



FEBRUARY 2022

Share Something Sweet! A Blessed Valentine's Day to You in Christ's Love!

It's February and the stores all have their Valentine's cards and treats out for us to share something sweet with our loved ones and everyone in our lives. What is even sweeter is how God has blessed us with a way to see how to love God and each other in His Word. Paul writes to the Corinthian church how to love the Lord God, and to love each other. With this being February, may the Lord bless us to understand the depth of God's love and the meaning of applying His love in this world, in our families and in our church and community. [The Living Word of God quoted from Paul to the Corinthian Church, the Church in Ephesus and for our Church at Holy Cross.]

The Body of Christ and the Most Excellent Way of Love!

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated

with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

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Prayer for Spiritual Strength

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Jesus is our dearest valentine and may your Valentine's Day and every day be filled with His love always, in all ways, as well as His love in you to share with all others on the path the Lord is guiding you on and meeting people to share something sweet, His grace!

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jim



OFFERING ENVELOPES



The 2022 offering envelopes are ready for all to pick up in the church fellowship area. If you want an envelope box but didn't get one, let Megan know.

PRAY & PLAY EVENT WINTER FUN



Weather, snow, sleds, snowshoes, hot chocolate and adult involvement provided, all children and willing "grown-ups" are invited to have some winter fun together on **Sunday, February 6**. Just like last year, we will have the chance to play together by sledding or snowshoeing, building snowpeople possibly and simple outdoor fun around the church campus during the Sunday School hour. Bring all your gear and come have some winter fun! Everyone is invited to participate in some way as we pray together and then play together as a church family.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY



Join us at Holy Cross from **8-9am each Tuesday** as we watch and discuss the "7 Challenges Men Encounter." We meet in the Gamma classroom across from the Kitchen.

- Week 1** - Rejecting Passivity
- Week 2** - Accepting Responsibility
- Week 3** - Leading Courageously
- Week 4** - Loving Unconditionally
- Week 5** - Living with Integrity
- Week 6** - Serving Humbly
- Week 7** - Investing Eternally

FEBRUARY SERVICE THEMES & SCRIPTURES

FEBRUARY 6, 2022*Fifth Sunday after Epiphany* • 9:00 am Worship**Lessons:** Isaiah 6:1–8 (9–13); 1 Corinthians 14:12b–20; Luke 5:1–11**Theme:** Jesus Comforts His People and Builds Up His Church by the Ministry of His Gospel.**Text:**

When Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,” he was overcome with an awareness of his sin and “unclean lips” (Is. 6:1, 5). But the Lord atoned for his sin, took away his guilt and sanctified his lips with “a burning coal” from the altar (Is. 6:6–7). Not only was he rescued from death, but he was called and sent as a prophet of the Lord’s Word (Is. 6:8–9). Similarly, when Simon Peter and his companions “enclosed a large number of fish” at the Word of Jesus, he humbled himself and said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:4–8). But Jesus comforted Simon, called him to discipleship and declared that he would be “catching men” (Luke 5:10–11). So in the Office of the Ministry, the Church remains the little boat from which Jesus teaches His people (Luke 5:3). Thus are we instructed in the faith, so that we say “Amen” and return thanks with heart, mind, tongue and life. For the preaching of Christ Jesus is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, by which He builds up His Church on earth (1 Cor. 14:12–19).

FEBRUARY 13, 2022*Sixth Sunday after Epiphany* • 9:00 am Worship**Lessons:** Jeremiah 17:5–8; 1 Corinthians 15:(1–11) 12–20; Luke 6:17–26**Theme:** Christians Live by Faith in Christ and Rejoice in the Promise of His Resurrection.**Text:**

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man,” for all the strength of his flesh is like the grass that fades away (Jer. 17:5). The one who turns away from the Lord may have food and money and laugh for now, but he “shall mourn and weep” in the judgment (Luke 6:24–25). But “the man who trusts in the LORD” is blessed with all that he needs, “like a tree planted by water.” When heat comes, he survives (Jer. 17:7–8). For the Lord has come in the flesh to heal the people of all their diseases, to cleanse their spirits with forgiveness, and to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God to the poor (Luke 6:18–20). As all of this is by way of His cross, it is solely by faith in the promise of His resurrection that Christians “rejoice” and “leap for joy” (Luke 6:21–23). “If Christ has not been raised,” our faith is in vain and we are most to be pitied (1 Cor. 15:14–19). But, in fact, just as “Christ died for our sins,” so has He also “been raised from the dead” (1 Cor. 15:3, 20).

