

THE FLAME

Volume 52, Issue 02

February 2022



Let all that you do be done in love. - 1 Corinthians 16:14



Wednesday Night Activities

Kids M&Ms	3:30 PM
WOW	4:00 PM
P&P	5:30 PM
Chancel Choir	7:00 PM

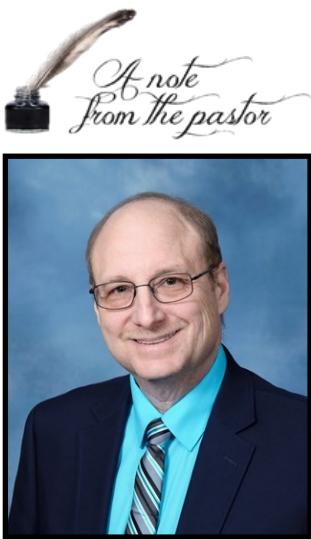
Schedule resumes

Wednesday, February 2nd



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Gineta Swanson has volunteered to direct Bible School this summer., but she would like to have an assistant director. If you have a heart for children, please consider serving. Cathie G is willing to train and help you before she retires in April. There are several options on curriculum and scheduling. Contact the Office (580) 762-1681.



Pastor
Don Griffin

What is the main holiday or observance for the month of February? That's right, the annual observance of my Dallas Cowboys not being in the Super Bowl. I suppose I'm still disappointed about the NFL playoffs. Everyone knows that the main day for February is Valentine's Day. We give flowers and chocolates to our sweethearts in honor of a man who was beheaded by Rome on February 14, 269 c.e. It is said that St. Valentine ministered to the persecuted Christians during this time period. He was said to have healed his jailer's daughter of blindness before his execution. Tradition indicates he wrote a short letter to her before his death and signed it "your Valentine." Later it became part of the folklore that St. Valentine would perform weddings for Christian soldiers who were forbidden to marry.

February is often called the month of love and romance. Being a single person, I must admit that Valentine's Day has not really had that meaning for me in a very long time. But from my brief lesson above, you can see where some of the traditions you may be observing originated. When you think of the term "love" in the English language, you tend to focus immediately on the romantic meaning. Two examples from the New Testament that are most often quoted concerning love is the great

commandment, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." And 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 NLT. The other is I Corinthians 13:1 – 13. This is my text for the January 30th sermon so you can attend to hear what God has for me to share that morning. For the rest of this article, I am going to focus on the great commandment and how we live it out today.

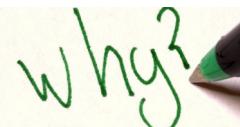
The New Testament was recorded in Greek. Our oldest sources are written in this ancient tongue. Every time the early Greek versions were translated into other languages decisions had to be made as how to best represent the Greek words with the new language. There are four distinct Greek words that are translated into English using the word "love". 1. Eros-Romantic love is the one that most people associate with Valentine's Day. 2. Storge-Is Family love that you might have for your children or parents. 3. Philia-Is often described as brotherly love. It is connection and friendship shared between two people. 4. Agape- Described as unconditional love is found in God's love for creation and our love for God. This is a higher and altruistic love. In the great commandment quoted above it is Agape that we are focusing on.

Please note that great commandment calls upon us to have this higher love for God. Love God with all our heart. Love God with all our soul. Love God with all our strength. Love God with all our mind. We then have the phrase to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Philia, right? No! The same word Agape is used in loving both self and others. The highest commandment in our Christian faith is to love God as God loves us. To love ourselves as God loves us. This is the same kind of unconditional and altruistic love we have for God that we should have for ourselves. This is not Narcissistic love but just accepting unconditionally that we are of value and purpose despite our faults. The great twist here is that we should also have this

same unconditional love for our neighbors. Unconditional love that values them and sees purpose in them despite any shortcoming we may perceive. Jesus said that to live out this commandment assures eternal life or heaven.

Regardless of your relationship status for Valentine's Day, February can be a true month of love. In fact, we as Jesus' followers should make every day of our lives on the foundation of Agape love for God, for ourselves, and for others. That should be the relationship we have with each other in our congregation and in our neighborhoods. You are called to a people of love...Agape love.

