

## Celebrating Love This February

As we step into February, we are reminded of the power and importance of love in our lives and in our community. This month, we celebrate not only Valentine's Day but also the love that reflects the heart of our faith, a love that is generous, unconditional, and transformative.



### The Foundation of Love

1 John 4:7-8, reminds us ...

*"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

As children of God, we are called to embody this divine love in our everyday interactions.

Love is not just a sentiment; it is an **action**. It compels us to reach out to those in need, to serve our neighbors, and to uplift one another during difficult times. This February, let us reflect on how we can show love in practical ways within our church community and beyond.



This month, we encourage everyone to engage in **"Acts of Love."** Here are some ways you can participate:



#### 1) Random Acts of Kindness:

Surprise a neighbor or a church member with a kind gesture—bring them a meal, write a note of encouragement, or simply offer a listening ear.



**2) Volunteer:** Give your time to a local charity or church ministry. Your involvement can light up someone's day and provide much-needed support to those who are struggling.



**3) Share Your Story:** Throughout February, we invite you to share stories of love you have experienced or witnessed. These can be shared through social media platforms, highlighting how love has impacted your life.

### A Prayer for Love

*"Dear Lord, thank You for the gift of love. Help us to recognize and embrace the many forms it takes in our lives. May our hearts be open to both giving and receiving love, and may we seek to reflect Your love in the world. Amen."*

I love being called your Pastor,  
Chris



## February MISSIONS

The **Safe and Warm** campaign by ABCCM aims to provide essential warmth and support to families during the winter months through various means, including providing blankets, winter coats, space heaters, and heating bill assistance to those facing safety risks from freezing temperatures. Your contributions can help ensure that no neighbor is left in the cold during the winter season.

Our EBC mission emphasis for FEBRUARY will focus on collecting donations of new and slightly used blankets to distribute to the community.

As always, if you prefer to give cash, please indicate ABCCM and the amount on your offering envelope. 

*And just one more thing for February missions....*



**"SOUPER" Bowl Sunday** is February 8. It's an EBC tradition to collect donations after the morning worship service and give them to ABCCM to help feed the many hungry folks in our area. So be prepared, choose your team and drop your donation into your team's bowl. *In the past... whichever bowl (team) collects the most money usually wins the Super Bowl!*

^ FEB 01	10:55 a.m. 4:45 p.m.	Morning Worship Choir Practice 
FEB 03	10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	Group Bible Study Prayer Meeting 
FEB 04	6:30 p.m.	Women's Bible Study
 FEB 08	9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 4:45 p.m.	<b>2nd SUNDAY CELEBRATION</b> "SOUPER" Bowl Sunday "Pick your favorite team and help feed your community." Choir Practice
FEB 10	10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	Group Bible Study Prayer Meeting
FEB 11	6:30 p.m.	Women's Bible Study
FEB 15 ABCCM SUNDAY	10:55 a.m. 4:45 p.m.	Morning Worship Choir Practice
FEB 17	10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	Group Bible Study Prayer Meeting
 FEB 18	6:30 p.m.	Women's Bible Study 
 FEB 22	10:55 a.m. 4:45 p.m.	Morning Worship Choir Practice 
FEB 24	10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	Group Bible Study Prayer Meeting 
FEB 25	6:30 p.m.	Women's Bible Study
FEB 28	8:00 a.m.	 Men's Breakfast



## WHY IS VALENTINE'S DAY A THING AND SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT IT SO MUCH?

Exciting. Stressful. Important. Over-celebrated.

People's opinions about Valentine's Day vary. Some think it's great, others not so much. Flowers and chocolate. Instagram posts of presents and captions that express more feelings than most people care to read (no offense).

For some people it's a day of unity and happiness, for others it's a reminder of divisiveness and hurt.

These opinions are directed at the celebration of...what exactly? The Valentine's Day we know is pretty different from the holiday it's creators established. Do we even know what all of our hype is about? If you do, humor me for a moment while I summarize it for those of us who passed notes during history class.



### THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY

The holiday was originally called St. Valentine's Day in honor of a Roman priest named, you guessed it, St. Valentine. Scholars believe there were actually three men by this name and all were martyrs. Each was brutally killed — beheaded, decapitated, scourged — for refusing to deny his faith.

These men showed great love for God and His church by laying down their lives, just like Jesus did.

So how did we get from martyrs to heart candy? Good question.

In the Medieval times, people believed birds began to mate on February 14, a symbol connected to love. They established the tradition of dedicating the day to "lovers" in honor of St. Valentine, who had demonstrated love in its most extreme form. This, in turn, started the giving of gifts, letters, signs of affection, and chocolate. (*I made the last one up, but whoever thought of giving chocolate deserves to be celebrated.*)

The original meaning behind Valentine's Day has faded over time. The love many of us celebrate today is not the sobering, sacrificial love St. Valentine displayed. However unintentionally, Valentine's Day has turned into a holiday about proving our romantic love through grand gestures and big gifts. We compare our celebrations to others' and allow what we did or did not do to carry more weight than it probably should.

**Jesus' love, not our significant other's, is what sustains, fulfills, and completes us.**



### SHOULD WE CARE SO MUCH ABOUT IT?

There's no biblical command to celebrate Valentine's Day, nor is there one that says celebrating it is wrong, so whether you do or don't is up to you. What the Bible does say a lot about is love.

- ♥ God in his very nature is love. Without knowing Him, we will never know how to really love someone else (*1 John 4:8*).
- ♥ The way we love one another should reflect the way Jesus loves us. He loves us sacrificially, sincerely, and endlessly (*John 15:13, 1 John 3:18, Ephesians 3:17-19*).
- ♥ What love looks like is best described by the apostle Paul... even if we have everything, even if we give everything, without love life is meaningless (*1 Corinthians 13:1-7*).
- ♥ There's nothing wrong with expressing feelings through gifts, special dates, or pictures. Celebrating people we care about is a way to reflect how Jesus loves us. Let's make sure that whatever we do, or don't do, is rooted in the understanding that Jesus' love, not our significant other, is what sustains, fulfills, and completes us.



### WANT TO CELEBRATE BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

Remember Jesus' love is enough. His love is what will ultimately fulfill us, not the perfect date or gift.

If you're in desperate need of someone to love you on Valentine's Day, you're missing out on walking in the freedom and confidence that come from the truth that you are loved by Jesus every day.

You don't have to give fancy gifts or spend tons of money to mirror Jesus' love, and you don't need someone else's love to know you are valuable.

No matter what stage of life we're in, we can all find ways to show Jesus to someone else. Jesus' love is a selfless love. A generous love. An unconditional love. A real love.

~ Copied



## Valentines Day



LOVE  
CHOCOLATE  
ROSES  
HEART  
KISS

VALENTINE  
CARD  
GIFT  
RED  
PINK

FEBRUARY  
CANDY  
FRIEND  
DATE  
CUPID

### A LITTLE VALENTINE'S DAY TRIVIA

- 1) On average, how many marriage proposals are there on every Valentine's Day?
- 2) What activity increases a person's pulse rate to at least 110 bpm?
- 3) A single red rose surrounded by baby's breath is called what by florists?
- 4) What do yellow roses symbolize?
- 5) What major invention was patented on Valentine's Day?
- 6) What are the top five most popular gift categories on Valentine's Day?
- 7) In what country is Valentine's Day an official public holiday?
- 8) What is the Guinness World Record for the longest marriage ever recorded?

*The record for the world's longest marriage goes to Herbert and Zelmyra Fisher, who were married for an astonishing 86 years, 9 months, and 16 days as of February 14, 2024. In the 10+ years since we first wrote about Herbert and Zelmyra, no one has even come close to beating their record. Although they have left this world, they will never be forgotten. ~ Guinness Book of World Records*



*Answers: 1) 220,000; 2) Kissing; 3) A signature rose; 4) Friendship; 5) The Telephone; 6) Candy, flowers, greeting cards, and evenings out; 7) None; 8) 86 years and 290 days*