

SLCRC MIDWEEK

December 26, 2018

LOVE

LOVE You More!

I have loved you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

Think about the words, "Love you more!" in the light of Jeremiah 31:3. Who is speaking these words? It's God himself. The same God who called the entire universe into being. "Let there be . . .," he said. And it was. That's the one who loves you! The same God who crafts each child's smile, dimples, and all. That one – that one true God – loves you!

God loves you with all his might. He never started loving you. He has loved you forever, and he claims you as his very own. He will fight for you. He will defend you. He will comfort you. All this because you belong to him. God loves you yes, you! And he is truly the only one who can legitimately proclaim: "Love You More."

God is the best, the champion, at loving. That's because "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God's very nature is love – heartfelt, powerful, genuine love. Love is who God is! And he alone enables us truly to love, to love him and to love one another. What's more, when we fail to imitate God's perfect love, he forgives us, completely.

God's greatest act of love came to earth wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger. Jesus, God's own dear Son, loves us to death, his own, even when we were sinful and totally unlovable. The Bible says, *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8.

"Love you more!" God reminds us. No matter what happened yesterday, regardless of what happens today or tomorrow, you can be sure his infinite love will hold you close, now and forever! - Gail Marsh

THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 30, 2018 – JANUARY 5, 2019

Sunday, Dec. 30: 9:30 am - Worship
Sunday, Dec. 30: 10:30 am – Coffee Fellowship
Wed. January 2: 1:30 pm – Lydia Bible Class

PRAYER CONCERNS

Remember the following friends and members who have health issues, are in a nursing home, are homebound, or experiencing personal cares and concerns:

Bob & Rhea Teunis – The Hume House at 1244 W. Southern Ave., Apt. 9, Muskegon, MI 49441

Ruth Wierenga, Etta Peterson, Henrietta Laning, - Homebound

George Wierenga is under hospice care and is at home.

Cheryl Rasinske – Harbor House in Jenison Marshall Teunis – Marshall is at American House-17387 Oakcrest Parkway.

Henry & Amy Sterenberg – living at Lake Woods, 1684 Vulcan, Muskegon, MI 49442

Mickey Van Andel has returned home following therapy at Riverside Nursing Home

THANK YOU!

From Henrietta Laning, Etta Peterson, Cheryl Rasinske, Henry & Amy Sterenberg, Marshall Teunis, Bob & Rhea Teunis, Mickey Van Andel, Eugene & Donna Wierenga, George & Ruth Wierenga, "Thank you so very much for the Christmas Cards. They were beautiful and we read them over many times."

SOUND SYSTEM FUND DRIVE

As you are aware we recently have been experiencing sound system failures. The sound board is old and needs to be replaced. A new mixer sound board along with a new pastor's head set and additional wireless hand held will cost around \$6,100.00. We have a little over \$4,700.00 in the sound system fund. To assist with the shortage and to avoid depleting the sound system fund totally, Council is asking the congregation to participate in a Sound System Fund Drive in the amount of \$3,000.00. This would be over and above the regular budget. We would like to complete this by December 31, 2018. Therefore, we are asking the congregation to prayerfully consider helping us reach this goal. Please place your gift in an envelope and mark it as "Sound System" and place it in the offering plate or give it to one of the deacons by the end of December, 2018. Thank you for your financial gift.

LETTER FROM THE HOLTROPS – Steve, Kim, Alia, Nathan, Elise, Esme

"I've never seen it this bad." These are the words of my 85 year old landlord when I asked him how business was at his hardware store. He has lived through dictators, civil war and extended economic depression.

The weight of impending doom looms large for so many people. Jobs have been lost and more are going to be lost. Families have been physically and emotionally torn apart. Trust is almost gone. For many folks it seems hopeless.

The Bible is full of 'hopeless' stories. Right now I hear fireworks as many Nicaraguans celebrate Mary. In the eyes of her community she was an unwed mother with an 'illegitimate' child. She lived with that stigma for the rest of her life. At times it must have felt hopeless. Flowers bloom in our yard every November and December. Like the birth of Jesus, in the midst of hopelessness, beauty comes forth reminding us of God's sovereignty, giving us hope.

Recently I had a visit with some pastors who are implementing some Trauma Healing workshops from the American Bible Society and who are being trained the International Institute for Restorative Practices as well as some other tools. I was quite inspired by my conversation with them. Our meeting started with the very real fear that our very meeting was likely being watched and that some of the planned participants did not come due to fear of being associated with the wrong people. However, as we sat there and they shared, it was clear God is working in the midst of this situation. Here are some examples they shared:

1. Church members went to non-church houses with a survey of things they could pray for. Every house took the time to fill out the survey and invited the church to enter and pray with them. This far exceeded their timid expectations.
2. A church held a trauma workshop for 50 youths from within the congregation but also from the community. All youth were encouraged to lament and bring their pain to the cross. There was feed back from neighborhood youth and some expressed a desire to know Jesus.
3. In the midst of their own economic loss, a church sacrificed to provide food baskets to four community families.
4. Due to lack of work, a pastor spent more time in his community and got to know the drug sellers and buyers. Through this he discovered a wonderfully talented woman they are helping develop her beauty business.
5. Church leadership wants to regularly gather at 4 am to seek God's will. They are relying on God.
6. A Church held an elegant dinner for local drunks. This lavish outpouring of love in the time of crisis forced some of the drunks to wonder "why?" The response was accepted by 4 men.
7. Many churches have political fractures. A "trick" meeting by the pastor brought both sides together and forced them to talk with each other and pray for each other regarding non-political things. A step of unity and healing took place.