

HOPE & HARMONY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MARY ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH

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WELCOME!

The month of February hosts several special holidays and monthly observances like Black History month, American Heart Month, and National Love Your Pet Day (Feb 20th, or every day if your dogs are as spoiled as ours). One day in particular has been one of my favorites since I was a little girl, Valentine's Day. I remember picking out Valentines and candies to hand out to my friends at school and church. I enjoy getting flowers and eating chocolate. I think the most special part is celebrating love and having a day all about expressing love to those around us.

As Christians, this should be our mindset all year long. After all, Jesus said in John 13:34, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment he replied in Mark 12:30-31 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Let's bring a little bit of the Valentine's spirit into everyday life, and show love so that God's light will shine through us as we follow his commands.

In this month's issue we will explore Jesus' love for us, a story of real life love, an article on living like Jesus, and even some ideas of sharing God's love from our little love bugs. Sending lots of LOVE to each of you (but you'll have to buy your own chocolates. 😊)



JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW

As Christians, we accept that God loves us. We sing about it in hymns, read about it in scripture, and see it in our lives. While there are many ways His love is manifested and proven, one very powerful and personal expression of this love is Jesus' prayer in John 17.

To set the scene, Jesus and the disciples had just partaken in the "Last Supper." After some discourse and teaching, Jesus prayed this prayer about himself, his disciples and those who believe in Him. In other words, Jesus prayed for us. While on this Earth, Jesus put forth a petition to God on our behalf long before we even existed. Jesus knew His mission here on Earth was coming to a close, and that suffering, death, and separation from God was drawing near, yet he stopped and prayed for us. What an act of love.

When we look at what he prayed on our behalf, this picture of love becomes increasingly beautiful.

He prays for unity among believers. Jesus knew a shared mindset and limited strife within the church would bring strength and rejuvenation to his followers.

He prays that we be in God the Father and Son as they are in each other. To be so fully embraced within such a perfect, loving and holy relationship is a level of love that is almost beyond comprehension.

Jesus prays for unity among believers and with the Father and Son so, "that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me." (John 17:23) His love is not limited to believers, but is amplified to all.

Jesus ends this prayer saying, "I made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them." Jesus has experienced the limitless, powerful love of our heavenly Father since before creation and loves us so much that he wants us to experience that same love and for it to dwell within us. Jesus himself desires to be part of us. He loves us so deeply that he wants to be woven into our very existence.

Jesus' prayer opens our eyes to the desires of his heart for believers: unity, love, protection and sanctification. It also opens our eyes to His love for us. I encourage you to read John 17 knowing it is a prayer for you straight from the lips of the one who died for our sins and continues intercede with God on our behalf.

**"that the world may know
you have sent me and have
loved them as you have loved
me."**

John 17: 23

showing God's LOVE

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, the children of MEBC have shared a few of their ideas of how we can show God's love to others.

Praying

Sharing Love

Caring for others

Treat others the way you want to be treated

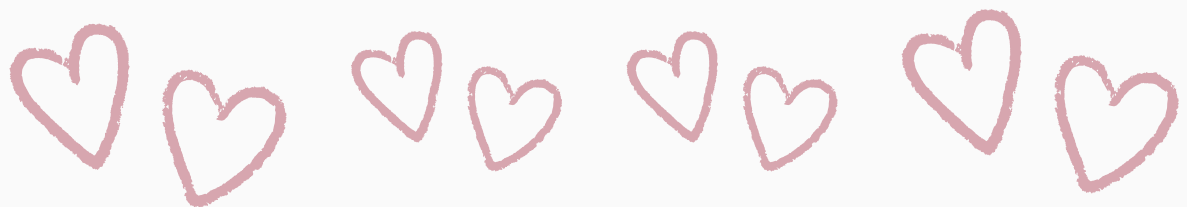
Tell people about God

By singing praises to God and singing in the choir

Saying kind words

Pray for others

Share our food





CELEBRATING ANOTHER BAPTISM!

We are overjoyed that yet another young person has made a public profession of faith, and joined our church as a brother in Christ. Weston was baptized on February 16th. Again, we were blessed by his family being present in the service. Weston, his mother, Connie, and his brother, Cameron sang a beautiful song about following the will of God. May we as a church nurture Weston and continue to encourage him as he continues to seek God's will.





