

# CELEBRATION NEWS



## *Congratulations* for 20 Years of News

Congratulations Bradenton/Sarasota congregation! The newsletter now known as *Celebration News* began 20 years ago. The first issue of the newsletter was published in January, 1991. The newsletter was introduced with the name *Shifting Sands*. The name was arrived at with the thought that "as the sands are shifted along the shore by the waves which encompass and alter that which they touch, so God and the people who come and go in our church family encompass and alter the life of the Bradenton/Sarasota Congregation." The name was changed to *Celebration News* in the summer of 1995 in anticipation of the Dedication celebration of our church facility in January 1996. The newsletter was published bimonthly until 1995 when it became a monthly publication except for July and August (that was vacation time).

The first issue had six pages of which two of the pages were calendars for January and February activities. It included a message from then pastor, Andrea Cooper. Three Adult Church School Classes were introduced for the new year. Other news items included a treasurer's report and a word search puzzle. Written articles were about four young people (**Lisa Hollenbeck (Rodriguez)**, **Heather Skene (Quinn)**, Ryan Biddulph, and Amanda Chartier who had been baptized in December, an upcoming Tampa Bay District Conference, and notification of the activities that would take place for our Consecration Service to be held in February. Some things haven't changed such as noting birthdays and anniversaries and corrections and updates for the congregational directory.

Many people have contributed throughout the 20 years. Some of them have moved on to other areas while others still continue to contribute news items and articles. We are fortunate to have writers who share their talents with us. One person that has been on the "staff" since it's beginning and indispensable is proof reader, **Jo Fenn-Martin**. She used to do the proof reading during lunch hours and after work - well, sometime even during working hours. Now the drafts are sent to her via e-mail or fax since we both retired.

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## Calling All Young Adults!!

"Seize the day...without going crazy!" is the theme for the next **Young Adult Retreat** on **March 18-20** at Deerhaven Retreat Center. The guest speaker will be Tony Chvala-Smith from Independence, MO. He works for the World Church as a scripture and theology specialist. He is a professor at Graceland University and a theology instructor at Community of Christ Seminary. He has traveled to England, French Polynesia, Kenya and Zambia. He likes to cook, travel, read and a good cup of coffee. Lead organizers for the retreat are **Karla Van Beek**, JaAna Skene Swartz and Christy Stanbury (from Orlando).

Some of the classes that will be available are jewelry making (taught by Karla), tie dye (taught by **Megan Chlebina**), recreation, parenting, chats with Tony, mini-work day projects, hiking, yoga, and fishing. There will also be a kid's campfire, bunko games, and a movie night. Child care will be provided so parents can enjoy activities without worrying about their children. Taking young children to Deerhaven is a great way to introduce them to the campground so when they are ready to go to camp they are familiar with the area and the people.

The fee for the retreat is \$90 per couple and \$50 for an individual. Children ages 3-12 years are \$5 - children 2 and under are free. If you need financial assistance to attend the retreat, please contact **Marcia Brouger**. Money is available in our 2011 budget to help.

The Van Beek family and the Devine Family are registered already. Our congregation has a great group of young adults. Let's show up in force. For questions, call Karla Van Beek (941.739.9823).

## 20 Years of News, continued

At one time 125 copies were printed and distributed to those in attendance on Sunday, and the remainder were mailed. That meant many seals and stamps affixed for the mailings during the years. For many years, and even today, the newsletter is sent to those who were members of our church family years ago such as Margaret Moss, Leita Horton, Virginia McKee, Ralph and Leota Day, Claude and Pat Bradbury, Richard Allshouse, Jack and Dorothy Jousma, and Cathy Snow. Since 2010 many receive their newsletter via e-mail, and it is in color!

When I started as editor of the newsletter, it was done on the typewriter. I still remember how labor intensive that was. Thanks to Wayne McCooeye who taught me a publication program. The corrections and the arrangement of material is so much easier using a computer. Throughout the 20 years there have been changes although many aren't necessarily noticeable. I am thankful to serve our congregation in this area of communication. Communication is very important in a family/community. It has been my pleasure throughout the years to type, copy, fold, stamp, and mail or e-mail the *Celebration News* to each of you. I offer my congratulations to the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation for supporting the newsletter for 20 years.

