



FEBRUARY 2024

THE NEWSLETTER

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Brazoria, Texas

Love One Another

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

When you think of February, you often think of love. On Valentine's Day we celebrate romantic love. According to AI (artificial intelligence on the internet): "The origins of Valentine's Day are shrouded in mystery, but it is widely believed that the holiday has its roots in both Christian and ancient Roman traditions ^{1 2}. 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. 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 ¹."

"The association of Valentine's Day with romantic love is believed to have originated in the 14th and 15th centuries when notions of courtly love flourished, apparently by association with the "lovebirds" of early spring ^{2 3}. The first recorded association of Valentine's Day with romantic love was in the writings of Chaucer, who linked Valentine's Day to romance more or less by chance ³. Later poets, including Shakespeare, followed Chaucer's lead and helped create the romantic connotations we have today ³."

Wherever the link of St. Valentine's Day to romantic love, Christian love is an essential element of the Christian religion. Jesus summed up the commandments into two: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. It's important to keep these in mind.

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment. He ordered them (and us) to love another as he has loved us. This is a love that is described in one of my favorite hymns *What Wondrous Love Is This* (an Appalachian folk hymn) as "What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul,...." You see, Jesus took our sin upon himself to save us from the curse of death and being forever without God. That is part of what we contemplate during Lent. Why would God in the form of Jesus of Nazareth take on my sin and the punishment for it? Why would God be willing to die on a cross in order that I might be freed to love God and to live with him forever? The answer is—it's a mystery of our faith.

"And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and through eternity I'll sing on!" – What Wondrous Love Is This

Lent begins February 14th this year. We sit among the ashes of Ash Wednesday and we contemplate our unworthiness. We look ahead through the 40 days to the resurrection of our Lord. There's a lot to get through before we get there. There's the Last Supper, the arrest of Jesus, the trial, and his Jesus' death. Then there's the lonely Saturday when Jesus lay in the grave. Finally, finally, we get to Easter—the day of resurrection! Thanks be to God!

Love, Tracy

¹ history.com ² en.wikipedia.org ³ nationalgeographic.co.uk

PRAYER list

What we prayed for January:

Prayer Focus:

Keep in Prayer: Donna Schroeder, Diana Crocker, Shirl Riccetti, Peggy Badders, David Smith, Celia Selman, Jim Wiggins, Cole Buchanan, Jesse and Wendy Abbott, Earl and Nelda Gragert, B. J. Patterson, Debbie Floyd, Nancy Bristow, Paula Emmons, Matthew Stephenson, Martha McCrearey, Jeb Ogburn, Ricky Morgan and family, McKenna Buchanan, Debbie Sala and family, Pat Whitehead, Marilyn Shockley, Sandra Clarke, John Philips, Anette Robertson, Linda Lutz, Sharon Teague, Edwina Clingman, Brittany Kennison, Linda McAda, Wynelle Vollbaum, Nancy Oertli, David and Sue McRae, Holly Chrysler, Barbara Ferrell, David Marcum, John Jones and family, Barbara Sullivan, Jamie LeBouef.

Comfort and Hope: Family and friends of Jimmy Clark (at his passing). Family and friends of Sue Ellen (at her passing). Family and friends of Mike Cole (at the passing of his wife, Ellie). Families and first responders in Choghoran, Japan affected by 7.6 magnitude earthquake. Peace of Christ in our country and the world - Ukraine, Israel.

Other Prayers: Meredith and Bluegrass Band safe travel, White family, Joyce, Cindy, Betty, Session, teachers and students returning to school, elderly, lonely, homeless, hungry, city workers and others working in extreme weather, wisdom for elected leaders of our government, military and our veterans, First Responders, EMT, firefighters, police officers and their families, help our church grow in faith, bless our outreach efforts to reach those who have fallen away, bless our worship services so that we may glorify you in all that we do, guidance and blessings for our church, our members with a spirit of unity and love, pray for each other and our neighbors and all communities of faith.

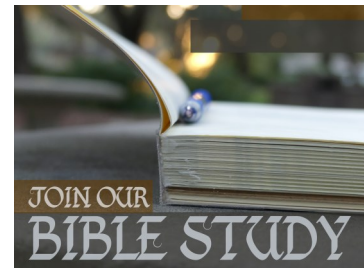
Sharing the Joy: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."
Romans 15:13

How can we pray for you today? If you have a prayer request, please call the church office, Rev. Tracy Williams, Ginny Raska or Linda Matheson.



LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

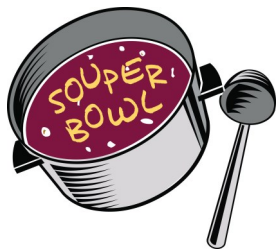
Lent begins on February 14th, and we plan to make daily devotional booklets available to guide you on your Lenten journey. Copies will be available to pick up during worship. If you would like to have one sent or delivered to you, please contact the church office or call Ginny Raska.



BIBLE STUDY

Every Tuesday
11:00 a.m.

