



Riverlawn Presbyterian Church
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2025

Have you ever wondered how Valentine's Day got started? Here's how the legend goes: In the 3rd century, there was a priest who lived in Rome. Claudius was the Emperor – known as Claudius the Cruel. Recruits for his army were complaining about their long separations from wives. And so an edict went forth that no soldier of Rome – *may their hearts grow bloodlessly cold – could weaken his will in marriage. No more weddings. Of course, edicts do not restrain love, so marriages went underground with assistance from a sympathetic priest, Valentinus, performing ceremonies secretly. He would whisper the words while listening for soldiers outside. One night, Valentinus heard footsteps at his door. The couple he was marrying escaped, but he was caught. He was thrown in jail. His punishment would be death. But a certain young woman was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit him to be her tutor, as she was blind from birth. She believed he did the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and leading couples in the vows and blessing of marriage. On the day Valentinus was to die, he left her a note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. He signed it, "Love from your Valentine."*

It's said that note started the custom of exchanging greetings on Valentine's Day. It was written on the day he died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people think about love and friendship. When they think of Emperor Claudius, they remember how he tried to stand in the way of love, and they laugh – because they know that love can't be snuffed out!

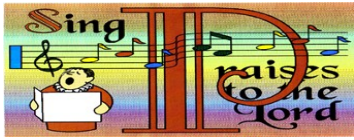
Christ also wants to foster a love in us that never fails ... but it's a love that looks quite different than the kind we usually think of on Valentine's Day. If you've ever read the Gospels, you know that Jesus sometimes says some hard things ... How in the world can you love someone who doesn't love you? For that matter, how in the world can you love someone who wants to do you harm or tear you down? It's much easier for me to love people who already love me. But Jesus comes along and tosses in this monkey wrench, saying that not only are we to love those who love us, but we're even to love those who hate us! Some of us may say, "That's what it means to be Christian" – and I agree with you. But if most of us are honest, when we're in the applicable moments of this teaching, we think, "You can't be serious!" When someone wrongs us, our first instinct is to get them back! Or, if we're really mature, to ignore them (while inwardly we hope for their demise) ... That is the world's answer to being wronged. But Jesus tells us we're to love our enemies. That seems to be asking the impossible.

One difficulty we need to overcome at the start lies in the sentimental associations that the word love has for many of us – especially the warm and fuzzy feelings associated with Feb. 14th. But the love that the Old and New Testaments speak of isn't primarily about emotions, but a practical attitude. It's very important to understand that Jesus is calling us to use a realm of our being that is to be conformed to the likeness of Christ – our will. And by the Holy Spirit nurturing the fruit of self-control in us, our will, and our attitude, is a much different matter than our feelings. Jesus is calling us to lend our enemy a helping hand, and even when they don't take it, to have an attitude that seeks God's best for them, regardless of how they may make you feel.

All of this is hard to do, but we've been commanded to do it, and that means the Holy Spirit will give us the ability to do it. And besides that, it's what Jesus has done for us. If you think about it, Jesus' entire life from beginning to end is God living out the same to us ... doing good to those who had shown hatred for him, blessing those who had cursed him, and even God the Son praying to the Father on our behalf – before the cross, on the cross, and after the cross.

You want a love for Valentine's Day, listen to Rom. 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" ... We're faced with a question: "How am I going to respond to my enemies?" [P] What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than to carry out the command of Christ to love my enemies. When you do that, Jesus says, "You will be sons and daughters of the Most High!" By loving your enemies, you demonstrate in a profound way that you belong to Jesus Christ. And that is the highest of all possible goods.

~ Pastor Chris



MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWS February 2025

When February arrives each year I think most folks think of Valentine's Day and the topic of LOVE. As Christians we are the recipients of the greatest love ever demonstrated.....God's gift of Jesus to the world & His salvation. I hope you feel that love every day and are able to share it with those around you.

On a lighter note.....a few years ago I included quotes from children about 'love'. Enjoy their responses.

WHEN ASKED WHAT ARE SOME SUREFIRE WAYS TO MAKE A PERSON FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU?

