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Who is the real St. Valentine?

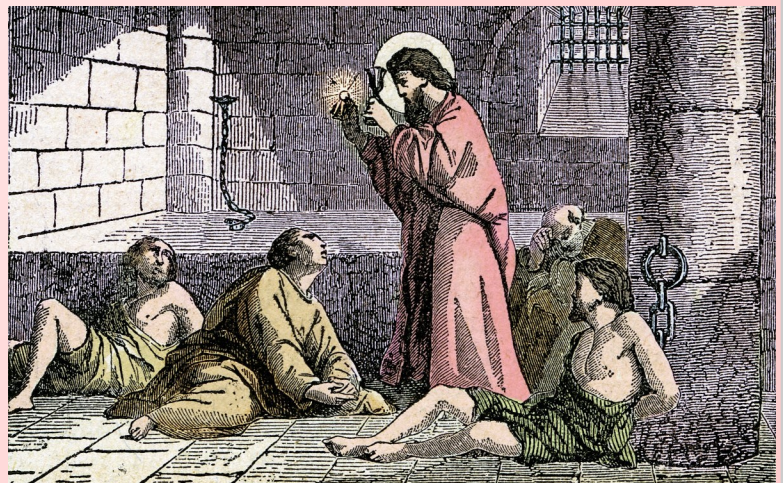
By Pastor Munding

There is a lot of mystery that surrounds Valentine's Day. Now I'm not talking about the Valentine's day that we all grew up celebrating where we had to give out cards and candy to all of our classmates. That celebration is pretty well understood. St. Valentine's Day was originally a church celebration remembering the Christian martyr St. Valentine, or rather, we remember two or three (depends on who you ask) different martyrs named St. Valentine. That's right, there were three Christian men who laid down their life for Christ and we as the church celebrate and remember them on February 14th; St. Valentine of Terni, St. Valentine of Rome, and St. Valentine of Africa. There are actually around 30 different St. Valentines that are commemorated throughout the year but these three are associated with February 14th. Who are these men and what do they have to do with our modern secular version of St. Valentine's Day?

Right off the bat you may be thinking that it's a weird coincidence that there are three separate martyrs named Valentine. Back in the Ancient Roman Empire the name Valentine was fairly common, sort of like John or Matthew are common names today. It's not a huge shocker to have over 30 men named Valentine who are remembered by the church. Let's take a closer look at the lives of these three men who are associated with St. Valentine's Day.

St. Valentine of Terni was born in 226 A.D. and he was either a priest or a bishop who preached and comforted persecuted Christians in the Roman Empire. He was martyred in the outskirts of Rome under the Emperor Claudius II and is recorded in ancient martyr lists that were compiled in the 5th century to assure that their names and deeds lived on in the church.

St. Valentine of Rome was also martyred in Rome under Emperor Claudius II by beheading. It is recorded, "At Rome, on the Flaminian Way, in the time of Emperor Claudius, the birthday of St. Valentine, priest and



Continued on page 2

martyr, who after having cured and instructed many persons, was beaten with clubs and beheaded.” Like St. Valentine of Terni, he helped encourage his fellow Christians who were being persecuted.

Sadly, little is known about St. Valentine of Africa. He most likely was the earliest of the three Valentines but not much is known after that. All we know is that he was martyred for His faith in Christ somewhere in Africa and we will meet him and all the Martyrs one day in Paradise.

You may be wondering what do these three people have to do with our modern celebration of St. Valentine’s day. Well, the answer is in reality not much. Pope Gelasius I officially made February 14th the feast day of St Valentine throughout the church in the 5th century but in reality, it has little to do with our modern celebration. You may hear of several church traditions which state that St. Valentine secretly married Christians couples which was forbidden by the Roman Empire or you may hear of the legend of St. Valentine sending a note to a woman who was in jail and signing it with “Your Valentine”. These are fun little stories that helped shape the current celebration of St Valentine's but sadly these stories are most likely works of fiction which were written in the middle ages or later. The earliest writings we have which speaks of the stories other than the martyrdom of St. Valentine comes from the 13th century. While you can argue that our modern-day celebrations are based on these fictional stories of St. Valentine, the day really has little to do with the real men who died for the faith. In fact, the Roman Catholic church has a hard time keeping track of which story goes with which Valentine.

