most clearly in the love story depicted in **Song of Songs**. This is a story of a bride and a groom falling in love with one another. We see their desire for one another and the intimacies of their romance.

Friendship love is seen through the story of David and Jonathan revealed to us in **I Samuel 20**. In this story, David and Jonathan makes a covenant, a promise, in the Lord before one another. They make an oath of protection and love. The writer of the book of Samuel even pens these words, **“Jonathan had David affirm his promise out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.”** Jonathan protects and loves David even at the cost of his own life. Jonathan and David loved one another with a bound of friendship that was founded in the love of the Lord.

Familial love is seen in the spiritual father-son relationship that Paul and Timo-

thy share between one another. Paul takes the time to write two different letters to Timothy about helping him become more disciplined in the ways of Christ so that he can lead the Church. Paul introduces each letter with these words, **“To Timothy my true son in the faith.”** Timothy is hand-picked by Paul to join him in his missional journeys—this we know from Luke’s accounts and writings in the book of Acts. Paul and Timothy’s relationship is founded upon the love of God and how God’s love has joined their hearts as spiritual father and son.

Lastly, we see the sacrificial love of God throughout the story of Scripture. We see this most drastically in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Jesus, **“is the sacrificial lamb of God who takes the sins of the world (John 1:29-30).”** Jesus’ death is foretold through the prophet Isaiah and proclaimed in the mouth of John the Baptist.

Jesus, in the words of Paul is, **“the one who knows no sin but has been made to be sin for us that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21).”** Jesus laid aside the intimacy and love He shared with the Father and Spirit so that He could be our sacrifice. In love and power, Jesus is raised from the dead and destroys and defeats the power of death and spiritual brokenness which has its hold on us. We are invited into the intimacy of the love of God because of Christ and His love lavished upon us.

I end this letter of love by quoting Jesus’ disciple John,

“See [experience] the great love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (I John 3:1).”



In Christ, love has been lavished upon us. Love is an invitation that we can experience each and every day of our lives. You and I have been given a personal invitation into the story of love by God Himself.

Go and live following after the way of love—the way of Christ.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

AMEN.



“I Believe in The Holy Spirit”

by Scott Matthews

“No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now God’s Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who has spoken through the prophets makes us hear the Father’s Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. The Spirit of truth who unveils Christ to us will not speak on his own. Such properly divine self-effacement explains why the world cannot receive him, be-

You may think that you are completely insignificant in this world.

But someone drinks coffee from the favorite cup that you gave them.

Someone heard a song on the radio that reminded them of you.

Someone read the book that you recommended, and plunged headfirst into it.

Someone smiled after a hard day of work, because they remembered the joke that you told them today.

Someone loves themselves little bit more, because you gave them a compliment.

Never think that you have no influence whatsoever.

Your touch, word and good deed which you leave behind cannot be erased.



Written by rhythmia and posted on the internet by Rachel Miller, a friend from Decatur First UMC

cause it neither sees him nor knows him, while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them.”

(“ I believe in the Holy Spirit” was written by St. Ambrose and was promoted by Pope John Paul II which was article 8 of the Apostles Creed.)

Let me tell you a story.....

It is Sunday morning in early spring. I was sitting in my normal spot in the sanctuary listening to Pastor Cox’s sermon. It was communion Sunday and I was personally ready to receive communion. As he was performing the consecration of the sacrament I had a strange, unsettling feeling run through my body. Now focused on what I just felt wondering what I was being told or supposed to do, I simply shook it off and continued watching him complete his task. Still sitting in my pew and watching the ushers serve communion to each of us, again I felt a warm but harsh feeling this time moving through my body. Ok I said to myself, what is this? I need to know and understand. Again I let it go, but it weighed on my mind. As I was drinking the blood of Christ, the feeling hit me hard for the third time. What went thru me, I cannot explain but I was told what I was to do...

For the rest of that Sunday, my experience at the time of service was all I could think about and I knew what I must do. Monday morning I called Pastor Cox and asked if I could see him. He agreed and that afternoon I was sitting in front of him in his office. After a little chitchat, he asked “what’s on your mind?” I explained my ex-

perience Sunday and I told him I know what I must do. My assignment was to bring the church to the home bound members and serve them communion. He told me he would pray about it and let me know. I do not like saying this, but I received no response from him. I again met with him and asked for his help. Again I’ll get back with you. Again no response. I was beginning to lose faith in the man I looked up too, but I was persistent. I again approached him, very persistent this time. “This is something I must do, I said to him” He gave me an answer I wasn’t looking for. “He could not do this because his health would not allow him to do so.” I stated “ I am not asking for your help, I’m asking you to teach me so I can do this, the people need this and we need to do this for them!” I was denied, which hurt me but I understood his situation and I had given it my effort and didn’t know what else to do, but I never forgot my assignment.

Not long after this Pastor Cox retired Pastor Karna arrived. It didn’t take long for me to be sitting in her office and telling her my story. Not sure of the outcome she sat back in her chair and said, “If the power of the Holy Spirit is working through you to give communion to his people than this is something we must do!”

Finally a comfort came through me and I said “let’s make this happen”. Working together we put together a list of home bound members and she contacted each of them. Some members were delighted



and some said no, surprisingly. Pastor Kar-na typed out a reading for us to serve each person. I told Joel Hawkinson about our task and I saw his eyes light up. He said he would like to go with us.

