

Community Christian Center

The Word
Fellowship
Prayer

The Good Tidings Newsletter



A Report on the Revival at CCC

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ERIC GIORGIO, PASTOR

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Pastor's Corner

This month featuring *Senior Pastor Eric Giorgio*

Happy Valentine's Day

By *Pastor Eric*

Valentine's Day is a great time to think about love. What's



love? Is it a feeling? Or is there more to it than just feelings? What happens when feelings disappear? Do people fall out of love, then? How do we make sure that we know what love is? And are we practicing love in the way it was designed by God?

First, let us see if we can discover what love is. According to Hollywood, it is a passion that suddenly invades a person. Then, the person loses all control

and launches into various actions. In the movies, it is usually some sort of uncontrollable heavy-breathing, shirts and blouses flying with a race to a carnal wrestling match. Is that love? How did we come to understand the beautiful, sacrificial gift of God as an immoral act between two strangers? How did our society permit this kind of pseudo-action to replace true love? How did love become so cheap?

With all due respect, Hollywood does not seem to understand the meaning of true love. To the movie-makers, love is an out of control, magnetic response which leads to immoral behaviors. They define love as something that comes suddenly and leaves as quickly. It's a fleeting emotion which cannot be described. Our society appears to have bought this concept which is sold by screen writers.

True Love

The Bible defines love as an act of commitment. Love is not just a feeling. It has feelings. But true love is based on a decision with a very conscious act of commitment. Feelings come and go and are transitory. True love is a steadfast commitment. It will remain the same in all seasons. It does not change because of unfavorable weather.

Look at these words from the book of Jeremiah: "The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying; 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you'" (Jeremiah 31:3). To make His commitment absolutely firm, God added the following statement. "Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name); if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever" (Jeremiah 31:35-36).

What is He saying? He is confirming His love and commitment to the highest degree. God is committed to love His people. They might leave Him and worship other gods. They might forsake Him. Nonetheless, His promises stand forever. "Let your

conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). We, as His people, might move away from Him, but He will never move away from us. Because of His love, His commitment is eternal. There will be consequences for departing from Him. Yet, His commitment and love remain forever. He shows that sort of commitment to Israel and to the New Testament church. You and I are part of this precious love of God as believers in Jesus Christ.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Notice that He did not wait until we loved Him. He committed Himself to die on the Cross while we were still sinners. This is the Agape Love of God.

Do people celebrate this Agape Love on Valentine's Day? For the most part we have to say, "Not really!" The love, candies and flowers are usually a display of human love.

Conclusion

We want to show the difference between today's human love and the Agape Love of God. The Agape Love of God is higher and better. It's a commitment that usually entails a high cost of sacrifice. True love does not concentrate on what it receives. It concentrates on what it gives. Here are some phrases from I Corinthians 13 to help us celebrate true love with one another.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal... Love suffers long and is kind; ... does not behave rudely, ... does not rejoice in iniquity, ... bears all things, ... endures all things. Love never fails ... "(I Corinthians 13:1-13).

Is it possible to live in this kind of Agape Love? Yes, God gives us the ability to love like He loves. We are not able on our own to practice this Agape Love. Yet, the grace of God gives us the capacity to first love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind. And we are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Happy Valentine's Day to you! May all of us have the revelation of His Agape Love! We pray that we can be able to express this true love every day towards God and towards each other. God loves you with this everlasting love. You and I are invited to experience this great Love of God today. Express Agape today toward all your family members and all people by the power of the Lord working mightily in you.

By faith in our God, we believe & experience the Agape Love of God every day, in Jesus' Name, Amen!



James 2:8-10

This royal law is found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." If you obey this law, you are doing right. But if you treat one person as being more important than another, you are sinning. You are guilty of breaking God's law. NCV

NEWS FLASHES!

by CCC's Roving Reporter, **Debbie Shaw**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I returned to California on the 8th of January. Our plane flew over the local mountains on the way here and what a thrill it was to see the snow covering those peaks; it was as if God had taken a huge paint brush and covered them with a beautiful thick, white frosting. Thank You, Lord!

Did You Know?