**Elaine Gregg**, Editor



## Our Father's Cupboard

Our **Father's Cupboard** will be inviting our clients to come inside the church to meet with our ministers for spiritual blessings and to receive information on services provided within Manatee County. There will be story time provided for young children. Anyone who wants to be a part of this special ministry on the third Saturday of the month is welcome to join our team. We need greeters, priesthood members, information people and story readers. Our first inside day begins **February 19, at 10:00 AM**. Contact **Ginger Robertson** of Outreach Ministries at 941.756.8276.



The second month of the new year is just around the corner. How are you doing with keeping your resolutions? Did you resolve to study the scriptures regularly this year? Did you resolve to start attending the Wednesday evening Praise services weekly? Did you resolve to strengthen your relationship with God during the new year? Only one month has gone by so you still have time to keep your resolutions. Perhaps attending the worship services in February will help you move forward toward your goal. Try it!

What does it mean to be the salt of the earth and the light to the world? This teaching of Jesus is part of the Sermon on the Mount and follows the Beatitudes that we studied the last week in January. Found in the 5th Chapter of Matthew, these verses starting with 13 will be explored on February 6. *Let Your Light Shine* will be the focus of the Communion service with Evangelist **Karen Palko** speaking and Elder **Jim Deering** leading the service.

Youth Ministries Day will be celebrated on February 13 with the theme *Grow in God*. Is your relationship with God still growing or does it need a boost? In I Corinthians, Paul tells the people of Corinth that in order to mature in God they must be open to the message of grace and love. Elder **Ginger Robertson** and Priest **Heather Devine** will be sharing about what it takes to grow in God.

Paul's continued efforts to get the people in Corinth on track are described in I Corinthians, Chapter 3. He lays down the foundation of Jesus Christ for them. Paul takes them deeper and deeper in his explanation that *Christ is Our Foundation*. On February 20th, Teacher **Fay Beers** will preside over this service while Elder **Jim Brougher** calls the congregation, as Paul did, to stand as a community of faith.

*Seek First the Kingdom* is another teaching from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Chapter 6. Verses 24-34 bring us the best known of Jesus' teachings about wealth and worry. In today's culture the acquisition of wealth is expected to be a relief from worry. Jesus is turning the expectations of his followers upside down, and his teaching on this subject is no exception. Elders **Elaine Gregg** and **Marcia Brougher** will be sharing thoughts about the kingdom in this February 27th service.

If you are looking for ways to help keep the resolutions you made for the new year, try attending the Wednesday evening 7:00 PM Praise services during the month. See if it makes a difference in keeping you on the right path for your journey.

**Jo Fenn-Martin**, for the Worship Team

## The Spirit of Love

February makes me think of LOVE. It brings to mind a favorite reading from the movie "Love Actually." At the beginning of the movie the narrator relates, *Whenever I get gloomy with the state of the world I think about the arrival gate at Heathrow Airport. General opinion is starting to make out that we live in a world of hatred and greed, but I don't see that; seems to me that love is everywhere. Often it's not particularly dignified or newsworthy, but it's always there; fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, old friends.....When the planes hit the Twin Towers as far as I know none of the phone calls from the people on board were messages of hate or revenge, they were all messages of love. If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling you'll find that love actually IS....all around.*

I would like to share a story that exemplifies the spirit of love. A small boy wanted a puppy more than anything else. Every day he went to the pet show, petted the puppies, and memorized each one's small, squirmy personality. One afternoon he pulled \$1.57 from his pocket and asked if this was enough money for a puppy. The answer was, "I'm sorry, but the puppies are \$25." He walked back to the pen and reached his hand over the little wire fence around the dogs. He stroked their soft fur and spoke in quiet tones to them. The owner was touched. "Say, young fellow, I've been thinking. Your \$1.57 will do. Pick whatever puppy you like, and it's yours," he said. The boy's eyes sparkled; he knew each dog by heart. He reached in and without hesitation pulled a certain puppy out of the pen. The owner said, "Oh, no, you don't want that one. He's crippled. He will never run or chase balls in the park." The boy answered right back, "It's all right, sir." The boy lifted his pant leg, and there was a brace. He said, "I'm crippled, too. I can't run in the park either, but I need a lot of love. I'll be a good friend to this crippled puppy!"

In some ways we are all crippled. We all have bad days, weak moments, and flaws in our character, and we all need love. Remember the old song *what the world needs now is love, sweet love; there's just too little of love, sweet love.*

The very greatest expression of love came into this world and showed us how much He loved by example. As we celebrate the gift of love this month, may we be reminded as never before that because of the grace of our Heavenly Father, love actually IS....all around! Look for it and share it, because the more love we give, the more we have to give as the supply continues to grow, unending.