While the fictional stories associated with St. Valentines are nice and fun and they help us get into that St. Valentine’s Day mood, I think the true stories of these men are even greater and show us a greater example of love. These men were shining examples of the Christian faith and should serve as encouragement for all of us. They selflessly served the church and her members even in the face of death. But most importantly we remember that God loved all three of these men and sent His Son Jesus to die for them on the cross. They were redeemed by the blood of Christ, victory over the grave was given to them at Jesus resurrection, and all this was sealed for them in the waters of Holy Baptism. They were willing to lay down their lives because Christ first laid down his so that even in death, they may truly live. Their faith laid hold of and clung tightly to the cross of Christ where the greatest act of love was shown to the world. Christ says in the Gospel of John, *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

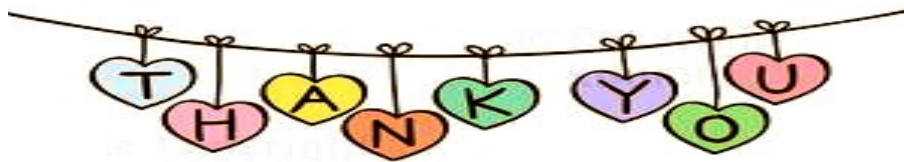
St. Valentine's Day was originally for the purpose of remembering the deaths of God’s saints (these three men and really all the faithful) but more importantly it is about remembering all that Christ has done for His faithful; the very reason why they laid down their life. They never wavered even in the face of great storms. As the winds blew relentlessly, they held on even tighter to doctrine of Christ for the salvation of their souls, their examples of love for God and love for neighbor in spite of their own sinfulness in this sin-stained world.

Don’t get me wrong, you can still celebrate St. Valentine's Day with the rest of our country. It is good and right to show our significant other unconditional love and this day helps us pause our busy lives and remember those whom God has placed in our lives and husband or wife. Just don't forget the original meaning of this day which has been forgotten by many. This is also a day to remember the love that God has for us through Christ Jesus! Out of love, Christ gave everything for us so that we might have everything, including His forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Him. The martyrdom of St. Valentine of Terni, St Valentine of Rome, and St. Valentine of Africa should help us remember that fact! Christ gave everything for them, and he has given everything for us so that we may live with him for all eternity when we go through the portal of death!

John 11:24-27, “Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.’”



John	2/4
Don	2/5
Sue	2/11
Mike	2/12
Gavin	2/12
Maxine	2/19
John	2/20
Mike	2/20
Tina	2/22
Justin	2/27



Thank you to our church family for the prayers, cards, and encouraging words during my preparation for and recovery from surgery. Your support has meant so much to John and me during this time. Thanks be to God for guiding my care team and for the best possible outcome. Andrea

We want to thank all who prayed for me as I recovered from my recent hand surgery for carpal tunnel. Being lifted up in prayer is such a comfort. I am thankful for all of you "prayer warriors". My hand is recovering well, and should be back to normal soon. I am especially thankful for the absence of pain, numbness, and tingling in my hand!

Thank you too for your prayers for Allen this last fall and early winter with the health issues that had him in and out of the hospital several times. He is doing great, and you will likely see him down at church raking, sweeping, mowing, spraying, or just checking on things. Holy Cross is his "home away from home"! With thankful hearts, Cherylene and Allen



And, I received this email & picture:

Date: Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 8:21 PM
Subject: Thank you
To: office@holycrossconcord.org

I've been meaning to thank you for your beautiful Christmas candles. Every time I drove by you reminded me what Christmas is really about. Thank you so much.

You make such a difference in our community.

Thank you again,
Evette Reinwald

RAGIN' CAJUN VALENTINE OCCASION



JOIN US OUTSIDE FOR A VALENTINE'S
DEVOTIONAL SERVICE FOLLOWED BY A
CAJUN SHRIMP BOIL. WE WILL ALSO BE
SERVING GUMBO FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT
A FAN OF SHRIMP. MAKE SURE TO DRESS
WARM AND BRING YOUR APPETITE!

FEB 14, 2019 - 1PM
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH PARKING LOT

For more information, you can email us at office@holycrossconcord.org or
go to www.facebook.com/holycrossconcord.



Holy Cross Book Club
Online Event

Pastor has started our **Holy Cross Book Club.**

Many of us have more time to ourselves & what a good way to spend it learning in an informal environment & gaining new perspectives. And good news - you don't need to live close to Holy Cross to participate!

Below is his invitation & information. If you have questions, contact Pastor or Joyce.

*******A message from Pastor Mundinger*******

Join us as we enrich our spiritual lives by reading and discussing Rev. Bryan Wolfmuehler's book,

A Martyr's Faith in a Faithless World. It is my hope that his book will help encourage all of us to be faithful in confessing Christ against the attractions of Satan and the hostile world we live in.

We will be discussing this wonderful book on Zoom every week.

We will be meeting every 1st, 2nd, and 4th Monday of the month as well as the 3rd Tuesday of the month because there is a council meeting that week on Monday. ###

Reminders will be sent out on Facebook (& email) every week.

Since there is no council meeting in February, we will meet every Monday this month!

