

Every February, across the country, candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is shrouded in mystery. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred.



One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl — who may have been his jailor's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today.

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial — which probably occurred around 270 A.D. — others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February — Valentine's Day — should be a day for romance.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America. Now in America, Valentine's Day generated billions of dollars in sales of cards, candy and flowers.

**Just don't celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Express your love throughout the year.** Surprise your spouse or loved one with a special gift, or even a hand written note tucked away in some place they will find later in the day.

**And of course celebrate God's love for us as well.** Return God's love for you by showing your God-given love to others through your words, your actions and the giving of your time. Make this Valentine's day special by celebrating God's love all year long.

Article taken from: [www.history.com/content/valentine](http://www.history.com/content/valentine)

## God's Box of Chocolates--A Valentine's Day Devotion

Everywhere I look near Valentine's Day, there's chocolate: boxes of chocolate in all the stores, chocolate on TV promising to be the only love you need, chocolate girl scout cookies--CHOCOLATE!

I think that's what led me to remember the famous quote from Forrest Gump: "Life is like a box of chocolates...you never know what you're gonna get." (I even remembered it with his accent.)

In reality, that phrase can be true in many ways. We wake up every morning completely unsure of what the day may hold for us. We've made our plans. Sometimes they even happen the way we make them. But we never know for sure, do we?

God knows that life as it pertains to circumstances is uncertain for us. That's why He comforts us and reminds us so many times that He is our constant companion, our steadfast friend, our consistently loving God and Savior. He doesn't keep promises the way we do: *"When people make promises, they guarantee them by appeal to some authority above them so that if there is any question that they'll make good on the promise, the authority will back them up. When God wanted to guarantee His promises, He gave His word, a rock-solid guarantee--God can't break His word. And because His word cannot change, the promise is likewise unchangeable."* (Heb. 6:16-18)

You see, no matter what chocolate we are "in the middle of" right now, He is there--with the certainty of His promise today as well as His hope of heaven in the future. Read how Hebrews continues to encourage us: (vs.19-20) *"We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go. It's an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of God where Jesus, running on ahead of us, has taken up His permanent post as high priest for us, in the order of Melchizedek."*

I love the visual picture of grabbing on to Him with both hands as He runs ahead of me to the Father. That makes me able to get up today and praise Him for whatever comes my way. This faith, this confidence, this hope is our unbreakable spiritual lifeline--HIS love for us no matter what, when, how or why. Let's binge on His priceless box of chocolates today...the sweetest and most satisfying of them all. *LauraLee Shaw* author of "Women of Passions" <http://lovinthearts.com>

## February Bible Studies

**Monday Eve Bible Study** Class meets on Monday's at 4:30pm for the study called "Faith Weavers". Weave Christ into your life, through study of His word. Leader: Sue Smith.

**Tuesday Morn Bible Study** Class meets Tuesday's at 6:30am at the Chippewa Family Restaurant. Bring your Bible and your appetite (cost of the meal is on your own). Topic: 2 Corinthians led by Pastor Mathews & Pastor Plautz.

**Tuesday Eve Bible Study** Come Tuesday's at 7pm to the home of Fred & Joan Bargmann (11250 27th Avenue, CF). Topic is the life of Jesus. Leaders are Dale & Sharon Volrath.

**ATTN: High School Youth** High School Bible classes are Wednesday's at 7pm. Share your journey! Leader: Sue Smith

**Thursday Morn Bible Study** Come Thursday's at 9:30am to this fun class. If you're thinking about joining a daytime Bible study, this one is for you! Leader: Pastor Mathews.

**Thursday Women's Bible Study** meets at 6pm here at church. Topic: God's Esteem—You'll learn that Jesus not only understands your feelings, He relates to them, relates to you, and He has the answers you've been looking for. Make the connection & attend this class. Leader: Laura Hills.

## PLACE—Finding your place in ministry

God created each of us for a purpose. "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" Ephesians 2:10. Part of God's purpose for us is to edify the church and to serve in its ministries. The PLACE process can help you discover how God has uniquely designed you, and helps you realize His purpose for your life.

Beginning Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 7pm or Sunday, Feb. 21 at 9am— this 6 week course will be offered.

Each participant will discover their personality type, learn about their spiritual gifts, be made aware of their abilities, connect their gifts with their passion, and explore their experiences. Call the church office or sign up on the table in the narthex to participate.

## Congregational News

### LENT BEGINS FEB. 17

Worship services will be offered Wednesday's at 6pm. Soup suppers will start at 5pm. The Lenten sermon series is titled "Life Together" and is based on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic book, "Life Together" that describes in challenging ways what it means to be the body of Christ in community. Series schedule is as follows:

Feb. 17	1 Peter 2:20-25	Life's Better in My Hands
Feb. 24	1 Peter 1:22-25	I'm Being True to Myself
March 3	1 Peter 1:3-5	This is It???
March 10	1 Peter 2:9-12	How Do You Know Who I Am?
March 17	1 Peter 4:12-25	How Can I believe in a God who would...
March 24	1 Peter 4:1-6	I Need This...and This...and This...

These are Wednesday's. We will provide similar resources for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. God bless your Lenten journey!

**FAMILY TIME DEVOTIONAL NIGHT - Wednesday, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 pm** The purpose is to help the parents and grandparents of our children become confident in their ability to be the spiritual leaders and teachers of their children and grandchildren. Participants will actively learn how to teach Biblical lessons and truths with activities that are exciting and stimulating. It is designed for parents and grandparents of children from age 4 to 11. Childcare will be provided. Call the Church Office by Feb. 7 so proper plans and materials are on hand.

