



February 2020

“Yucca Breeze

T H E U N I T E D C H U R C H E S O F H O T S P R I N G S

P A S T O R ’ S P U L P I T :

Dear Friends and Family,

Fabulous February... 2020. Have you ever considered the origins of Valentine’s Day? The history of Valentine’s Day—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine’s Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine’s actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Still others insist that it was Saint Valentine of Terni, a bishop, who was the true namesake of the holiday. He, too, was beheaded by Claudius II outside Rome.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first “valentine” greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor’s daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed “From your Valentine,” an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure.

Whatever the case, it’s a wondrous observance of love divinely situated between Christmas and Lent. Just as the Advent/Christmas season kind of kicks off with Thanksgiving, now it seems that the Lent/Easter season kind of kicks off with Valentine’s Day. A Time of expressing thanks for the coming of Christ (Christmas) ...a time of expressing love for the sacrifice of Christ (Easter).

(continued page 2)

Any way you look at it, isn't it great to live in a country that is historically so grounded in the Christian faith and more, in the acts of the One who is called the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Love. And in case you haven't heard it lately; He came, He lived, He died, and He was raised from the grave, all in the Name of love, all for the sake of love, all because of love, and all to show His love for you. Why not make out one more Valentine's Day card this year, telling Him how much He means to you. Slip it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. We'll keep it sealed and keep it private...just a way for all of us to express our thanks and love to Him on the day set apart for that very reason!

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor David

MISSIONS TEAM

During the month of February, the Missions Team is putting the emphasis on the Hot Springs Ministerial Association's Food Pantry. The February "Loose Change" offering will go to the Pantry. In addition, we will host a major FOOD DRIVE throughout the month. We encourage you to bring non-perishable food items to the church anytime throughout the month. Items may be placed in the bins at the back of the church. They will be delivered to the Food Pantry in early March. Thank you for your generous support of this local mission that will benefit the more vulnerable members of our community.

SUMMER 1920

In the summer of 1920, the Methodist Episcopal church and their pastor, Rev. Donovan invited a group of the Baptists and Presbyterians to worship with them. This invitation was accepted and church and Sunday school services were held in the city Auditorium.

Rev. Robert Tarleton was called to the pastorate in October 1920. The first specific organization was perfected when a constitution was placed into the hands of the members of the union on Sunday December 5th, 1920. Officers and committees had already been elected as provided for by the constitution. From this time on, the three denominations working as The United Churches was an official organization. There have been some changes in the first constitution and some amendments added but the United Churches has been a working unit since the above date.

HYMN STORY GOD BE WITH YOU Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1828-1904

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. (Romans 16;20)

*It is my joy in life to find at every turning of the road,
The strong arms of a comrade kind to help me onward with my load.
And since I have no gold to give, and love alone can make amends-
My daily prayer is, while I live, "God make me worthy of by friends."*

Often we hear someone tell us glibly to "have a good day!" Would not a far better farewell for Christians be the loving wish of today's hymn test – "God be with you"? The added thought of "till we meet again" suggests a sincere desire for continued friendship. (continued page 3)

FEBRUARY Birthdays:

9 Shirley Leigh
10 Sarah Hart
14 Karen Bent
22 Mary Sewright
26 Jon Schuchardt
Lynn Mason
27 Sheryl Brost



FEBRUARY Anniversaries:

22 Claude/Karen Bent

If your name is not included on the Birthdays and Anniversaries list and you would like it to be added, please contact the church office by email: uc@gwtc.net or call 745-5640.

The writer of this hymn text, Dr. Jeremiah Rankin, pastored several prominent Congregational churches throughout the East until 1889, when he became president of Howard University, the noted school for the education of black students. A powerful preacher and an excellent leader and promoter of congregational singing, Rankin wrote much poetry, including the still popular hymn "Tell It to Jesus." He also edited a number of well-known gospel songbooks.

No other hymn except perhaps "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" has been as widely used as this one as a closing benediction in church services. "God Be With You" was a favorite in the Moody and Sankey meetings throughout North America and England. It became the official closing song for the Christian Endeavor Conventions around the world. And still today, no finer farewell can be expressed by Christians to one another as they leave a place of worship than the sincere wish, "God be with you till we meet again."

God be with you till we meet again, by His counsels guide, uphold you, with His sheep
Securely fold you – God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again, 'neath His wings protecting hide you, daily manna still provide
you – God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again, when life's; perils thick confound you, put His arms unfailing
round you – God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again, keep love's banner floating o'er you, smile death's
Threat'ing wave before you – God be with you till we meet again.

Chorus: Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus's feet, till we meet, till we meet God be
with you till we meet again.

Bible Reference: Exodus 33:14; Acts 20:32; 1 Peter 5:7-10

Avoid trite and casual greetings and farewells. Instead, practice a genuine concern for others. Try saying goodbye to friends or family with some of the lovely wishes expressed in this text: 'God be with you....guide, uphold you, hide you, put His arms around you.



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