**Information from Jan Walker,
our Council Financial Secretary**

**Giving to Holy Cross with Your Bank's
Online Bill Pay Feature is an Easy Process!**



A quick and easy way to give electronically, with no worries about writing out a check, having an envelope, or even a stamp is to give electronically by using the "BillPay" feature on your bank's website. This service is usually provided free of charge to you as the customer. Each bank's website is a little different, but the typical process is the same.

***Log onto your bank's website and click the link for "BillPay."**

***Add the church as payee- Holy Cross Lutheran Church
1092 Alberta Way, Concord, CA 94521**

***Set up a recurring payment to be sent to the church on a scheduled basis (weekly, monthly, or a one time gift)**

***If you don't want a recurring payment, then leave the amount blank and simply send an offering anytime you want and for any amount.**

***If the bill pay feature at your bank allows for a "Memo or Note" regarding the check, enter in your Holy Cross envelope number.**

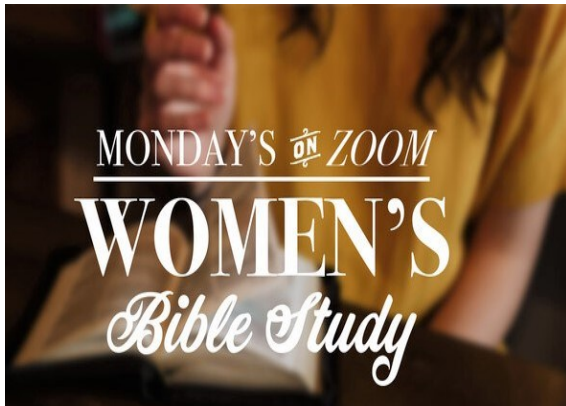
If you have any questions about using Online Bill Pay for offerings or donations to Holy Cross, please contact Jan Walker, Financial Secretary, (mrsjwalk@yahoo.com or 970 744-8613).

February Bible Studies

Adult Sunday School, 1pm, Zoom

Join us for Sunday School with Eric!

The link is the same & is in the
Friday Announcements.



Monday Women's Bible Study, Zoom

We will resume our study on
Monday, January 11, 10-11:30am.

The link is the same &
is in the Friday Announcements.

We had our BEST turnout at our 1/25 Women's "coffee and conversation" Zoom call! One of the benefits of this type of fellowship is represented here: 5 women from Holy Cross in CA (Melarie, Cherylene, Nancy, Marlene, & Joyce), Sue in AZ, Idalene in TX, Sherry from Benicia Lutheran, CA & transferred member Carol Lau from IA (her first ever Zoom call!!) It was a virtual, mini WoHC reunion!

JOIN US ANY MONDAY AT 9AM!



HOLY CROSS MEN'S KAFFEKLATCH PLATOON (HCMKKP)

The Men's Platoon had a Mandatory ZOOM Formation on 21 January 2021. We made history by having the absolutely worst MANDATORY Formation ever. There were only 7 participants (pictured). Mike Liebe and Joe Odrzywolski correctly requested and received excused absences. The good news is - the rest of you no longer need to worry about getting the COVID vaccine because doing the 50 push-ups you owe me should kill you. If

they don't, do 50 more.

While we may be weeks/months away from getting to sit down somewhere for formation, we did discuss places we might go since Mel's shut down for good. Suggestions include, but are not limited to; IHOP on Clayton Rd., Country Waffles on Harbor in Pittsburg, Black Bear on Bancroft Rd., Walnut Creek & the Buttercup Pantry on Clayton Rd. When we appear close to being able to eat inside, I will visit each of these locations to determine whether they will serve our purposes. Being suitable means they have a

separate dining area, will accept separate checks, will not automatically charge 18% tip because more than 8 men show up, have good food and are reasonably priced. We are not asking for much.

More ideas/suggestions are welcomed; however, they should meet the criteria specified above. Meanwhile, we will continue to hold MANDATORY ZOOM FORMATIONS, at 0830 hours, on the THIRD (3rd) Thursday of the month and maximum participation is appreciated (kinder, gentler way of saying "expected"). If Scott Stadler can attend from Texas, you'all can attend. **COMMANDER**

NIFTY FIFTIES by LUKER (The new, but will never fill his shoes, Marv)

Obviously, if the Men's Platoon & that other group (what do they call themselves...Women of Holy Cross [WOHC]) can't meet for a sit-down meal, neither can the Nifty Fifties. I do miss the Nifty Fifty outings! Since ZOOM seems to work well as a way see each other face to face & to communicate, I'm thinking about conducting a monthly Nifty Fifties chat session on ZOOM; however, if someone else wants to take the lead on that, please step up to the plate. If I do it, I'll have to deconflict scheduled ZOOM use before I can pick a day and time of the week.