"Tell them that you own a whole bunch of candy stores." - Del, age 6

"One way is to take the girl out to eat. Make sure it's something she likes to eat. French fries usually work for me." - Bart, age 9

AND ABOUT LOVE IN GENERAL:

"I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful." - Manuel, age 8

"If falling in love is anything like learning how to spell, I don't want to do it. It takes too long." - Glenn, age 7

"Love is the most important thing in the world but baseball is pretty good too." - Greg, age 8

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." - Billy, age 8

Enjoy this month of red hearts, cupid's arrows & valentines but never forget the greatest gift of love Jesus Christ.

~Pam



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING FEBRUARY 9

It's that time again! The **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** is **Sunday, February 9th**, and you are invited to our annual Souper Bowl Luncheon in the gym following the service.

We will be collecting the following most needed items (you can place your donations in the basket at the gym door or on the steps in front of the sanctuary):

Vegetable	Current top 5 needs:
Chicken Noodle	Pasta sauce
Tomato	Peanut butter
Cream of chicken	Vienna sausages
Cream of mushroom	Raman noodles
	Brownie mix

Contact Beth Sturgill at 304-415-1150 if you need items picked up. Thank you!

The food will be donated to the St. Albans Food Pantry and the money collected in the Soup Pots that will be in the back of the church on the 9th will go to support Jericho House.



1st Megan Emmet
2nd Elbert Taylor ?
5th Ethan Marcum
9th Connie Campbell
12th Pat Croghan &
Becky Sutphin
13th Paul O'Dell
16th Garrett Albert
Trevor Barrie,
Louise Taylor

18th Bethany Bryan
20th JB Recknagel
22nd Missy Sneed
23rd Andrew Albert &
Tesla Roberts
24th Ray Keller
26th Bob Sutphin
28th Barb Recknagel



PRAYER CONCERNS

Tom Eckenrode (Wanda Smith); Christine Bearia; Dale Dodrill (Randy Dodrill); Darrell Williams (Mary Kathren Watson); Vicky Williams/Herk & Dot McGraw (Wanda Smith); Joe Lothes; David Poe (Wanda Smith); Robin Burnam; Eddie Mcfall (Linda Ross' son); Mike VonDuben (Gayle Michael); Greg Cook (Dawnetta Cook); Collin Recknagel (Adam & Sandra Recknagel); Lois Jackson (Todd Barrie); Emma Rose Cavender; Frances Miller; Kathy Barnes; Elbert Taylor; Caroline Dodrill; Jane Lothes; Arlis Miller (Joe Lothes); Sarah Wandling; Gretna Michels (Susan Bryan); Angel Grover (Brenda Petry); Rick Wolford; Linda Monday; Ernie Powell; Travis Keller (Ray Keller); Pam Mullins; Lori Goodwin (Brenda Petry); Betty McAdam; Sherry Ellis; Elizabeth Thompson (Bill Bryan); Missy Sneed; Abby Goff/Anthony Smith/Renee Bird (Wanda Smith); Jenna Meadows; Dave Ryan; JB Recknagel; Janet Young; Mick Hughes (Caroline Dodrill); and for the Global Church that we may embody the gospel to all.



BITTY BASKETBALL

Bitty Basketball season began on Saturday, January 18 and will run thru March 1. Games are on the hour from 9:00 a.m. until 3pm. Come and join the fun to cheer on the little ones and connect with their families and our community.



Junior Church is offered for PreK through 5th grade on Sunday mornings after the Children's Message, until 11:30 or when the church service ends.



*Ladies Bible Study ("Luke in the Land") meets on Mondays at 1:00 in the adult Sunday School Room.

*Bible study of Romans, Volume 2 with J.D. Greear, lead by Pastor Chris will be meeting at 6:15 p.m. in the Cottage.