FEBRUARY 20, 2022*Seventh Sunday after Epiphany* • 9:00 am Worship**Lessons:** Genesis 45:3–15; 1 Corinthians 15:21–26, 30–42; Luke 6:27–38**Theme:** As the Son of God Is Merciful and Forgives Your Sins, You Also Be Merciful and Forgive.**Text:**

Your inheritance as a child of Adam is sin and death, but in Christ you are made alive through His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21–22). As you have died with Him in Holy Baptism, so are you raised with Him to newness of life. Therefore, “do not go on sinning” (1 Cor. 15:34). Instead of serving your desires and harming your neighbors, live as “sons of the Most High,” and “be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35–36). Deal with others as you would have others deal with you (Luke 6:31, 37–38). As Christ loved you when you were at enmity with Him, as He blessed and prayed for those who abused Him, and as He did good to those who hated Him and hurt Him, so also “love your enemies, do good” (Luke 6:27–29, 35). For God sent His Son to bear the cross and suffer death, not to condemn the guilty, but “to preserve life.” So does He provide a place for you within His Church, where He is near and deals kindly with “you and your children and your children’s children” (Gen. 45:5–10).

FEBRUARY 27, 2022*The Transfiguration of Our Lord* • 9:00 am Worship**Lessons:** Deuteronomy 34:1–12; Hebrews 3:1–6; Luke 9:28–36**Theme:** The Glory of God Is Manifested in the Body of Christ.**Text:**

“Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant,” but Christ Jesus “has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses” (Heb. 3:3, 5). A beloved and well-pleasing Son, faithful even to the point of death, Jesus’ own body was raised up on the third day as the house of God, and He has brought us into that house through the waters of Holy Baptism (Heb. 3:6). Thus, it was not Moses, the lawgiver, but his successor, Joshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus), who led the people into the Promised Land (Deut. 34:1–4, 9). Now, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the New Testament Joshua appears in the glory that He is about to manifest by His “departure” (exodus) in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Having entered the waters of the Jordan in His Baptism, He passed through those waters and entered into glory by His cross and Passion. What He thereby accomplished in His own flesh and blood, crucified and risen, He reveals and gives to His Body, the Church, by the means of His Word. Therefore, the Father declares from heaven, “Listen to him!” (Luke 9:35).

THE CRUSHING FREEDOM OF DECISION-MAKING

Decision-Making Fatigue

Sometimes things become so much a part of the fabric of our lives that we don't even recognize them. Decisions are chief among them. They are so ubiquitous that we tend to drown out their prevalence and significance.

In a self-initiated experiment, I decided to keep a running tally of the number of decisions I made throughout an average day. Before my feet even hit the ground, I had counted four: *Do I sleep five more minutes? Do I shower now or after my morning walk? When should I take the dog for a walk? What shall I wear today?*

Next, I stared down a significant breakfast decision. I landed on cereal but then had to decide which cereal, which bowl, and which milk. As soon as those decisions were settled, I faced coffee decisions: *travel mug or regular mug? Sugar or Splenda?*

At this point, I had been awake only three minutes. *Where will I sit to spend time with God? Should I journal or read the Bible? Assuming I decide to start with reading the Bible, where shall I read this morning? How many verses?* We are only ten minutes into the day. Suffice it to say that after an hour I promptly quit the exercise, utterly overwhelmed by the sheer number of decisions that make up an ordinary day.

