

Gray Weekly News



Week Leading to Sunday, February 6, 2022

Love That Never Ends

By Kira Austin-Young, www.ministrymatters.com

Walk into any grocery store or drugstore right now, and you'll be met with an explosion of red and pink hearts, enormous stuffed animals, and giant boxes of chocolates. My email inbox is full of restaurants and other venues advertising special dinners and events for two in mid-February, a sign that our culture's liturgical observation of romantic love, Valentine's Day, is fast-approaching.

Whether you are partnered and celebrating or think the whole thing is made up by the greeting card industry, these are the messages that we receive about what love looks like. Love, particularly romantic love, is about jewelry, chocolate, and champagne.

I don't think there is anything wrong with having a special day designated for showing a little extra affection for someone, but if our only idea of love is the one that is propagated by the Valentine's Day Industrial Complex, that's a problem.

Continued on page 2



Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 138

1st Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

“God Sends Us”

News and Notes

THIS WEEK

Sunday, February 6

Please join us on Sundays at 11 am. If you don't feel comfortable coming in person, you can watch our livestream at graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com or graymemorialumc.org/youtube, at 11 am or any time after that at graymemorialumc.org/



If you have prayer requests, please contact Norma Adams, Jennifer Skinner or Gail Teems.

You may also call the church office at 850/385-6441 or send a text to 850/933-8469.

Prayer Requests

Family of Doris Yon

Sam, Patsy and Betty

George, John and Patty

Brenna, Bella and Joyce

All those who are suffering from accidents, illnesses and surgery

Continued from page 1

Not everyone is partnered, and holidays that focus on couples can be painful for those who are single or who have recently lost a spouse. Plus, the couples whose relationships are most inspiring to me are poorly represented by a large red Mylar heart balloon.

Those of us who follow the Revised Common Lectionary were treated to Paul's treatise on love from First Corinthians a couple of weeks ago. It is a passage that is familiar to the point of banality thanks to its frequent use at wedding ceremonies. But hearing it in the context of the gathered worshipping community on a Sunday morning, these verses sound different and closer to Paul's imagined audience, the church in Corinth which was wracked by argument and division.

Directly before this passage, Paul has told the church that no gift is better or more honorable than another; they are like parts of the body. But this is the real thrust: no matter what gifts an individual has, if they do not have love, it is all for naught. The greatest gift of the Spirit is love, and its fruits are patience and kindness. Love rejoices in truth. It is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love never ends.

Continued page 3

There are certainly ways in which this is true of romantic love as well, but to narrow this passage to that particular circumstance is to lose the breadth of love that is available to us in this world and as part of a Christian community. In 1 Corinthians, love is about community, not a couple.

The local church community has often privileged ministry to the traditional family unit at the expense of neglecting those who don't fit into the mold — those who are single, divorced, widowed, or have a non-traditional family structure. With an increasingly mobile and transient society, even if someone has an extended family, they may be geographically distant.

As a pastor, I have had the privilege of seeing the love of a community in action: love that is manifest in fighting for justice and equality; love that keeps vigil at a bedside when death is imminent; love that cares for other people's children.

It might not be the kind of love that our culture celebrates on Valentine's Day, but it is a love worth recognizing and lifting up. The love that never ends is a love that includes, not excludes. It is a love that we know because we first know and are known by Christ.

Basketball and Bible Ministry



Thanks to everyone who helped with the installation of the new professional-quality basketball goal. We've already received positive comments from our neighbors who have tried out the new goal!

Plans are to have a "dedication" event sometime in February to which everyone will be invited. See Pastor Beth if you have ideas or want to help plan a function to let the community know that it's available and open for use.

UPCOMING EVENTS

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, February 1 | 5:30 pm 7 pm | Yoga Class Finance Committee Meets via Zoom |
| Wednesday, Feb. 2 | 12 noon 7 pm | Wonderful Weds. Brown Bag Lunch Zoom Bible Study led by Todd Clark- Book of Acts |
| Thursday, Feb. 3 | 10 am 5:30 pm | Bible Study Choir Practice |
| Sunday, Feb. 6 | 11 am 1:30-4:30 | Worship Service St. Luke's Anglican Church meets at Gray Memorial |
| Tuesday, Feb. 8 | 2 pm 5:30 pm 7 pm | United Methodist Women Yoga Class Executive Council meets via Zoom |
| Wednesday, Feb. 9 | 7 pm | Zoom Bible Study led by Todd Clark- Book of Acts |
| Thursday, Feb. 10 | 10 am 5:30 pm | Bible Study Choir Practice |
| Sunday, Feb. 13 | 11 am | Worship Service |