Carolyn Deering, Editorial Staff



Before being baptized by her Great-Aunt Nanette Disney, Zoe Van Beek let loose with her enthusiasm and shouted, "Yea, I'm going to be baptized!" It is hoped that Zoe's excitement is catching, as she reminds us how exciting it is to be a disciple of Christ.

## Mark Your Calendars

The first fund raising event for the year will be a **Simple Tasteful Party on February 26th, Saturday at the church at 6:00 PM.** This event will be hosted by **Jo Willetts**, and everyone is invited. This is not just a girl thing - guys are encouraged to come, if they like food! If you are interested in food, you will enjoy the opportunity to try different foods. You then can order easy to prepare foods such as dips, salsas, breads and seasonings. Word is that the food is delicious and the soups are "out of this world". Everything takes only one or two common ingredients along with the mix. Cooking time is also short.

Our congregation will benefit from all the sales and any party bookings made that night. This will be a fun time. Invite your friends to be a part of this Simple Tasteful Party. Ask Jo Willetts about how you can e-mail an invitation to your friends out of town.



## Children's Church

Although we have changed the week that we meet to the third Sunday of the month, **Children's Church** continues to be a wonderful ministry provided by the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation. Any child from first grade through fifth grade is welcome to join us for a fun learning experience and a light snack which is a big hit with the kids.

The theme for the month of January was *Jesus and Me, BFF*. We explored the character traits that help make up a good friend. The kids talked about their best friend and were



reminded of that person by wearing a "gummy life-saver" ring on their finger.

The round, flexible candy was a symbol of the "circle of love", flexibility and strength that is embodied through true friend-

ships. We read the scripture from Isaiah 41:10 that introduced us to another best friend. Of course, we are talking about God. We can always count on God to be there, and the children were encouraged to talk to Him daily. We had fun making heart cutouts from the homemade play dough provided by **Marcia Brougher**. Thank you, Marcia, for thinking of our children.

We look forward to our future meetings this year and are excited about what the children will share as we learn and love together.

**Patty Day and Carolyn Deering,**  
Children's Church Coordinators

## February Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 Carolyn Deering
- 2 Jasmine Rodriguez
- 7 Penny Cramer
- 11 Dan Willetts
- 12 Nancy Brougher
- 14 Barbara & Mervin Smith (anniv)
- 19 Christopher Morgan
- 19 Karla & Jason Van Beek (anniv)
- 22 Mason McReynold
- 23 Brenda Haskins



The Fund Raising Committee has planned the following activities for the first part of 2011:

**YARD SALE • MARCH 5th.  
SATURDAY. 8:00 AM • 2:00 PM**

Everyone's help is needed for this activity. Starting February 28, items will be moved into the Fellowship Hall to be sorted and priced. Those having

free time during that week (during the day or after work) please plan to help out for an hour or two to get things organized and priced. There will also be a **Bake Sale**, and donations of cookies, brownies, cup cakes, cakes, pies will be needed. Coffee, hot chocolate, and donuts will be sold during the morning. **Charlie Walker** will make his famous brisket and **Jason Van Beek** will be introducing his pulled pork. Plan to have lunch at the Yard Sale.

If you have small items to donate, please see a Fund Raising committee member for help in placing them in the storage building prior to the week of the sale. If you have large items to donate, please hold on to them until the week of the sale. Then they can be taken to the Fellowship Hall. Only children's clothes will be sold - NO adult clothes, please. All left over items will be donated to Goodwill.

There will be sign-up sheets in the Information Center for bake sale items, donations of food items (canned sodas/individual bags of chips/donuts), set up and tear down of tables, shifts for selling food items, and pricing and sorting items prior to sale. Don't forget to sign up.

Just a reminder - last year the yard sale made over \$3,000, and the year before, it made over \$4,000. What can we make this year?

**COOK OFF • APRIL 2. SATURDAY. 5:00 • 7:00 PM**

Calling all cooks! Bring your best casserole or dessert and enter the contest. The best casserole and the best dessert will win a prize! We will all enjoy them after the judging as well as salads. There will be karaoke as the entertainment. This will be a free will donation dinner. Do you make a mean noodle bake? Broccoli and chicken rice dish? Hot lava cake? Grandma's carrot cake? Bring it! Sign up in the Information Center to bring a dish to compete.