If you are not convinced by my experiment, I'd like to invite you into a short trip to the local grocery store. We aren't shopping for a Thanksgiving meal. We only need the ingredients for an apple pie. Sounds simple enough, right? Before we even get to the store, we must decide which parking spot to choose based on which entrance we will walk through. Then we must choose whether to get the wonky-wheeled shopping cart or risk nearly breaking our wrists carrying a basket. Friends, we are not yet fully in the store. We approach the produce section with a simple need: apples. What used to be a semi-simple choice between green or red has become a complex decision these days. *Pink Lady, Gala, Red Delicious, or Fuji? Organic or regular?* Next comes flour. *Almond flour? Whole wheat flour? Enriched flour? Store brand or name brand?* Regarding eggs, we have an entire endcap from which to choose. *Regular eggs, organic eggs, free-range eggs, and local eggs* (and every possible combination of these categories). I won't belabor the point. You live in the same world I do. We experience the same decision-making fatigue. Thus far we are only making an apple pie. We have not even broached the subject of the weightier decisions of life.

The Dizziness of Decisions

Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian and philosopher, once said, "Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom." If grocery store decisions make us dizzy, the more significant decisions of our lives cause deeper and more disorienting anxiety. One of the unanticipated weights of living in an age of unprecedented freedom is the anxiety that comes as its counterpart.

In the past (and in other cultures in the present), freedom was much more limited. Most children were not able to choose a calling or direction. They would learn the family trade that had been passed down from generation to generation. Likewise, it was assumed that they would remain in the hometown that the family had lived in for generations.

My parents-in-law were born in neighboring villages in Kerala, India. My amma had two career choices: nurse or teacher. When my appa was young, he knew he would study engineering as his father and uncle had. Amma and Appa did not even play a primary role in choosing to marry one another; their parents arranged their marriage. The second time they met, they were walking down the aisle and into their future. After having twins (one of whom is now my handsome husband), they emigrated to the United States in search of a better future and more opportunities for their children.

Flash-forward twenty years. My husband and I sit around Amma and Appa's kitchen table in Austin, Texas, with our three children. My middle son has been tasked with preparing a heritage report for his class. We huddle around the table as a captive audience as my son interviews my in-laws. When asked about their childhood in India, both Amma and Appa smile as they reminisce. "It was so carefree; we played all the time. We did not have the stress and the worry. We were just children."

My children have far more choices than Amma and Appa had at their age. They can choose from five different club soccer teams. They select multiple elective courses even at their elementary school. Shows, books, and role models regularly remind them to be whoever and whatever they want to be. For now, these promises of choice and freedom sound alluring. However, in less than ten years my oldest son will likely be graduating from college. Suddenly the freedom to be and do whatever he wants will transform into the intense, crushing anxiety that is the dizziness of freedom. Professors and well-intentioned friends will be asking him a litany of questions. *What are you going to do when you graduate? To which graduate schools have you applied? Where will you live?*

Divine Direction in Decisions

I imagine I don't have to convince you of the dizziness of decisions or their power to shape our lives. You are likely living in the crosshairs of critical decisions. Perhaps you are wondering which path to take, which church to choose, or which spouse to marry. No matter what decision you are deliberating, the incredibly good news is that the Scriptures offer guidance for believers making decisions.

God graciously stamped humanity in his image, giving us the ability to make decisions (*Gen. 1:27*). By his very nature, God is self-revelatory, meaning he wants to be

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known, seen, worshiped, and followed. God is not a divine clockmaker who created the universe and then stepped away to let it run. Rather, he has intimately involved himself in his creation from the beginning.

Even after God's people alienated themselves from him through their sin, God moved toward them and directed them (Gen. 3:8-10). He created for himself a people whom he would lead (Gen. 12:1-9). He sent prophets to speak to them, priests to atone for them, and kings to lead them. His engagement with his decision-making people came to a culmination in the incarnation of Christ (John 1:6-14). Christ made the invisible God visible in a tangible way (Heb. 1:3). Christ walked this earth and experienced the daily decisions of life. Though he was tempted in every way as we are (Heb. 4:15), he made every decision considering the favor of his father. He chose to follow God even when that choice meant death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, believers are invited into the freedom of making decisions as children of God. Rather than following the whims of their heart, believers are invited to place the desires of their hearts alongside the word of God as a ruler. God's word, God's Spirit, and God's people are intended to help instruct us in the series of decisions that constitutes life.

Written by Aimee Joseph

This article is adapted from Demystifying

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

We will gather as a church family for meals during the Lenten season. Our first will be Ash Wednesday, March 2nd at 6:00pm.



