



“THE STARTER”

February 2022

Rev. Brian Beck

Our email: 1stcongregperu@sbcglobal.net

Web page: firstcongregationalperu.net

Phone 815-223-0722

The Story of St. Valentine

The story of Valentine’s Day begins in the third century with an oppressive Roman emperor and a humble Christian martyr. The emperor was Claudius II. The Christian was Valentinus. Claudius had ordered all Romans to worship twelve gods and he had made it a crime punishable by death to associate with Christians. But Valentinus was dedicated to the life of Christ and not even the threat of death could keep him from practicing his beliefs. He was arrested and imprisoned.

During the last weeks of Valentinus’ life, a remarkable thing happened. Seeing that he was a man of learning, the jailer asked whether his daughter, Julia might be brought to him for lessons. She had been blind since birth. Julia was a pretty young girl with a quick mind. Valentinus read stories of Rome’s history to her. He taught her arithmetic and he told her about God. She saw the world through his eyes, trusted in his wisdom and found comfort in his quiet strength.

“Valentinus, does God really hear our prayers?” Julia asked one day.

“Yes, my child, He hears every one,” he replied.

“Do you know what I pray for every morning and every night? I pray that I might see. I want so much to see everything you’ve told me about.”

“God does what is best for us if we only believe in him,” Valentinus said.

“Oh Valentinus, I do believe,” Julia said intensely.

“I do.” She knelt and grasped his hand.

They sat there together quietly praying. Suddenly there was a brilliant light in the prison cell. Radiant, Julia screamed, “Valentinus, I can see! I can see!”

“Thanks be to God!” Valentinus exclaimed and they knelt and praised Him.

On the eve of his death, Valentinus wrote a last note to Julia urging her to stay close to God and he signed it “From your Valentine.” His sentence was carried out the next day, February 14, 270 A.D., near a gate that was later named Porta Valentini in his memory. He was buried in what is now the Church of Praxedes in Rome. It is said that Julia herself planted a pink-blossomed almond tree near his grave. Today, the almond tree remains a symbol of abiding love and friendship. On each February 14, St. Valentine’s Day, messages of affection, love and devotion are exchanged around the world.



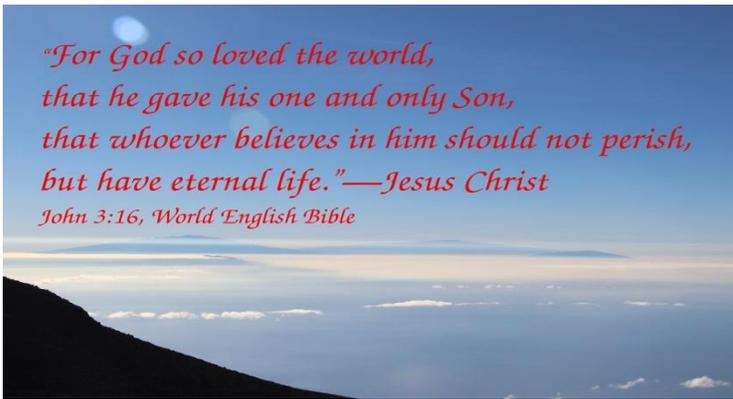
Facts About the Bible

A prisoner, condemned to solitary confinement, obtained a Bible and by three years of careful study obtained the following facts:

The Bible contains 3,586,489 letters, 773,692 words, 31,173 verses, 1188 chapters and 66 books. The word ‘and’ occurs 46,277 times. The word ‘Lord’ occurs 1855 times. The word ‘reverend’ occurs but once, which is the 9th verse of the 118th Psalm. The middle verse is the 8th verse of the 118th Psalm. The 21st verse of the 7th Chapter of Ezra contains all of the alphabet except the letter ‘j’. The 19th chapter of II Kings and the 37th chapter of Isaiah are alike. The longest verse is the 9th verse of the 8th chapter of Esther. The shortest verse is the 35th verse of the 11th chapter of John. Each verse of the 136th Psalm ends alike.



To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was YOU!



*“For God so loved the world,
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish,
but have eternal life.”—Jesus Christ
John 3:16, World English Bible*

Mission Report

The Mission Board hosted “Missions Month” in October. Visiting missionaries included, Transport for Christ, Cup of Cold Water and Abigail Women’s Center. A freewill offering was given to all except Abigail Women’s Center due to the giving through their baby bottle campaign. In December, 75 Christmas cards were given to the residents of Heritage Health in Peru.

Valentines To Give Your Children

ACCEPTANCE – teach kids that you love them for who and what they are. Give this gift with a kiss.

SELF-CONFIDENCE – Help children understand that they can trust themselves. Give this gift with a hug.

LIFE WITHOUT NEEDLESS FEARS – Don’t let your kids see you a worrier. Give this gift with laughter.

APPRECIATION – Help children acquire a spark of gratitude and enjoy all of life. Give this gift as they go out the door.

FAITH – Introduce your children to God, the best friend they’ll ever have. Give this gift by taking them to church every Sunday.

Our Perfect God

There is no perfect life, no perfect job, no perfect childhood, no perfect marriage and no perfect set of people who will always do what we expect them to do.

What we have is a perfect God who is able to lead us through this imperfect life with unfailing strength, incomparable wisdom and infinite love.