**Stuart Skene** will bring his karaoke machine so warm up your vocal chords. There will be an assortment of music from the 50's to current day for you to sing along with.

**Karla Van Beek**, Fund Raising Committee member

**Men's Retreat** will be held at Deerhaven Retreat Center April 1-3 with guest ministers Don Compier and Derrick Williams. The theme for the weekend is *Run the Race*.

## Love Will Win

from Bob Slasor's Journal

The Spirit stirs within me, and I feel the motivation, the desire, to share Jesus with others. I am ready to bring ministry. Oh, that I can transfer what I feel into words spoken under the Spirit's influence. You, Oh God, want to raise up a people of righteousness so that Zion can be. There is no magic to it, and there is no way for it to "just happen." No, it is growing into, changing into, transforming into reality because we *first* love and trust God. And *second* that we believe with all our hearts and minds that it can be, and it can be in me! Would God have called us to this challenge if it cannot be? No, just the promise of Zion makes it be.

But a promise from God without action from me (us) remains a promise unfulfilled. The question is not "What can God do?". The question is "How much of us will we surrender to God so he can do his work in us?". If we are too busy doing what we want to do to allow God to do what he wants to do in us, it can never be done. Spiritual growth is never "against" our will, but only with our permission and openness that we surrender our wants to God's wants for us.

Creator God **owns** us! He created us. He sustains our life moment to moment whether we believe in him or not. His love for his creation is without limits and without end. Nowhere can we run from it and nowhere can we hide from it. Eventually no way or nowhere can we resist it. Love **will** win!

In our worse moments the Spirit knocks on our hearts and asks if we want to be healed and set free. The worse the moment, the harder the Spirit knocks. When the door of the heart is opened even just a crack, light and warmth enter in and something wonderful happens in us. What is hard to believe is why so many refuse to be healed and made whole. Why so many lock and bolt the door of their hearts for fear of the Spirit. Is it guilt? Is it fear? Is it shame? Is it unbelief? Whatever the reason, God's longing to bless is not and cannot be poured out. How painful for God who could save and redeem to be refused the opportunity to do it because one of his creation chooses to stay in brokenness rather than to risk what would happen if they let God in. And so the Spirit whispers and says:

You cried out to Me in your brokenness,  
and when I answered you would not hear,  
because you did not want to change.

You wanted Me to "fix" you, but not be part of you.  
You wanted to take from Me, but not give back to Me.  
How can I, the God of love, bless you but leave you in your brokenness?  
If I bless you, or "fix" you and leave you as you now are,  
your brokenness will return much worse than it now is,  
because the cause of your brokenness remains  
untouched, unhealed, and unchanged.  
Surrender your heart for healing. Surrender your life for changing.  
Surrender your joy for transformation.  
Then you will have joy, then you will be whole.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

The newly organized **Prayer Shawl Ministry** has been a very active and rewarding program. Eight shawls or lap robes have already been presented to give comfort, solace, warmth, and a reassurance of God's love to someone in need of a blessing. We have received notes from recipients expressing gratitude and joy in receiving the shawls and lap robes.

This ministry begins with selecting a pattern and yarn and having the yarn blessed. Then comes the knitting or crocheting along with thoughtful prayer. The finished product is blessed before it is given or sent to a recipient. Sometimes the process is quiet and meditative, punctuated by the click of the needles while at other times the sounds of voices are heard talking, laughing, crying, and sharing. Both giver and receiver are blessed in this ministry.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry group meets together on the second Saturday of each month at the church. If you enjoy knitting or crocheting and good fellowship, please consider joining us - **Saturday, February 12, at 2:00 PM.**



## Share the Peace

A **Peace Festival** is being planned for **Saturday, April 9th, 10AM - 2PM**, at our church. This will be an opportunity to share the peace of Jesus with the community through games, crafts, food, music, and worship. There will be something of interest for all ages. If you want to join in the planning, or be a volunteer, please contact **Charyn Walker** (941.741.4697). Committee members are **Larry Bell, Lynn Bryant, Wade Bryant, Dale Morgan, Sr., Ginger Robertson and Charyn Walker.**

## 2011 Congregational Directory

The 2011 Directory is ready for distribution. Some will receive the directory with their newsletter or at church. After February 6th, please see **Marcia Brougher.**

## Sweethearts and How They Met



Couples from our congregation were asked to share with us how they met and how many years they have been married as our tribute this month to Valentine's Day. The following were submitted, and we thank them for sharing with us.