A supper will be served each Wednesday through April 6th. The Lenten church services will follow at 7:00pm. You can get involved by providing soup, other main meal items or dessert. Signup sheets are posted in the Commons. A simple set up is at approximately 5:30pm. Signup to help as a family; it's not hard!!! Questions? See Pam Hunter. As an FYI, Easter is April 17th.

NIGHT TO SHINE



Night to Shine 2022 will be a VIRTUAL prom event on Friday, February 11th. We are still needing cash donations to purchase food gift cards for the guests. We are providing a prom swag bag to all registered guests and will be delivering these bags the week of the prom. Gift cards are \$25 per guest, and we need many more. Please let me know if you can help with this donation! We are really blessed to be able to provide such a great event to our special needs community! Thank you! Shari Schulze mnnighttoshine18@gmail.com



THE LUTHERAN HOUR



The Lutheran Hour can be heard each Sunday on WCCO (830 AM) at 6:05 am. And it can be streamed online too, www.lhm.org. Check-out LHM's daily devotions too.

February 6

"How Christians Can Admire the Jewish Sabbath"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Dr. Michael Zeigler says the Jewish practice of observing the Sabbath is sort of like being in a long-distance relationship. (Luke 6:1-11)

February 13

"The Unexpected"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Roland Syens

Jesus said those who are poor in spirit are blessed. Pastor Roland Syens says poverty is not a problem in God's economy. (Luke 6: 17-20)

February 20

"TBD"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

February 27

"Greatness"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

(Luke 9:1-48)

2 MINUTE MULTIPLIER



A weekday 2-minute devotion that helps you see Jesus at work in your world.

Pastor

A few years ago I got to spend a week with a very high-powered crowd. All CEO types. From around the world. I was the only pastor.

The small group I was in treated me like a rare species of bird. Or skunk. None of them belonged to a church. One of them publicly berated me for wanting to "proselytize everyone."

Before the week was up each person in my group had privately engaged me in a spiritual conversation. About a job. About a spouse. About her direction in life. I was not their pastor. But in that moment I became their pastor.

Everyone you meet is spiritual. Everyone has a spirit and that spirit needs feeding. Everyone you meet carries around in them the image of their Creator. Everyone is only fully fulfilled when that spirit is reconnected with the Holy Spirit who breathed life into them.

That spirit will wander and search until it is reclaimed by the Spirit of Jesus.

The haranguer who verbally attacked me showed up at my breakfast table on the last day. Turns out his daughter had been treated poorly by her congregation. I was guilty by association.

In tears, he asked for forgiveness. In tears, I gladly gave it and then asked the same on behalf of the Church.

I wonder about him often. I trust my words about Jesus worked healing in his life. Especially between him and his Father in heaven.

Who's your pastor who helps frame your life in Jesus? Who reminds you how loved you are? How eternally secure you are? For whom can you be such a pastor?

Everyone needs one. Especially today.

Rev. Bill Woolsey

President and Founder

FiveTwo Network

Sign up to receive the 2 Minute Multiplier emailed to you! www.fivetwo.com/2mm

FEBRUARY 2022



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 8:00 am Men's Bible Study 7:00 pm Elder's Meeting	2 12:00 pm Happenings 4:00 pm Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class	3	4 Coverall Cleaning of the Church	5 9:30 am Fill Night to Shine Bags
6 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Bible Study 10:15 am Winter Fun Event	7	8 8:00 am Men's Bible Study	9 12:00 pm Happenings 4:00 pm Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class	10	11 Coverall Cleaning of the Church	12
13 Sixth Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study	14 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 8:00 am Men's Bible Study 12:00 pm Newsletter Articles Due	16 12:00 pm Happenings 4:00 pm Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class	17	18 Coverall Cleaning of the Church	19
20 Seventh Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study	21 <i>HAPPY Presidents Day</i>	22 8:00 am Men's Bible Study	23 12:00 pm Happenings 4:00 pm Articles Due 4:00 pm Confirmation Class	24	25 Coverall Cleaning of the Church	26
27 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00 am Worship/Communion 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study	28					