Our Weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays after Prayer Group will continue with our study of Revelation until Lent. We plan to shift to a Lenten Bible Study during the weeks of Lent. You are invited to join us on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m.



February 11, 2024
Immediately following worship

SOUPER BOWL/SOUP DINNER
followed by the
Session Meeting

Are you ready for another “Souper Bowl” on February 11th. We will be having soups, sandwiches, salads, chips & dips, along with desserts and tea. I already have a few volunteers to bring things for the dinner, but would love to hear from you if you are willing to bring something for this special church dinner.

What makes this dinner so special? We get the opportunity to collect canned goods and monetary donations to help feed the hungry. All of the donations of canned goods and money will stay with our church.

We are registered to be part of Tackle Hunger where I will have the pleasure of reporting all of the donations the congregation collects to add to the national total.

Can't wait to hear from you, God bless.

Robin Harrington
979-482-3750



One Great Hour of Sharing



Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Received during the season of Lent (February 14 - March 31), each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

First Presbyterian Church of Brazoria will be receiving this offering during Lent. Please note clearly that your contribution is for OGHS. Thank you very much for whatever support you are able to provide this worthwhile mission.



Presbyterian Women

February 25, 2024
following worship

**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

Our Presbyterian Women's Study will continue with Lesson Five: A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus (Luke 17-21) on February 25th. We invite you to join us for a light lunch after worship, followed by the Bible Study. Each lesson stands alone, so you do not need to have attended the previous lessons. For more information, contact Ginny Raska.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

You are invited to study God's word on Sunday, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

Everyone is welcome (all ages).

A light breakfast is provided.

Puzzle!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 14 - 7 = ___ Father | 10 + 15 = ___ in |
| 10 + 9 = ___ heavenly | 10 - 5 = ___ God |
| 9 + 9 = ___ the | 6 - 3 = ___ to |
| 12 + 12 = ___ blessing | 12 - 6 = ___ and |
| 2 - 1 = ___ Praise | 6 + 6 = ___ Christ |
| 7 + 7 = ___ has | 18 - 9 = ___ our |
| 11 + 11 = ___ every | 22 - 11 = ___ Jesus |
| 13 + 13 = ___ Christ | 1 + 1 = ___ be |
| 8 + 8 = ___ us | 7 + 6 = ___ who |
| 10 + 10 = ___ realms | 2 + 2 = ___ the |
| 8 + 9 = ___ in | 10 + 5 = ___ blessed |
| 5 + 5 = ___ Lord | 4 + 4 = ___ of |
| 10 + 11 = ___ with | 10 + 13 = ___ spiritual |

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26		

Ephesians 1:3, NIV

Answer: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3, NIV



Remember the Blessing Box and the Food Pantry

Please bring donations for the Blessing Box and/or the Food Pantry when we have Communion. When you come to receive heavenly food, remember those who have no earthly food to eat. Please bring pantry items.

Thank you! Thank you!



On January 28, 2024
Anita Glisch
joined our church.

Welcome, Anita!

ATTENDANCE

	Total	Elders	Facebook
1/7/24	27	5	134
1/14/24	21	4	154
1/21/24	22	6	105
1/28/24	17	5	149



*** TREASURER REPORT ***

December Income \$24,954.28
(Including \$7,387.65 from Manse Fund)
December Expenses \$6,682.71

Lectionary Gospel Readings for February:

Sunday's Date	Gospel Passage
February 4, 2024	Mark 1:29-39
February 11, 2024	Mark 9:2-9
February 18, 2024	Mark 1:9-15
February 25, 2024	Mark 8:31-38



Open invitation

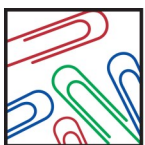
Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
 Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
 Ye need not be one left behind,
 For God hath bidden all humankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
 The invitation is to all:
 Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
 All things in Christ are ready now.

Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
 Ye restless wanderers after rest,
 Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
 In Christ a hearty welcome find.

—Charles Wesley (18th century)
 —ChurchArt Pro, February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Every Sunday 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship		Every Tuesday 10 a.m. Prayer Group 11 a.m. Bible Study 6 p.m. Game Night		1	2 10-Noon Food Pantry	3
4 ☺ Destiny Smith Gibson	5	6	7	8	9 10-Noon Food Pantry	10
Boy Scout 11 Sunday Communion Souper Bowl Sunday Church Dinner Session	12	13	 Ash Wednesday 5:30 p.m. Worship	15	16 10-Noon Food Pantry ☺ Philip DuBose	17 ☺ Sarah Wilson ☺ Jim Barnett ☺ Kayson Buchanan
18	Presidents' 19 Day Church Office Closed ☺ Nancy (R) McLaren ☺ Jr. LaBreck	20 ☺ Jackson Buchanan	21	22	23 10-Noon Food Pantry	24
25 Presbyterian Women	26	27	28	29 		



Office Hours

The church office will generally be open Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 The exception will be holidays.