Happy Agape Days,
Pastor Don



Not long after I arrived at First Church, we organized three teams to look at different aspects of our church's ministry. The first team focused on how we could re-introduce ourselves to the community. Our focus was getting the message of our community of faith into the places we are called to serve. The second team focused on how we could better connect within our congregation and to people who came to visit our church or was connected to ministries of our church, such as Mother's Day Out. The third team was to evaluate the ministries of our church and see what was working and what needed to be revised or replaced. Team three had just begun our work together when Covid shut us down and shut us down hard.

I would like to begin that work of

Cont'd on page 3



“Music

*Speaks what cannot
be expressed*

*Soothes the mind
and gives it rest*

*Heals the heart and
makes it whole*

*Flows from heaven to
the soul”*

Music Notes

by Joycelyn Davidson

KID'S M&Ms

Kids' M&Ms starts back February 2nd at 3:30. Be sure to notify the school if your child will be riding the church van. This will be Ms. Cathie's final semester with us as Children's Director. She is retiring the end of April. We want this to be a busy spring for her so send your

kids, grandkids, neighbor's kids to participate on Wednesdays. There will be a couple Sundays that we would love to have them in worship but that is yet to be determined. There will also be a going away party for Ms. Cathie. More information will be sent out at a later date.

CHANCEL CHOIR

Chancel Choir is back in the loft! It is always a happy day when they come back after a break no matter how long or short the break.

We are currently working on anthems for worship during the season of Epiphany. However, the first Sunday in Lent is March 6th and then we make that push toward Easter which is late this year. April 17th sounds like a long way off, but it will be here before we know it.

PERSONAL NOTE

I am so in awe of all your prayers, cards and support. I am headed into the final phase of treatment with a bone marrow transplant. I will be in the hospital most of February followed up with rehab. Marta Sullivan will be directing the Chancel Choir during my absence. Please pray for her as she is dealing with hip pain following a fall.

Cont'd from page 2

evaluating our ministry together with one simple question: Why? I am going to begin a study and discussion group that will meet each week to talk about the ministries of our church and we are going to seek to delve beyond the “what we do, when we do, where we do and how we do it” to the ultimate question of why are we doing these things? What, when, where and how questions are important but focus more on our traditions and not on the base question of why. Why do we worship? Why do we have Bible studies and Sunday school? Why do we have children and youth minis-

tries? Why do we support and participate in ministries to those outside our walls? Why do we have subgroups in our church?

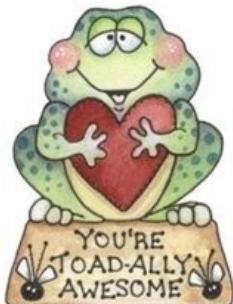
I am inviting all of Team 3 to join this process and would like to extend it to anyone who would enjoy this exploration. I plan to begin this study/discussion group around February 15th. I think this group will meet in the late morning or early afternoon weekly through Easter. Do you have ninety minutes to dedicate to our church and God's work each week? I pray you will join me in this process.

Pastor Don



Love doesn't make the world go round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile.

—Franklin P. Jones



Hey Youth, and Parents ,

We will have our annual dessert auction on the last Wednesday of February, please let me know if you will be able to help provide for the meal and/or desserts!

I am proud to say that we started a new Bible study in January that we continue with this month! It is based on a show called *The Chosen*. The kids seemed to really enjoy it. I can't wait to see what they think of the next few episodes!

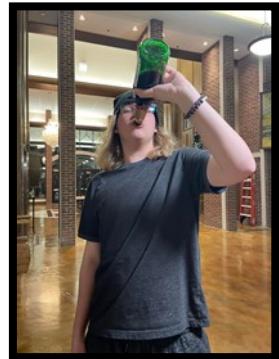
Blessings
Lindsey



Did you know the word love is used more than any other word in the Bible? In the King James version it is used 238 time.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. I Corinthians 13:4-8





**Yes, it is sparkling
grape juice!**



New Year's Eve Fun at the Hub!