It is likely that we will want to discuss options for future outings when everyone has had the vaccine & all COVID restrictions cease. As concerns selection for restaurant outings, I suggest we follow the Men's Platoon framework. Read their article. We may have to forgo a separate dining area but the restaurant should attempt to seat us all together (impossible now with current COVID separation rules). I do have a personal pet peeve to share. I have an intense dislike of establishments that will not accept separate checks. The wife only gives me so much cash allowance per month but doesn't argue (too much) when I use the credit card. Additionally, it is a logistical nightmare trying to fairly split the bill when some people drink or get desert, etc., & others do not. Additionally, a lot of us take exception to being forced to pay the mandatory 18% tip, particularly if/when service or food is bad. This always comes up when trying to split the bill. What we really need is a rich uncle to pay for us all. Problem solved; I always heard that when complaining, have a solution & now you do.

Start thinking about your day & time preference for a Nifty Fifties ZOOM chat. I think I have found a free program that will help determine when most of you are available. I must investigate it a little more & if I think it will work, I'll get the word to you. Does anyone have experience with DOODLE?

Blessing Jars by Cherylene

Be still...
KNOW THAT
I AM
God.
PSALM 46:10

It has been a month now since we finished our 150 days of reading the Psalms. You likely found many that really spoke to your heart, or maybe you found a new favorite. I am reading them again, feeling closer to the Lord!

As we turn the first page of our 2021 calendar, we find the season of Lent just around the corner. Lent is a time to focus on our repentance, to have a contrite heart, to be thankful for God's presence in our lives and his precious gift of eternal life through his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection on Easter Sunday are God's ultimate Blessings to us.

Let us daily proclaim "Be still and know that I am God." PSALM 46:10 during Lent. As we repent our sins, we can also reflect on how God blesses us every day.

On February 14th you will have the opportunity to receive a [Blessing Jar](#) after church from the Vision Committee. It will be packaged in a handled paper bag along with a sheet of "Blessing Slips". The plan is to daily write a personal blessing (1, 2, 3 ...) on a "Blessing Slip" and drop it in the jar. Make more slips if you run out! Throughout Lent reflect on those blessings, pray on them, fill your jar!



On Easter Sunday, you can replace your "[Blessing Slips](#)" with a small bouquet of flowers to bring to church. We will send out an email closer to Easter with directions of where to put your [Blessing Jar](#), depending on where we will hold our worship service. You might want to keep your "Blessing Slips" in a special box or jar at home to reflect on during your private devotions. Maybe you will add blessings as the year advances!

Blessings from the Vision Committee!

His hands . . . are **wounded hands** that embrace your sorrow,
Strong hands that support your weakness,
Healing hands that restore your soul,
Reassuring hands that bring you comfort,
Gentle hands that calm your fears,
Loving hands that hold you close.

© Best to You --Roy Lessin

Sunday, January 17, Parking Lot Worship with Outdoor Seating!

"It was such a nice day to be outside, and it was so good to see all those willing to take a chair in the sun to listen to Pastor. I took a couple of snaps from my far away vantage point, but figured if you could use them to show we have choices and that on that Sunday it was so good to be out in the open. "

Nancy Hoffman



February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7pm Book Club Zoom	2 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	3	4	5	6 9am Vision Mtg
7 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot Voter's Meeting & Communion after 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	8 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7pm Book Club Zoom	9 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	10	11	12	13
14 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot Communion after 1pm Rajin' Cajon Valentine Occasion, Parking Lot 	15 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7pm Book Club Zoom	16 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	17	18 8:30am HC Men's Kaffeeklatsch Zoom	19	20
21 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot Communion after 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom	22 OFC CLOSED 9-9:45am Women's Coffee Zoom 10-11:30am Ladies Bible Study Zoom 7pm Book Club Zoom	23 11a Prayer Group, Sanctuary	24	25	26	27
28 9:30am Worship Service/Parking Lot Communion after 1pm Adult Sunday School Zoom						

cl=choir loft, C=Conference Room, E=Ed Bldg., PH=Parish Hall, L=Library, ws=wing room

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, LCMS

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Trustees: Allen Brueckner, Bill Luker

Elders: Bill Riechmann, John Coyne,
Eric Roman, Herb Neumann

Secretarial Staff: Joyce Liebe

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9am-1pm

Newsletter Editor: Joyce Liebe
editor@holycrossconcord.org

Sunday Worship Schedule:

Sunday Service 9:30AM

Adult Sunday School 1PM Zoom

Youth Bible Study 11AM (on hold)

Sunday School 11AM (on hold)

Week Day Bible Study Schedule:

Monday (Ladies) 10AM

Wednesday (Adult) on break during Advent

*****Above subject to change due to COVID*****

Bulletin & Cross Currents Publication Deadline:

Bulletin: Noon, Tuesday

March 2021 Cross Currents: February 22, 2021