**FAMILY EVENT** Everyone is invited to come Saturday, Feb. 20 to a spaghetti dinner (serving 4:30-6:30pm) and to the musical "The Wiz" (7:30pm) at the Chippewa Falls High School. Many of Faith's youth will be performing. Cost is \$15/person. Please sign-up in the narthex so arrangements can be made. Questions? Contact Kathy Haakana at 726-1289.

## YOUTH FUNDRAISERS:

**Super Bowl Soup/Sub Sandwich fundraiser** has begun. Order slips are available from the table in the narthex. Orders can be picked up Sunday after 7:45am, 9am or 10:15am services. Cost for soup or sub is \$3.50 each or 2 for \$6. Deadline for ordering is Sunday, Jan. 31.

**Valentine Bake Sale**— Youth are sponsoring a bake sale on Sunday, February 14. Donations of baked goods are needed. Please bring items to church prior to Sunday services marked with a suggested price. We appreciate your support of this effort.

**DID YOU KNOW?** We have eight youth and three counselors attending the LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans July 17-21, 2010. The Gathering is about "WHAT WE BELIEVE" and "THAT WE BELIEVE" based on John 20:31. "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (ESV). Rev. Terry Dittmer, director, LCMS District and Congregational Services-Youth Ministry, notes, "One of the things that youth always say about the Gathering is how much it means to encounter other students who 'believe like I do.' 'We Believe' is a wonderful expression of our faith in Jesus Christ, especially as we focus on the creed and our confession as we take that faith to the New Orleans community in Word, celebration, service, witness, and fellowship." We look forward to sending our youth to this event.

**YOUTH EVENT:** Our next youth event (gr. 6-12) is Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm. Come to the youth room here at church – it's movie night! Sloppy joes will be served and a drawing for a gift card. We'll have a Valentine project. Don't forget to bring a pillow or bean bag chair (gotta get comfortable).. Sign-up on the youth board...bring a friend. See you there!

**FISH FRY—Feb. 24 at 5pm** - Bring a dish to pass & enjoy this fabulous time in fellowship.

## 2010-11 Faith Christian Preschool Registration has begun!

We are offering open enrollment to members of Faith Lutheran Church and the community.

Classes available are:     Mon.-Wed.-Friday   3-5 year olds (Must be 3 by March 1) 9-11:30am  
  Tuesday-Thursday   3 years olds (Must be 3 by Sept. 1) 9-11am

Please call the church office for a brochure (or) register by stopping by the church office between 8am and 4pm weekdays.

*Thank You to the Shut-In Visitation Team.* What a blessing you are to so many people! Our teams are: Al & Ilene Zien, Nellie Kilcher; Dale & Sharon Volrath; Evelyn Elam and Alice Lofgren; Dick & Linda Walders; Bonnie Jacobson and Lucille Yauch; Ed Heidtke; Julie & Will Schaller, Pam Pfankuch; and Bernie & Cheryl Wendt. Cheryl Wendt is now taking over the duties of Visitation Coordinator, working with Pastor Plautz. If you are interested in serving on this ministry, please contact them today!

**Needed: 5 volunteers** to make phone calls to people of Faith we haven't seen in church and to let them know we miss them. Please call Pam Pfankuch at 723-7124 or Pastor Mathews to offer your time and service to your family at Faith.

**Choir Rehearsal** Like to sing? Come to choir practice on Feb. 3 at 7pm. Choir will perform on Feb. 7

**Praise Team** Like to sing contemporary music? Come to practice Feb 3 at 8pm. Praise team will perform on Feb. 7 at 9am.

## WOMEN OF FAITH

Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend the next meeting of Women of Faith on Tuesday, February 16 at 7pm.

They'll do a Bible study from the Quarterly and mite offerings will be collected. Come and join in the fellowship!

## NEW FUNDS ESTABLISHED!

PIANO FUND to replace the piano in the sanctuary.

HEARING IMPAIRED to enhance worship via audio equipment for our hearing impaired.

## Happy Birthday!

- 1-Cheryl Brock, Shelby Loebertman, Steven Missfeldt, Elaine Schmidt
- 2-Frank Christian, Judith Hacker, Harold Zempel
- 3-Sharon LeDuc, Michael Musser, Charlie Wirtz, Claire LaBreck
- 4-George Brock, Larry Schaller
- 5-Rosemary Horgen
- 7-Morgan Chaussee, Justin Jaquish
- 8-Greg Musser
- 9-John Felmlee
- 10-Paul Wucherpennig
- 12-Cortney Grant, Sawyer Nesvacil, Alexander Wing, Valerie Wing
- 13-James Isaacson
- 14-Andrew Pfankuch
- 15-Joseph Pfankuch, Darra Sandvig
- 16-Carrie Andersen, Jaynee Ingraham, Bernie Wendt
- 17-Kayla Jepson, Rev. Craig Mathews
- 18-Skylar Anderson
- 19-Irish Johnson, Mike LaGessee, Michele Langhough
- 20-Julie Engel, Kenneth Schimmel
- 21-Dennis Schroeder, Florence Western
- 22-Sarah Atchley, Aimee Chovan
- 23-Alex Dietze, Samantha Plasch
- 24-Donna Moldenhauer, James Peterson
- 25-Chad Webb
- 26-Laura Atchley, Jason Isaacson
- 27-Lyle Johnson, June Pagel, James Schaller, William Schaller, Thomas Wright

## Happy Anniversary!

- 16-Julius & Millie Huth
- 23-John & Kim Feirn
- 24-Patrick & Susan Smith
- 25-Brad & Teri Goulet
- 26-Ed & Kathleen Heidtke
- 27-Thomas & June Wright
- 28-Milford & Bea Newman