✂ Each engine on a Boeing 777 can produce 115,000 pounds of thrust and is wider than the fuselage of a Boeing 717. (About eleven feet across.) Taken from The Flying Book.

✂ Someone said to me, "You love planes and flying." I always had a fascination with flying. When I was a girl growing up, I would look up in the sky and think, "I wonder if I'll ever fly in those huge planes."

✂ When Ralph Nader introduced the importance of seat belts in the 60's, he had to fight human ignorance. People refused to do what was good for them.

✂ One of the most discussed subjects is the weather, however, we can do nothing to change it. It is under the control of our great God. If we pray and call on Him He will send rain in His timing. 1 Sam 12:16-18 *"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes: Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking a king for yourselves."*

So Samuel called to the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. NKJV

✂ Arica in Chile is the driest city on the planet with only 0.03 inches of rain per year. Some places in the surrounding Atacama Desert have not received rain in more than 500 years! From The Weather Book, LA County Library and livescience.com

✂ Llano, Columbia is the wettest place on earth with an average of 525 inches of rain per year. From The Weather Book, LA County Library

Bit of Humor

✂ Deacon Steve always tried to look on the bright side. He said, "Pastor, I have some good news for you: Your biggest critic left the church. But the bad news is he's been appointed your head Bishop."

✂ When life give you lemons, throw them back and pray for chocolate!

✂ Bulletin Bloop: Everyone is excited about the upcoming wedding of Brad and Melody. They are having a "country style" wedding and everyone is invited to join them as they exchange cows in the church courtyard.

Quotes

✂ Jesus is a promise keeper - if He has promised you something He will keep that promise. -Pastor Al Oguinn

✂ Only a life lived for others is worth living.- Albert Einstein

✂ Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get.

✂ There are two magic words to get what you want: Please and Grandma!

✂ Worrying is betting against yourself.

Person of the Month

✂ Our person of the month is Sharon Johnson who is editor of

our Church newsletter and maintains CCC's website. She also does church photography and is a member of the drama club. Sharon



has one son, Chad who is manager of the Las Vegas and Phoenix Greyhound maintenance yards. She has two granddaughters, Cerra who works for Sephora and freelances as a make-up artist and Samantha who has received a scholarship for Westminster College in Utah and will attend there in the fall. Her daughter-in-law, Kelly, is a project manager. Sharon worked as an RN for over 21 years in the field of psych nursing and is now retired.

Her favorite Bible verse is Rom 8:1 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,* NIV

So long for now, your Roving Reporter, AKA Jr. Scoop.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Romans 16:20

Taking Things for Granted

by Sharon Johnson

The miracle of a beautiful day. In all the universe, so far as we know, there is not another place that is so mild and calm where life such as ours can exist. We walk outside and say, "Oh! It is such a beautiful day," and then go on about our business. But do we know what it took for God to provide this planet for us so that a beautiful day could even happen?

Our all-powerful and all-knowing God was thinking about us, His future family - people to be made in His image, when He created the universe in the 'big bang.' All space, time and energy came into existence together in that "bang." Before then, there was no time. There was no space. Then, suddenly, an exceedingly dense, incredibly hot, infinitesimal ball of something began to expand rapidly with our whole world inside of it. We know that was God working.

When time began the physics and quantum physics of all this took enormously intelligent and ultra-intricate engineering of the uncountable number of transactions per nano second throughout the course of the 14 billion years that led to the formation of earth. Then a staggering amount of things had to happen to make this planet habitable. If everything didn't happen precisely right, at the right place, and with exact timing - no life could have ever existed here. Then we see the progression of creation as is listed in Genesis that leads to the creation of man at a time when everything had been prepared for him by a loving God. Sin did not exist on earth, so everything was perfect. After the fall, was when the struggle began.

But a beautiful day, is the most incredible miracle. When we see a terrible storm roaring through towns and cities destroying everything in its path, we think of power. And there is power there, but nothing like the power and unfathomable intelligence that God had when He created all of this for us and provided beautiful days and all of our days for us to enjoy.

Mike Paraspolo said that if God could handle all of the things of creation, why do we worry about the problems we deal with? He took care of the sin problem by giving His beloved Son, Jesus, to die for us. God loves us and is more than able to take good care of us.

