



Newsletter of First Church  
Barboursville United Methodist Church WV

**This issue:**

## A SEASON OF RENEWAL

BY PASTOR TERESA

Dear Friends,

In preparing Lent this year, I thought about how different it will be. With all the changes in our lives due to the Pandemic, changes in our Government, not to mention our personal life changes. Our Nation needs God more than ever. We all know people who are feeling scared, or lost or isolated. We know people in poorer communities, and those living with disabilities who have been affected in some way or form. During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines, putting others first in safety. None of this is easy. Many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. COVID has prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside. All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is especially hard. Therefore, we need to support each other by reaching out to one another with care and kindness.

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## A SEASON OF RENEWAL

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For believers, observing LENT offers a renewing reflection of our life during a season we are accustomed to. Despite the politics, the pandemic and the personal issues we face, we still have this time to think about where we are in our faith journey and how God has touched our lives. We have so many things to be thankful for and we have this special opportunity to strengthen our relationship with our Creator and Savior. Isn't that what Lent is all about? God's amazing grace is always available to those who call on His Name! None of us are perfect and despite outward appearances there is brokenness in all of our lives. Lent is an opportunity for growth as a disciple and follower of Jesus. And LENT is an invitation to all follow Christ. It calls us to reflect in honesty and humility on our brokenness—but not only on the brokenness, but on the grace and mercy and forgiveness of God who wants no more than to grace what is broken in our lives. Many are praying for everything to go back to the way it was before—something so many of us want. We are comfortable with the “status quo.” Change is difficult. But God uses change in transforming lives. We are called to die to the old, to the comfortable, to the sin in our lives in order to rise to something new. This is what our ashes mean. They are not a badge of honor but an outward sign of our humble acknowledgement of our need for God's grace. They are a sign of our willingness to once again make room for that grace, and to allow it to transform us. We each need to see Lent as an opportune time to empty ourselves and make room in our lives for the amazing grace God offers to each of us as beloved sons and daughters.

Let us use this time of LENT, as a special time listening in prayer. Offering ourselves before Him in love.

Being quiet, and listening for His voice.

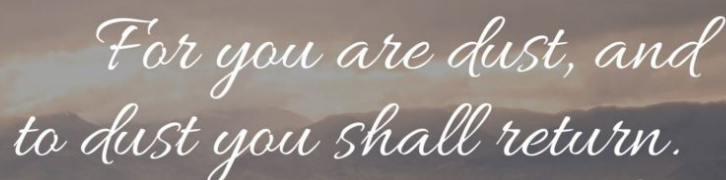
I TOOK MY TROUBLES  
TO THE LORD;  
**I CRIED OUT**  
TO HIM, AND HE  
ANSWERED MY  
PRAYER.

PSALM 120:1 NLT



**Ash  
Wednesday**  
Create in me a clean heart,  
O God,  
and put a new and right  
spirit within me.

Psalms 51:10



*For you are dust, and  
to dust you shall return.*

Gen. 3:19





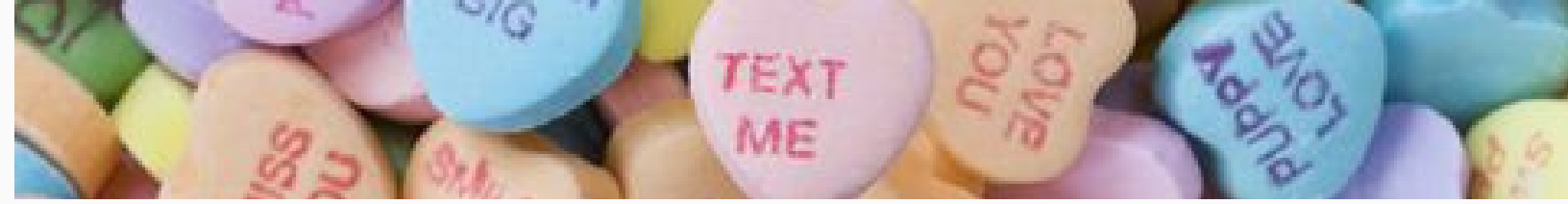
# CARE PACKAGES OF LOVE WITH ASH WEDNESDAY SUPPLIES

DELIVERIES THIS NEXT WEEK BEGIN!