PRAYER CORNER

Father, love is the true mark of a believer and follower of Christ. Please pour your love into my heart so people can see you in me. Let all I do be done with the love of God. Let Your love grow in my heart so I can give more of my time and self to You, Your work, and to those around me. Let Your love set me free from fear, selfishness, strife and hatred. Let Your love transform me into a patient, humble, kind person who does not envy, boast, get easily angry, or keep record of wrongs. Help me to live in You; help me live and walk in love.

Amen



Somehow I missed the opportunity to sign the staff Thank you in the January newsletter. I want to thank you for the Love Offering and a special thanks to the Chancel Choir for the "little box" presented to the staff on Cantata Sunday.

I greatly enjoy providing music for worship and it is an honor to be part of the FUMC family. Love and blessings for 2022!

Debbie Rue



Blessed Are the Volunteers!

If you have volunteered to serve in any capacity in the church, you know it is truly a blessing, not only to others, but to yourself!

Did you know that Dianne, the church secretary only works three days a week. We need someone to answer the phone on Thursdays from about 11:00-1:00 to cover staff lunch breaks when Dianne is off. (The church office is closed on Fridays.) If you are available, please let us know in the office. (580)762-1681

Ushers are needed on Sunday mornings. A signup sheet is available on Sunday mornings, or you may call the office as well.

If you want to know what an usher does, we ask you to serve each Sunday for a month, three times a year. You are a greeter, handing out bulletins to people as they come into the sanctuary, answer questions for visitors, take a headcount of people in attendance, collect the offering and after the service make sure trash is not left in the pews, and that Bibles, hymnals etc. have been returned to the racks on the back of the pews.

Dianne and Andy Tubbs (our head usher) have put together information on how each of these tasks are performed. If you have any questions before you sign up, you can talk to Andy or call the church office.

Be a blessing - get a blessing! Sign-up today!



UMW had the annual planning meeting on Saturday January 22nd. Many projects were planned for the year and a few changes were made. The meeting time has been changed to Monday evenings at 6:30. We will meet February 14 at 6:30 to make crib sheets for Living Hope Pregnancy Center. Everyone is invited to help. There will be sewing and non sewing jobs so everyone will be able to participate.

February 4 and 18, Friday, we will be passing out sack lunches to the school children again. We will make sack lunches at 2:00 pm and hand them out as soon as school lets out. Anyone is welcome to help make lunches. If you would like to donate food or money to this project, contact Becky Hightower. We plan on doing it again in the following months and we always love to have your help.

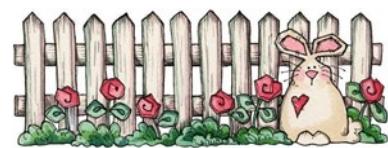
Currently we are collecting cleaning supplies to help the residents at Exodus House in Oklahoma City. This is a Northern Prairie District project of UMW. If you would like to donate money or supplies, we are collecting them until the 14th of February. A list of needed supplies should be in the weekly announcements. We will take the supplies to Stillwater at the Spiritual Day Apart on February 26th and then get them on to Oklahoma City.

Stay tuned for more upcoming events. Remember, God has no feet but our feet, no hands but our hands to do his work today. Please feel free to join us on February 14 at 6:30.



February

2022



SUN MON TUE WED THUR FRI SAT

		1 9:00 Intercessory Prayer	2 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Choir	3 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	4 2:00 UMW Sack lunches for kids	5
6 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Communion Food Sack Sunday 10:30 Children's Church	7 9:00 Staff Gathering	8 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:00 Trustees 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	9 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Choir	10 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	11	12
13 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church	14 9:00 Staff Gathering VALENTINE'S DAY 	15 8:00 UMW Fundraiser 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	16 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Choir	17 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	18 2:00 UMW Sack lunches for kids	19
20 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church	21 9:00 Staff Gathering 5:30 Friendship Feast	22 9:00 Intercessory Prayer 6:30 Bill's Bible Study	23 3:30 Kids' M&Ms 4:00 WOW 5:30 P&P 7:00 Choir	24 10:00 Ladies' Bible Study	25	26 9:00 UMW Spiritual Day Apart in Stillwater
27 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:30 Children's Church	28 9:00 Staff Gathering 9:00 Quilters					