James 1:17-18 *Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows. God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things he made.* NCV

The Flu, Kaiser, & Me

by Sharon Johnson

I went to Kaiser this week with flu symptoms and I asked God for a good parking space. I felt really sick and didn't want to do a lot of walking. I thought, "Well if it looks really busy, I'll use the valet parking." I had the \$5.00 plus tip. Well it turned out that it was extremely busy that day and the valet parking was full. There was no parking space to be found. As soon as I saw one, someone zipped in and got it. Finally I found a space but it was a long distance from Urgent Care and was on the street and in a tight space. I would have to do some fancy parallel parking to get into it.

As I pondered this some cars were honking at me to "Move it!" So I tried to remember the instructions about parallel parking that I heard so many years ago and 1-2-3 I parked beautifully well, A Nascar driver would have been envious at how well I parked that car. Me, the mechanically challenged, did that. Ah, but that was God helping me.

I trudged onward to the building. Really old ladies (older than me) and people in wheel chairs passed me handily as I slowly moved forward. When I got there, I found out that there was a two to three hour wait to be seen by a doctor. The words, "Woe is me" passed through my mind. However, we all have to accept what we can't change. BUT, the receptionist referred me to the Tent - which is where the flu clinic is held.

So, as I headed there, I'm wondering how many coughers and hackers I would have to sit by in the Tent waiting to be seen by a doctor. God is so merciful to me, I was the first patient they had that day. In the fact the doctor said, "Where have you been? We've been waiting for you." I was in and out in a jiffy. A line did start to form, and from the look on the faces of those poor people, they were in bad shape. I pray God help them.

I stopped at Starbucks and got my favorite coffee and dessert. And then trudged back to my car. I had many blessings that day but still wondered why God did not answer my prayer the way I wanted Him to and give me a closer parking space, I remembered my nursing classes that taught us that people must remain as active as they can to prevent pneumonia. That could have been the reason God chose to give me a far away parking space. There could be a dozen reasons why He did it that way. I have learned to trust Him in whatever

comes my way. His ways are higher than my ways.

This may be just a simple example of accepting God's decisions and loving Him and rejoicing in Him, but it works in much more important things also.

Shaken

by Charles Spurgeon

That those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Heb12:27

We have many things in our possession at the present moment which can be shaken, and it ill becomes a Christian to set much store by them, for there is nothing stable beneath these rolling skies; change is written upon all things. Yet, we have certain "things which cannot be shaken," and I invite you this evening to think of them, that if the things which can be shaken should all be taken away, you may derive real comfort from the things that cannot be shaken, which will remain.

Whatever your losses have been, or may be, you enjoy present salvation. You are standing at the foot of His cross, trusting alone in the merit of Jesus' precious blood, and no rise or fall of the markets can interfere with your salvation in Him; no breaking of banks, no failures and bankruptcies can touch that. Then you are a child of God this evening. God is your Father. No change of circumstances can ever rob you of that. Although by losses brought to poverty, and stripped bare, you can say, "He is my Father still. In my Father's house are many mansions; therefore will I not be troubled."

You have another permanent blessing, namely, the love of Jesus Christ. He who is God and Man loves you with all the strength of His affectionate nature—nothing can affect that. The fig tree may not blossom, and the flocks may cease from the field, it matters not to the man who can sing, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." Our best portion and richest heritage we cannot lose. Whatever troubles come, let us be mature; let us show that we are not such little children as to be cast down by what may happen in this poor fleeting state of time.

Our country is Immanuel's land, our hope is above the sky, and therefore, calm as the summer's ocean; we will see the wreck of everything earth born, and yet rejoice in the God of our salvation.

Churchgoers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out. - Billy Graham

BLASTs
from the past: 2007 & 2008



Kitchen Korner

from the kitchen of *Dee Paraspolo*

A post by *Corinne Rogero*

I want to be engaged this year. As of yesterday I've been on this earth for more than twenty-three years, and I think it's about time for me to be engaged. I've been asking people on my Home Team what one word they want to hold true for 2016. When the question was finally reciprocated by my friend Sanford, I couldn't come up with anything. I hadn't found one that quite fit. I would say seemingly meaningful words aloud to see if their meanings would hold any significance for what I want this next year to be. I rustled up words like "depth" or "rest" or "value" and announced them to myself in the car or in the shower or on my walk to work. Nothing clicked, until I drove to Joshua Tree Park and that's when a word so unexpected was whispered into the silence around me: "engaged."