We will be delivering our next series of Care Packages. This time with Valentine goodies, things to do, a Lent Devotional booklet, Newsletter and supplies to do your own Ashes during the Ash Wednesday service that will be posted on Facebook. There will be instructions for you in the bulletin provided a few days before the service. So put your Ash container in a safe place. The Ash Wednesday service will be posted Wednesday early in the morning and you will be able to watch it anytime that day at your convenience.







# VALENTINE'S DAY HISTORY

THE STORY BEHIND ST. VALENTINE

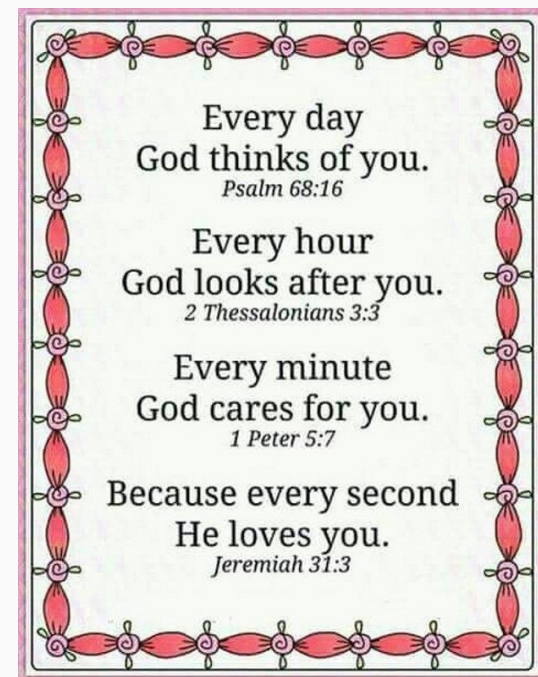
DANIEL THRELFALL CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE, CHURCH  
RESOURCES, HISTORY

We don't usually think of Valentine's Day as an explicitly Christian holiday. Other major holidays have obvious Christian origins: Christmas (Christ's incarnation) and Easter (Christ's resurrection), sure, but Valentine's Day? It's true that Valentine's Day is not connected with an event in the life of our Lord like Christmas and Easter are, but Valentine's Day does have some intriguing Christian roots. Along with most holidays, Valentine's Day has suffered from its share of commercialization and confusion, yet the poignant story of the original Valentine's Day is worth remembering.

In the interest of full disclosure, after about 1,700 years of history, it's kind of hard to know exactly who Valentine was and what he did. The truth is, there were probably several Valentines. Also, the truth is probably not as highly dramatized as we may wish. The truth is embedded somewhere in the depths of history, never to be known until we get to heaven. What follows may be part tradition and part truth, but completely fascinating.

The year was 270. The Roman Empire was engaged in a desperate attempt to retain the Pax Romana that had endured for centuries. Christianity was active during the 3rd century. Although Christ had died over two centuries prior, Christians were eagerly propagating their faith and churches were springing up everywhere. These early centuries of the church were the times of the great apologists such as Clement, Ignatius, Origen, Polycarp, Athanasius, and Chrysostom. But the 3rd century was also the time of the Christian martyrs. Prior to Constantine, the empire was not friendly to Christianity—not at all. Claudius, the reigning emperor of the time, was a warlord, intent only upon preserving his empire and routing his enemies. Christianity was not on his like list. His primary interests were military, and he would stoop to nothing to ensure that his mighty army remained loyal to him.

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# VALENTINE'S DAY HISTORY

CONTINUED

It was Claudius's maniacal grip on the military that led him to install a very foolish policy empire-wide. Claudius had a problem on his hands when it came to the army.