**Lee and Nancy Peters**, married 50 years - Nancy first met Lee when she was 16, and he dated her best girlfriend. They met again at Graceland College and began a romance that has lasted 50 years and counting

**Basil and Rosalee Long**, married 48 years - They met at a drive-in root beer stand called "The Big Mug." Rosalee was there watching a girlfriend work. Basil came there for a glass of tea after work every day. He saw Rosalee sitting at the bar drinking root beer. Basil got out of his car and sat next to Rosalee and asked her out on a date. Their first date was at a movie. Basil invited Rosalee to his parent's house for supper. They dated, and Rosalee loved Basil so much she used to kiss his picture! They have two children.

**Glenn and Patty Day**, married 31 years - Their first meeting was in a bowling alley. They both worked at the same manufacturing company (however not at the same time). Glenn was a machinist in the factory, and Patty was hired to work in the accounting department. Glenn left the company two weeks before Patty began. The large company had a bowling league to which Glenn belonged. Patty joined the league after some time. One Wednesday evening Glenn came to visit some of his former bowling team mates. The rest, as they say, is history. They've been having a "ball" ever since.

**Dick and Jerilyn Chlebina**, married 28 years - They met at church! Since Jerilyn is "so much" younger than Dick, they never went to school or camps together or were in the same church school class. Dick waited until Jerilyn got her braces off before he first asked her out. They went out a few times, but that didn't work out too well probably because of the age difference. Jerilyn was in high school, Dick was in college. Then Dick asked Jerilyn out again when she was between her freshman and sophomore year of college, and she said "yes"!

**Dale and Linda Morgan**, married 24 years - Dale's parents introduced him to Linda. They did a lot of boating weekends. They frequented the same marina and restaurants with other friends and started dating in late 1985. They married in August of 1986. In addition to their 10 children, they have had the privilege of having 40 foster children in their home.

**Dan and Jo Willetts**, married 22 years - Dan and Jo met through their children. Melinda was the older sister of some young children Jo used to baby-sit. Jo was very nervous about using a teenager to sit for her own children, but her father convinced her it was okay, and the rest is history!

**Mervin and Barbara Smith**, married 12 years - Barbara's neighbor had been trying for over a year to get Merv and Barbara together. So, finally, the neighbor had a gazebo built in her back yard and asked Merv, an electrician, to wire it for her. Barbara was in the process of ripping up old carpet in a downstairs bedroom, so they first met over the fence. Barbara was carrying out a load of old carpet to the trash, had old faded jeans on, hair was a mess, etc. That night the neighbor brought Merv over to see what Barbara was trying to do with the floor, and as she left she said, "Merv likes coffee. Bye." Merv stayed and helped Barbara try to remove the residue from the varnished floor, and they got acquainted. A week later they went on their first date, and a year later were married. They had a small, but wonderful wedding. Barbara's brother married them and her oldest son walked her down the aisle. They feel fortunate that they have the blessings of both of their families.

**Jason and Karla Van Beek**, married 11 years - Karla took one of her rehabilitation patients to a wheelchair basketball game in Dallas, Texas, and she first saw Jason there. He was playing for the Dallas Mavericks. And, boy, was he cute! Karla started to go to the games, and they started talking, e-mailing and one year from their first date they got married.

**Jim and Carolyn Deering**, married 10 years this June - Their first meeting was odd. Jim was Carolyn's Zion's League leader in the Kirtland, Ohio, congregation back in 1971. Jim was 21 and Carolyn was 16. Neither of them remembers much about it, but they found a picture of the group AFTER they had been married a few years! They met as adults at the Community of Christ summer reunion at Temple Grove, Pennsylvania, in July of 2000. Jim proposed that fall in the Kirtland Temple gardens!





## The Worth of All People

*Every human being is created in the image of God. In Jesus Christ, God took on the limits of human flesh and culture, and is known through them. We, therefore, affirm without exception the worth of every human being. (An Enduring Principle)*

We, the Community of Christ, believe in the worth of every human being as a Basic Belief and as an Enduring Principle. In remembrance of Racial Justice Day, I spent some time digging into our country's past history of racial *injustice*. Even before the first Europeans landed on the Shores of the Americas, the Spanish explorers slaughtered thousands of native Americans. Centuries later, as the colonist began their westward movement, these First People were stripped of their land and the freedom to live the only way of life they had known. In the mean time, slavery was introduced to this country, and innocent Africans were also denied their freedom. Sold and traded by colonist landowners, they, like the Native Americans, were not recognized as worthy of having any rights.