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Seth Griffin	2/03	Carey Head	2/14
Melissa Grubbs	2/05	Dennis Sanders	2/14
Jose Cervantes	2/07	Caitlin Parr	2/15
Ed Goodman	2/07	Khrystal Humble	2/19
Kristin Rasmussen	2/07	Anisa Layton	2/19
Carol Howe	2/08	Sandra Martin	2/23
Sandi Hedinger	2/10	Susan Fitzgerald	2/24
Claudia Bellah	2/11	Court Davis	2/27
Max Jackson	2/10	Teri Harris	2/29



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LIBRARY NEWS

The following books have been recently added to the library:

Dinner by Candlelight by Kevin Louise Schaner is a book of comfort and joy for advent.

Gum Moon by Jeffrey L. Staley is a novel of San Francisco Chinatown. This is a coming of age story about a Chinese-American girl who is sold in 1898 at the age of three to a cruel brothel keeper. The novel is based on events in the life of the author's wife's grandmother.

Separated at the Border by Gena Thomas is a story of a child who goes home, and it is the story of two mothers who are forever changed by a miracle.

Clara Lemlich by Deborah Heiligman is the story of an immigrant who escaped danger in Ukraine and came to New York. She worked in clothing factories on the Lower East Side and realized that workers were being treated unfairly. She changed the way factory workers were treated in America forever by standing up for their rights, especially girls and women.

Not Your Princess – Voices of Native American Women edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale. This is a non-fiction book for children but will be enjoyed by adults, also. It is the winner of the American Indian Library Association Youth Literature Award.

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate. The author takes an almost unthinkable chapter in our nation's history and weaves a tale of enduring power. "That Georgia Tann and her Tennessee Children's Home Society could exist, unraveling the lives of countless children...will give you chills.... Vivid and affecting." Paula McLain

Making Rounds with Oscar by David Dosa, M.D. This is the story of an unusual cat, the patients he serves, their caregivers, and one doctor who learned how to listen.

The House on Lowell Street by Linda A Keane. In this novel, the author has succeeded in capturing the social, economic, and political climate in a small midwestern city more than one hundred years ago. Based on a true event, this novel is deep and memorable.

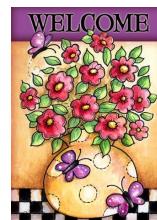
AT THIS TIME THE LIBRARY IS NOT ACCEPTING BOOK DONATIONS. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY OF YOUR USED BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY. THANK YOU.

TWO FEBRUARY HAIKUS

Be my Valentine.
Let God's love be shared with all,
and our Joy complete.

Who's your Valentine?
Does Christ light your inner
light?

Love with your whole heart.
~Wayne Moore



Welcome our new member
Henry Moore.
Henry transferred his membership to FUMC Ponca from FUMC Alva.

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February 2022

Daily Prayers



for our YOUTH

- Our Sons/Daughters, Grandsons/Granddaughters
& all the ones we love.

1

And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ~ Ezekiel 36:26

Blessed Lord, please give XXX a new heart and put a new spirit in him. Remove from him the heart of stone and replace with a soft heart of flesh sensitive to You.

2

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ~ Colossians 3:9-10

Everlasting God, may XXX be honest in all she does, putting on her new self as one renewed in knowledge of You the Creator God.

3

I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus is calling us. ~ Philippians 3:13-14

Omnipresent Father, may XXX set his mind on the prize that awaits him in Christ Jesus.

4

But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.' ~ Acts 13:22

Savior Lord, may XXX be a woman after Your own heart, whose thoughts, words, and actions are pleasing to You as she does Your will.

5

And so the Lord says, 'These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote. ~ Isaiah 29:13

Eternal God, may XXX honor you, God, with all his heart, and not just his lips. May his worship be heartfelt, not simply a pretense to comply with man-made rules.