And I know it's the right word for this year because it scared me to say it aloud. I knew as soon as I heard it in my spirit that it wasn't my idea – I'd never ask for something so radical. But as I sit in this snow-covered coffee shop that word keeps repeating itself in my mind to the point that I can feel it making itself at home and warming everything in me like the flat white in my coffee mug.

For my twenty-fourth year of life I want to be engaged. I'm as single as a slice of American cheese, which is perfect for me right now. So when I say I want to be engaged, I don't mean I'm looking for a fiancé. I mean I want to be engaged in the sense that I'm mindful of the people and surroundings and culture and the spiritual warfare around me. I want to establish meaningful connections with the person on the other side of my coffee mug or in the booth across from me a dinner or in the passenger seat of my car. I want to lean in and connect with the stories being told. I want to actively console the sorrows being shared. I don't want to go through conversations absentmindedly anymore. Because after two decades of being distracted by tomorrow and by my phone and by what's happening in my peripheral, it's about time I was engaged fully in these moments.

I just finished reading *A Hobbit*, *A Wardrobe and a Great War* by Joseph Loconte. It's a book about J.R.R. Tolkien's friendship with C.S. Lewis and how the events of WWI shaped their views on life, transformed their writing, and grew them together as best friends. I came across a quote in one of the last chapters from Lewis about what true friendship is and he says, "You will not find the warrior, the poet, the philosopher or the Christian by staring into his eyes as if he were you mistress; better to fight beside him, head with him, argue with him, pray with him."

I don't think we will ever be fully engaged in the lives of others by staring at them through Instagram or Snapchat or by stalking their musical tastes of Spotify (all of which I am full guilty). I think engagement happens when we turn off our phones and laptops and TVs and fight beside the people we love and want to know more. It happens when we sit together in the silence of reading or doing a puzzle together or in the gentle murmur of prayer for one another.

I want to engage in other cultures and environments and languages in this next year. I want to encounter more new places and faces than sticking to the social norms would allow. More than that, I want to engage in the invisible war that is taking place over the souls of the people around me. I want to be locked and loaded with a arsenal of grace and truth and boldness to bring the good news of hope into the lives that intersect mine. I want to be fully aware of God's presence in every moment and not as much

like Jacob who woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it!"

John 1:10-11 says, "He (Jesus) was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive Him." I don't want to be one of His own who is too busy or distracted or preoccupied to recognize His presence in every moment. I heard a pastor once say, "The holiest moment in life is the one happening right now," and I think he is absolutely correct; because the enemy has quietly and viciously crept into this world and distracted us with empty connections and excuses of worrying about tomorrow.

Will you be engaged with me? Will you spend more time being present in the present and interacting with the current landscape and giving the enemy a good dose of his own fear as your heart and mind sync up with these points in time that touch eternity? I think life looks better engaged, regardless of whether there is a ring involved or not. Because we have a God who's engaged and none of us did anything to deserve his fullness. Stop for a second and hear Him gently whisper, "wake up to the life around you."

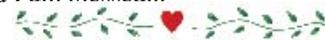
A Beautiful Devotional

by *Charles Spurgeon*

...I present what I have before the Lord Jesus; and through Him my prayers find acceptance wrapped up in His prayers; my praises become sweet as they are bound up with bundles of myrrh, aloes, and cassia from Christ's own garden.

If I can bring Him nothing but my tears, He will put them with His own tears in His own bottle for He once wept; if I can bring Him nothing but my groans and sighs, He will accept these as an acceptable sacrifice, for He once was broken in heart, and sighed heavily in spirit.

I myself, standing in Him, am accepted in the Beloved; and all my polluted works, though in themselves only objects of divine abhorrence, are so received, that God smells a sweet savor. He is content and I am blessed...



There is no better way to usher in a brand new year than to do it in Church with God's family!



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