Sadly, this attitude of fear and prejudice would continue to bleed into the Asian culture as Chinese and, later, Japanese immigrants would come to America to live, work, and raise their families. Chinese-American author Gail Tsukiyama has written several beautiful novels based on the turmoil of the families in those countries as well as the American citizens of Asian descent.

Currently, I am reading a book by James Ford, Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet. This book tells the story of two young children, one Chinese, one Japanese, living in Seattle, Washington, during the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the discrimination they suffered because of their race. As the Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps, their forbidden friendship would be abruptly ended. While it is not easy to read about these past transgressions, it is important to learn what we can about our past to ensure that racial justice will be upheld in our future.

Reaching out to one another in an effort to dialogue; to talk and to listen in an attempt to bridge the gap between cultures, teaching our children to be sensitive to other children in their communities who are of a different race, remembering that we are all made in God's own image are just a few of the ways we can live as examples of what we believe; the worth of all people.

**Ginger Robertson**, Outreach Ministries

## DID YOU KNOW ???

◆ **The Sunday 10:55 AM Nursery** includes any little ones who are walking up through pre-school? If you have questions, contact Amy Smeralda.

◆ **Lee and Nancy Peters** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 30th with three of their four children, five grandchildren and one great grandchild arriving from Colorado and Massachusetts? It was an exciting week and a wonderful way to begin the new year.

◆ **Kathy Parks, Nancy Brouger, Carol Law, Nanette Dizney, Ginger Robertson, Marcia and Jim Brouger, and Karen Palko** attended this year's week long Winter Reunion at Deerhaven Campgrounds?

◆ **New ideas** are needed by the **Fund Raising Committee** for activities in the upcoming year. If you have some ideas, please contact **Heather Devine, Nancy Skene, or Karla Van Beek**.

### Congregational Financial Update Ending 12/31/2010

#### Congregational

Local Operating Tithes (Income)	\$54,651
Local Operating Expenses	<u>(54,869)</u>
Difference	\$( 218)

Our Congregation approved 2010 budget was \$58,178. We were short of making our planned 2010 budget by \$3,527. We ended the year only short to our income by \$218.00. Good job done by all!

Thank you for your support both to our local congregation as well as our World Church.

**Bob Beers**, Congregation Financial Officer



#### Our Father's Cupboard

Income through 12/31/2010	\$9,140
Expenses through October	<u>(7,402)</u>
Difference	\$1,738

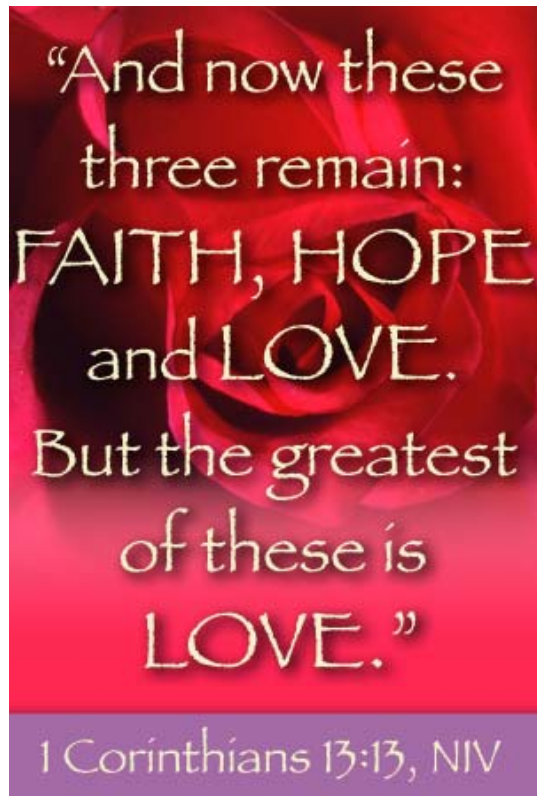
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Address Correction Requested

*We send our love to:*



*Listen to your heart  
For within there is an "ear"  
Attune to God's voice.  
-Peggy Ferrell*



*Love is the strongest force the world possesses, and yet it is the humblest imaginable. --Mahatma Gandhi*