LOVING LIKE *Jesus*

When I think of loving like Jesus, I am reminded of our group's Bible studies during a mission trip in Honduras. The pastor who led the group encouraged us to consider loving "practically." He acknowledged that God and Jesus' love for us is miraculous and hard to conceptualize, but Jesus also loved in very practical ways. He healed the sick, he grieved with the hurting, he fed the 5,000; all of these moments showed that he had empathy, compassion, and love for the people to whom he was ministering. Jesus' miracles weren't meaningless, mystical feats; they left an impact and changed lives in response to people's needs. Jesus' ultimate sacrifice is to meet our most ultimate need: salvation.

In John 13, Jesus sets an example of serving and loving. Jesus and the disciples are sitting around the table at the "Last Supper." Jesus fills a basin with water, grabs a towel, and begins washing the disciples' feet. We can imagine the shock of the disciples; Peter's response is even recorded, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" A task typically performed by a lowly servant was being carried out by their Lord.

Once he finishes, Jesus returns to the table and teaches a lesson in humility and servitude. Jesus led by example using an event the disciples had probably experienced numerous times to drive home his point in a very practical manner. Jesus wants us to have a servant's heart. We are to show love by serving others in meaningful ways.

Jesus knew that his time with his disciples was coming to an end. These men were precious to Jesus; John 13:1 says "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." Jesus chose in his final days to wash his disciples' feet. What an intimate act of love. I can imagine that was a moment that stuck in their minds and hearts long after Jesus ascended to heaven. What a powerful way to instill an example of loving practically and serving humbly. We can take Jesus' lessons in loving into our own lives as we strive to be more Christ-like. Introducing people to Jesus isn't just in a verbal sharing of the gospel it is living and loving in a way that makes him evident to the people around us. Just like Jesus, we must take opportunities to serve others humbly and minister to their needs. In a month that celebrates love, let us turn to Jesus, the most ultimate source of love, to fill our lives and teach us how to love others.

FEBRUARY

UPCOMING*

- WISER WOMEN BIBLE STUDY
MONDAYS, 6:30 PM
- SISTERS IN CHRIST BIBLE STUDY
MONDAYS, 7:00 PM
- REVIVAL
FEB 23-MARCH 16, SUNDAYS 11 AM
- BROTHERHOOD BREAKFAST
FEB 23, 8:00 AM
- LADIES MEETING - HILLCREST BAPTIST
MARCH 1, 10 AM
REQUIRES REGISTRATION
- BAPTISTS ON MISSION TRAINING
MARCH 1, HICKORY GROVE BAPTIST
REQUIRES REGISTRATION

*CLICK THE EVENT FOR MORE INFO & SHARABLE FLYER

MEBC HIGHLIGHTS

WOMEN'S GROUPS BIBLE STUDIES

TWO WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE CHURCH HAVE ELECTED TO BEGIN BIBLE STUDIES ON MONDAY NIGHTS. SISTERS IN CHRIST, THE YOUNGER WOMEN, MEET AT 7:00. THE WISER WOMEN MEET AT 6:30. THIS TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD HAVE BEEN A TREMENDOUS BLESSING IN EACH GROUP AND THEY ENCOURAGE EVERY WOMAN IN OUR CHURCH TO ATTEND AND EXTEND THE INVITATION TO VISITORS.

WISDOM CORNER

NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD;
BUT IF WE LOVE ONE
ANOTHER, GOD LIVES IN US
AND HIS LOVE IS MADE
COMPLETE IN US.

1 JOHN 4:12

GOOD FOR THE SOUL

I'M A SUCKER FOR REAL-LIFE HUMOUR, SO WHEN I SAW THIS STORY FROM READER'S DIGEST, I HAD TO SHARE IT WITH ALL OF YOU!

"EVERY VALENTINE'S DAY OUR CAMPUS NEWSPAPER HAS A SECTION FOR STUDENT MESSAGES. LAST YEAR MY ROOMMATE SURPRISED HIS GIRLFRIEND WITH ROSES AND DINNER AT A FANCY RESTAURANT. WHEN THEY RETURNED FROM THEIR DATE, SHE LEAFED THROUGH THE PAPER TO SEE IF HE HAD WRITTEN A NOTE TO HER. NEAR THE BOTTOM OF ONE PAGE SHE FOUND: 'BONNIE, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING HERE FOR? AREN'T DINNER AND FLOWERS ENOUGH? LOVE, SCOTT.'" — CONTRIBUTED BY RICHARD B. BLACKWELL



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND INTEREST WITHIN OUR CHURCH & COMMUNITY. PLEASE FORWARD OUR NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND! IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER OR HAVE CONTENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FEATURED PLEASE CONTACT US AT: MEBC3703@GMAIL.COM