6

A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart. ~ Luke 6:4

Loving Father, the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. May XXX be a good woman, whose heart store is full of good and worthy things pleasing to You.

7

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. ~ Proverbs 4:23

Sovereign Lord, may XXX be mindful that above all else, he is to be careful to guard his heart, for everything he does flows from it.

8

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. ~ Psalm 139:23-24

Mighty God, look deep into XXX heart, God, and find out everything she's thinking. See if there is any offensive way in her; lead her in the everlasting way.

9

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17

King of Kings, may XXX live as new creation, leaving the old behind!

10

...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ~ Ephesians 4:22-24

Awesome Father, may XXX put off his old self and cultivate a new attitude reflecting true righteousness and holiness like You Lord.

11

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." ~ Luke 22:42

Almighty Lord, may XXX have a heart that yields to You, so he is able to say, "not my will, but Yours be done".

12

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. ~ James 4:8

Adonai, may XXX draw near to You. May he not be double-minded. May he be inclined to be pure with clean hands and a pure heart.

13

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. ~ Psalm 51:10

My God, please create a pure heart in XXX. Please renew a steadfast spirit within her.

14

Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' ~ Matthew 22:37

HAPPY Valentine's Day
Lord of Peace, may XXX learn to love You Lord, with all his heart, soul and mind.

15

You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too. ~ Matthew 23:26

Majesty, may XXX not be like a whitewashed tomb; beautiful on the outside but full of impurities inside. May her heart be clean, full and overflowing with righteousness.

16

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ~ 2 Corinthians 4:16

Blessed Father, may XXX not lose heart due to circumstance, but instead, trust You and be inwardly renewed each day.

17

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. ~ Ecclesiastes 3:11

Glorious Lord, may XXX's mind be transformed and renewed to accept and appreciate God's good, pleasing and perfect will for her life.

18

A wise person chooses the right road; a fool takes the wrong one. ~ Proverbs 15:1

Merciful Father, may my child have a heart of the wise which inclines to the right, not the heart of the fool which leads astray.

19

"Son of man, these leaders have set up idols in their hearts. They have embraced things that will make them fall into sin. Why should I listen to their requests? ~ Ezekiel 14:3

Almighty King, make XXX not set up idols in his heart, nor put worldly, wicked stumbling blocks before his face.

20

Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ~ Acts 2:37

Omniscient God, may XXX's heart yearn for You Lord. May Your words pierce her heart and she repent.

21

For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing." ~ Jeremiah 31:25

Eternal Father, please refresh XXX when he is weary and weak. Refill him with hope, joy and peace.

22

"But I said to you, 'Don't be shocked or afraid of them! The LORD your God is going ahead of you. He will fight for you, just as you saw him do in Egypt.' ~ Deuteronomy 1:29-30

Awesome Lord, as XXX goes about her day, may she not be terrified or afraid, as You, The Lord her God, goes before her, fighting all her battles for her.

23

But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit. ~ Romans 7:6

Savior Father, may XXX not be legalistic, serving in the old way of the law. Instead, may he embrace the truth, serving in the new way of the Spirit.

24

Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ~ Luke 10:19

God of All Hope, please give XXX the assurance that You are bigger than her challenges. You have given her authority over all the power of her enemies. Nothing will injure her.

25

But if you are careful to obey him, following all my instructions, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will oppose those who oppose you. ~ Exodus 23:22

Blessed God, please stir XXX to be careful to obey You, following all Your instructions, so You will be an enemy to his enemies, and oppose all those who oppose him.

26

But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the LORD; their vindication will come from me. I, the LORD, have spoken! ~ Isaiah 54:17

Glorious Father, may no weapon formed against XXX prosper. May every tongue that accuses her in judgment receive Your condemnation. May this be her heritage as a servant of the LORD.

27

You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. ~ 1 Peter 1

Omnipotent Lord, may XXX love others earnestly from a pure heart.

28

But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.
~ 2 Thessalonians 3:3

Sovereign God, please strengthen XXX and protect him from the evil one and his minions.