*We fall. We break. We fail. But
With Jesus, We rise. We Heal.
We Overcome.*

Something to Think About

There is a potentially serious matter even the most mature believers in the best churches experience. We all need to be warned about it. The symptoms are many:

- ** The thrill of being a child of the living God is only a faint memory.
- ** Bible study and prayer grow dry and predictable. Worship becomes routine.
- ** The purpose and simplicity of the Christian life gives way to clutter.

While every Christian loves God, the intensity of that love has cooled.

Yet nothing is more important than cultivating and sustaining your affection for Christ. Loving Jesus is the heart and soul of the Christian walk. Nothing else matters without it. Just like in marriage, if we neglect our love for Jesus, callousness, carelessness and calamity can’t be far away. The relationship can’t stay healthy without constant tending.

What makes losing our first love for Christ specially dangerous is its subtlety. Like old age or poor eyesight, the loss of affection for Jesus comes not with a shout, but a whisper. It happens gradually. And to make matters worse, if we do not notice our love and zeal for Christ on the wane, we seldom consider it a serious sin.

We can fool a lot of people about where we are spiritually, but we can’t fool God. He knows the intensity of our love and He longs for nothing less than for us to serve Him with sincerity, vigor and joy.

Scout Sunday

Sunday, February 13th is Scout Sunday. The Cub Scouts that meet in this church will be bringing in the flags and leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

This is an excellent opportunity to get to know some of the fine families and share fellowship with them.



Welcome to the Movies

Christian Ed is hosting several afternoon movies. Sunday February 20th at 4:00pm the movies will be the next movie in the series of "God's Not Dead". They are open to everyone! Come enjoy fellowship, and yummy popcorn.



Sunday Funday

Christian Ed is having Sunday Funday in February. Pastor Brian will be the story teller. We will be making valentines to send to shut-ins, February 6th from 4-6pm. Maybe Hide and Seek!!



Souper Bowl

Christian Ed is asking for soup donations on or before Super Bowl Sunday. Super Bowl Sunday is February 13, 2022. All donations will be given to the food pantry.



Diner's Interest

The Dining group will meet on March 21st. There will be a sign-up sheet on the welcome table for suggestions of where you would like to go. Please keep in mind everyone is responsible for their own dinner.



New Members

We will be welcoming new members of February 27th. If you are interested in a becoming a member please see Pastor Beck, or Dean Tieman.



31st Annual Retreat to Rock

The Retreat to the Rock has been canceled due to covid concerns.



Lifeline Screening

Lifeline screening will be here on Wednesday March 2, 2022. Sign up on welcome table for 2 complimentary screenings. Good for 1 individual screening (worth \$70) or \$55 may be applied toward any vascular package valued at \$129.



2022 Small-Town Pastors' Conference

This seminar will be April 25-27 in Morton, Illinois. Flier on bulletin will be on the bulletin board outside the office. Questions and more information please see Pastor Brian.



Missions Night

Cup of Cold Water Ministries is sponsoring a Missions Night Banquet. It will be Saturday, February 26th at Helmar Lutheran Church in Newark, IL. Please see Charlotte if you are interested.



Pray for the health of Jane McClintock, Char & Pete Belski, Marilyn Cobb, Rita Tieman, Dawn's parents & Dawn Tieman. Pastor Brian Beck's family as Barbara's cousin Ron has passed away.

**Please pray for daily grace for our shut-ins:

- Myrle Sapienza Carol Edgcomb
- Don Walker Jane McClintock
- Lillian Mini Daryl & Lin Stuhr

** Pray for Pastor Roy Jacob & Peace Mission in India caring for children and widows

** Pray for Jews for Jesus

** Pray for the Surbers and Supply & Multiply

** Pray for Abigail Women's Clinic

** Pray for Cup of Cold Water Ministries

** Pray for Transport for Christ

** Pray for PADS providing shelter to the Homeless

God's Love

The Lord is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion.

Numbers 14:18

I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.

Deuteronomy 5:10

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalms 23:6

I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.

Psalms 31:7

He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies.

Psalms 103:4

The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

Psalms 103:8

God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.

John 14:21

This hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Romans 5:5

No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:39

God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much that even though we were dead of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.

Ephesians 2:4-5

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!

1John 3:1

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

1John 4:10

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

1John 4:16



Loving God

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you

Psalms 37:4-5

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name."

Psalms 91:14

The Lord protects all those who love him, but destroys the wicked.

Psalms 145:20

I love all who love me. Those who search will surely find me.

Proverbs 8:17

Those who love me inherit wealth. I will fill their treasuries.

Proverbs 8:21

Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.

John 14:21

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

1Corinthians 2:9

*God is greater than our heart,
and knows all things.*

1 John 3:20

Painting Party

Christian Ed will be sponsoring a painting party in the spring. Painting parties and crafts with Lucy will be here. More information to come.



The 7 Ups

****Wake Up!** Decide to have a good day. "This is the day the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24

****Dress Up!** The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks. 'The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance; but the Lord looks at the heart.' 1Samuel 16:7

****Shut Up!** Say nice things and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking. 'He who guards his lips guards his soul.' Proverbs 13:3

****Stand Up!** for what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. 'Let us not be weary in doing good, for at the proper times we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good...' Galatians 6:9-10

****Look Up!...** to the Lord. 'I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13

****Reach Up!...** for something higher. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

****Lift Up!..** your prayers. 'Do not worry about anything, instead pray about everything.' Philippians 4:6