Believe it or not, his men would actually prefer to get married and stay home with their wives and families rather than risk their lives and sacrifice for their country! Military recruiting was suffering because of the petulant affection between man and wife. Love was getting in the way of patriotism! Claudius would have none of it. Being the man with the big stick, he could make laws and enforce them, too.

So he did. Claudius passed a law forbidding anyone to get married. Obviously, this was an outrage. Was he serious? No marriage?



Living in this anti-Christian and anti-marriage climate, was Valentine. Valentine was a Christian priest in Rome. He knew from the Bible that marriage was good and honored by God. He knew that marriage was lawful according to the Christian faith, so he took it upon himself to perform Christian marriages—contrary to the law. As a priest, he performed secret marriages for couples who desired to be married bravely defying the anti-marriage edict. It wasn't just marriages that Valentine was working on. He was also trying to protect persecuted Christians who were being chased down and haunted by the aggressive Roman leaders. Christians knew that they could flee to Valentine to find protection. Valentine was taking a huge risk. Not only was it absolutely forbidden to marry or to perform marriages, but it was also a criminal offense to aid or abet Christians—especially ones whom the Roman Empire had on their hit list! Valentine was enmeshed in what the Roman Empire considered high treason and traitorous activity.

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*“Greater love hath no  
man than this...”  
(John 15:13).*



## VALENTINE'S DAY HISTORY

### CONTINUED

*Valentine was enmeshed in what the Roman Empire considered high treason and traitorous activity.*

*Although he was being loyal to his faith, he was flying in the face of Roman law. The Roman government hunted him down and locked him up in prison. Now, Valentine—protector of Christians and performer of marriages—was himself suffering for his love and devotion to God.*

*It got worse. Valentine, true to his bold character, tried to convert Emperor Claudius to Christianity. This had gone too far. Claudius demanded that Valentine recant his faith and submit to the cruel and godless tyranny of Rome. Valentine staunchly refused. The Roman Prefect condemned him to torture and death. He was beaten violently, then beheaded.*

*According to legend (and probably false), Valentine himself fell in love during his time of imprisonment. The daughter of the prison guard met Valentine and fell head over heels in love. As the story goes, their romance was the prototypical saga of steadfast love, broken only by the tragic death of Valentine. He wrote a note to her, allegedly penned on February 14, the day before he was beheaded. He signed the note, “Love from your Valentine.” Henceforth, we have the first Valentine’s Day card.*