Our first Communion Sunday provided a warm reception from the people. We received a outstanding reception, and the personal feeling in my heart was well worth the effort to get this set up.

Our first stop was Don and Harriett Wall. What a delight to meet with them and serve them the sacrament they missed so much. Harriet was such a pleasure to see each month and the warm welcome she gave to us. We got an opportunity to talk with Don and his life. A proud US soldier and a devoted Christian. With the loss of his sight, we were proud to place the communion in his hand for him and by doing so I felt the gentleness of this big man. What a beautiful couple.

Then off to see Barbara Boyd. Seeing her sitting in the cozy little sitting area around the fireplace was awesome. How she missed the church she was so active in for years and the feelings she shared with us about what we were doing. She sat me down and asked me “why are you doing this for us?” I told her the story of the Holy Spirit working thru me to come to you. With the warmest hug she looked me in the eyes and said “Thank you” I said “thank you for allowing us to do this for you.” Barbara went through the effort to bring people from her retirement home to share communion with us. What a special lady indeed.

Our next stop was Charlotte English. Always a warm reception from Charlotte and she enjoyed receiving the sacrament as well. She was struggling with her health which was foremost in her mind. We always listened and prayed for her health with her.

Then off to see Cathy Ferguson. Cathy wasn't always up for our company due to her health, however when she was, this beautiful little lady always gave us the best reception. She would always hug us as she knew we were bring the church to her. She was always positive about life and never showed us her pain. A beautiful soul that we will deeply missed.

Our last stop was Charlie and Joann Austin. I had spoken with both of them in the past, as they live in my neighborhood, and would walk Angel their little dog past our house. I asked Charlie one day if he and Joann would like to receive communion in their home because they didn't get around very well and were not able to attend service at church. At first he hesitated but later agreed. Always a warm welcome with these two. They made us feel comfortable as well. As we would serve them I watch Charlie close his eyes in prayer as if he was at church. I smiled as I knew this is what they both needed, Faith in God and people.

It is truly an honor for the fore mentioned people to welcome us in their home. Some are not with us anymore as they are



in their new home with our Father. We will truly miss seeing them each month. We had to stop providing this fellowship due to the covid-19 pandemic, however as soon as we are allowed to return we will resume providing these needs for our homebound members. If anyone reading this today would like to receive the sacrament of communion each month please let us know by contacting Rev. Parks or myself. It would be an honor to bring the church to you. Also if anyone who is reading this would like to join us in our journey please let us know. You will be truly inspired by doing so.

A special thank you to Pastor Karna, Joel, Lea, Jean and Mary for helping in the past.

With love and faith,

Scott Matthews

I am probably one of the few members of the congregation who is still clinging to a flip phone. Perhaps I don't want a phone that is smarter than I am, or it could be that the price and monthly fee are keeping me from jumping to newer technology. On that note, Jenny Garver forwarded a report from the Decatur Police Department about a new requirement concerning saving phone numbers and dialing them. This begins on February 27, 2021. Karen Rivera

Decatur Police Department

The Central Illinois area will receive an additional area code in February. Please read the below information to see how this will impact our area and calling.

Incoming changes by the State of Illinois:

To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers, a new 447 area code will be added to the area served by 217. The 217 area code generally covers the central region of the state serving thirty-five counties, including large cities such as Springfield, Champaign-Urbana, Danville, Decatur, Jacksonville, and Quincy. The new 447 area code will serve the same geographic area currently served by the existing 217 area code.

What is an area code overlay?

An overlay is the addition of another area code (447) to the same geographic region as an existing area code (217). An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code or phone number.

How does this affect you?

To complete local calls, the new dialing procedure requires callers to dial area code + telephone number or 1 + area code + telephone number. This means that all calls in the 217 area code that are currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using area code + telephone number or 1 + area code + telephone number.

The same dialing procedure will apply to telephone numbers assigned to the new 447 area code.

When will the change begin?

Beginning February 27, 2021, you must use the new dialing procedures, as described above. On and after this date, if you do not use the new dialing procedures, your calls will not complete and a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again including the area code.

What will remain the same?

- Your telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the overlay.
- What is a local call now will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 911.
- If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in your community, you will still dial these codes with just three digits.

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET??

The new procedure may sound complicated, but some of us are old enough to remember having a five digit phone number on a rotary phone.

WE CAN DO THIS !

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS	
2	EVELYN GARVER
5	JACOB GARVER
13	MONTE THORNTON
15	IMOGENE SHEPHERD
23	MARTHA FLETCHER
23	KAREN RIVERA
26	TREY GARVER

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
20	MURRAY & JEAN PRESTON

PRAY DAILY FOR:

DON AND HARRIETT WALL

GEORGE AND MILA

VIRGINIA HUMPHREY

MALVIA SHERWOOD

MELVA KIMBERLY (friend of Karen. Melva is recovering from a stroke)

ELLEN, CRYSTAL AND HER MOM

THE FAMILY OF MARY JO STEWART
(MARY JO AND HUSBAND JIM WERE MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH SEVERAL YEARS AGO. MARY JO PASSED AWAY ON JANUARY 26, 2021.