Join in us on Wednesday nights for Family Night, a time to enjoy friendships and our church family, with dinner at 5:30. Activities for the children and youth begin at 6:15. *Family Night will resume on January 8.*

WEDNESDAY KITCHEN CREW

- | | | |
|----------|----|---------------------------------|
| February | 5 | Pam Johnson & Frances Miller |
| | 12 | Mimi Albert & Sherry Claar |
| | 19 | Pam Johnson |
| | 26 | Judy Clingenpeel & Sherry Claar |

Available to substitute – Susan Bryan (304) 389-6063



Saturday, February 8 at 8:30 at Cracker Barrel in Cross Lanes. A time for fellowship, devotion and prayer.



Visitation Teams/Schedule

- Week of:
- 02/02 Parry Johnson—304-926-4745
Linda Monday—304-541-4927
 - 02/09 Joe Lothes—304-767-8313
Robin Burnam—304-722-5665
 - 02/16 Dennis Emmett—304-610-7535
 - 02/23 Pastor Chris—304-539-1514



BUILDING SECURITY

*After church lock-up for February is Mimi Albert.

*After hours security check for February:

- Week of:
- 02/02 Butch & Sharon Herndon
 - 02/09 Pat Croghan
 - 02/16 Ron Claar
 - 02/23 Jamie Albert

If you are unable to cover the security check on your scheduled week, please let Pat Croghan know (304)989-1894.

2025 Riverlawn Elders and Board of Deacons

Elders

Jamie Albert, Clerk of Session, Community & Family Ministries, Evangelism
681-340-1128; James.macd.albert@gmail.com

Dennis Emmett, Finance & Stewardship
304-610-7535; emmett@suddenlink.net

Sharon Herndon, Christian Nurture
304-444-2071; Polecat818@hotmail.com

Parry Johnson, Buildings & Grounds
304-926-4745; Parryjohnson1@gmail.com

Joe Lothes, Missions
304-767-8313; fishlothes@hotmail.com

Steve Wilson, Worship & Fellowship
304-741-7890; stevewillie@suddenlink.net

Deacons

Mimi Albert—304-546-6547
Mimialbert72@yahoo.com

Robin Burnam – 304-722-5665
robinsnestsawv@hotmail.com

Linda Monday – 304-541-4927
lindadmonday@gmail.com

Mary Reppert—304-419-2755
Reppert.mary@gmail.com

Linda Wilson – 304-741-3113
Linda.wilson867@gmail.com



Monday, February 24

Nurturing Faith Ideas

February 2: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany Read Jeremiah 1:4-10 God chose Jeremiah to be God's messenger, to speak God's word. Though Jeremiah insisted that he was too young and didn't know how, God promised to go with him and give him the words to speak. What has God called you to say about God to others? What excuses keep you from speaking with others about God?

February 9: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Read Luke 5:1-11 When Jesus called his first disciples, they were washing their nets after a long night of fishing when they caught nothing. Jesus invited them to follow him, and they did so, leaving everything behind them. We, too, have been called to follow Jesus. What did you, might you, have to leave behind to follow?

February 16: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany Read Luke 6:17-19 Crowds of people came to hear Jesus, hoping that he would heal them, and Jesus did so. How has Jesus healed you? How might you help share Jesus' healing ministry this week?

February 23: Seventh Sunday after Epiphany Read Luke 6:27-38 Do you have any "enemies"? How do you treat them? Jesus taught those who would listen to him to love their enemies and do good to those that hate them. Imagine what it would be like in our schools, workplaces, homes, communities, nation, and world if we did so. Reach out to an "enemy" with love this week.

Dates to Remember

Bitty Basketball - Saturdays 9:00-3:00

Women's Bible Study—Mondays 1:00

Romans Small Group— Wednesdays 6:15pm

02/08 Men's Prayer Breakfast, Cracker Barrel, 8:30am

02/09 SOUPER BOWL OF CARING - Bring non-perishables, Soup & Sandwich Luncheon

02/09 Bible Study—"How to Hear God"—4pm

02/16 Session via Zoom, 2:00pm

03/05 Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30pm

Riverlawn Strives To

Purge ourselves of pride by focusing on glorifying God

Teach the truth through fellowship & discipleship

Demonstrate a life of love through service to others

Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in need

Purge Pride, Teach Truth, Live Love