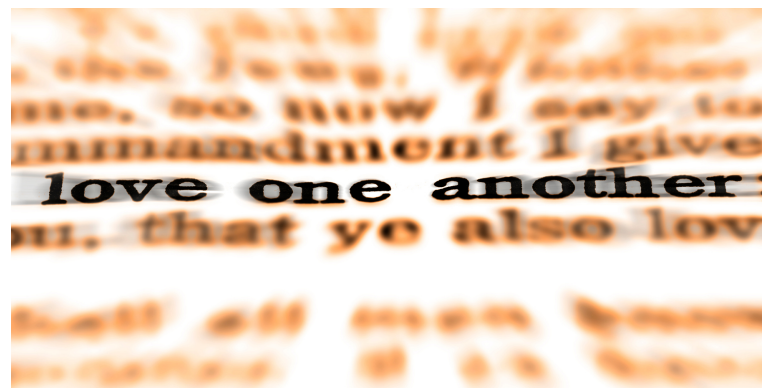


# CLM CORNER

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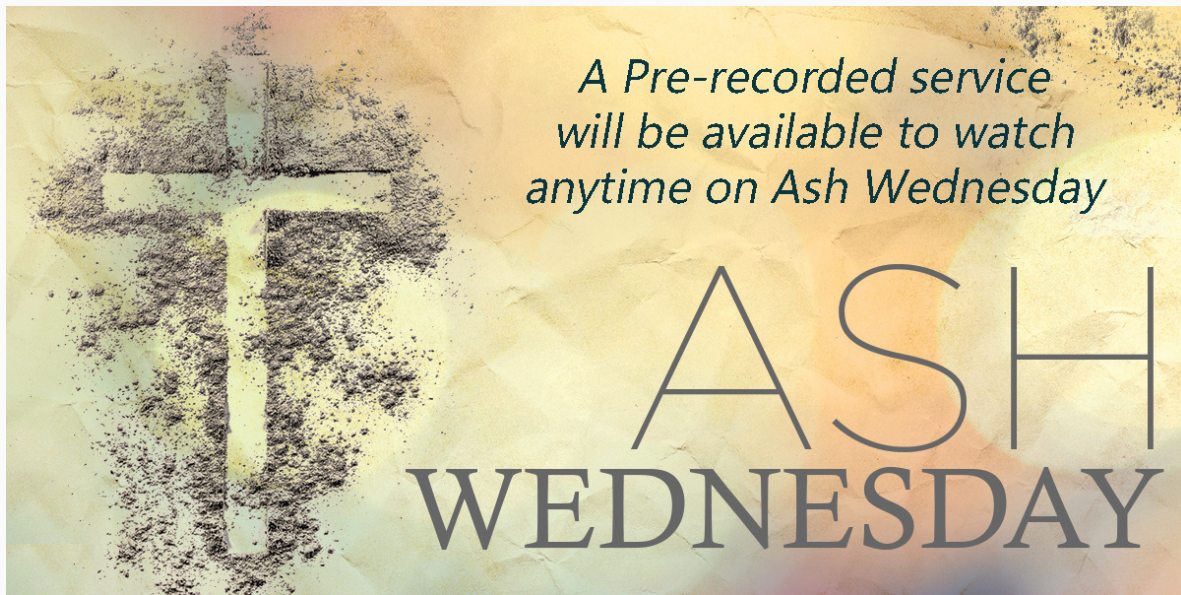
Here we are another month is gone. Seems like only yesterday we celebrated New Years Day. But here we are ready to start February 2021. It was a very fulfilling month for January but now we start a new month and new beginnings. On February 2 we celebrate Ground Hog's Day. I don't know about you but I hope he does not see his shadow. I am tired of the winter weather. But we will see what he says. On February 14 we celebrate Valentine's Day and I wish those with spouse or special friends to enjoy it. Also it reminds me of how God teaches us to Love one another and his love for sending his only son Jesus to teach to us and preach to us. And how he loved us so much he died on the cross to remove all our sins. Take time to celebrate this great gift and to thank him for his gift. Also remember Jesus said to "Love one another live we love ourselves. On February 15 we celebrate Presidents Day. A day set aside to celebrate. All the great Presidents we have had here in the USA. Take time to say thank you to all of them. I am also celebrating the fact I appeared before the District Committee On Ministers to see if I will be granted Certification as a Certified Lay Minister. I am currently awaiting a reply on if I was successful.

I will notify everyone with the results when I get them. I hope everyone has another great month and look forward to the day when we can gather together for in person Church Services. Till then Glory Be to God. Allen CLM Canidate





# ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE - WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17TH.



Ash Wednesday service that will be posted on Facebook. There will be instructions for you in the bulletin provided a few days before the service.

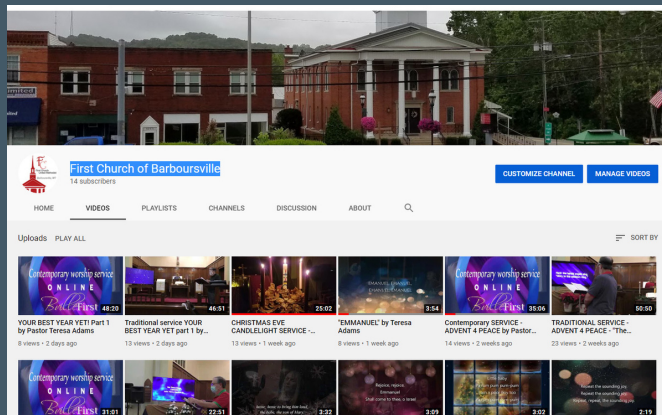
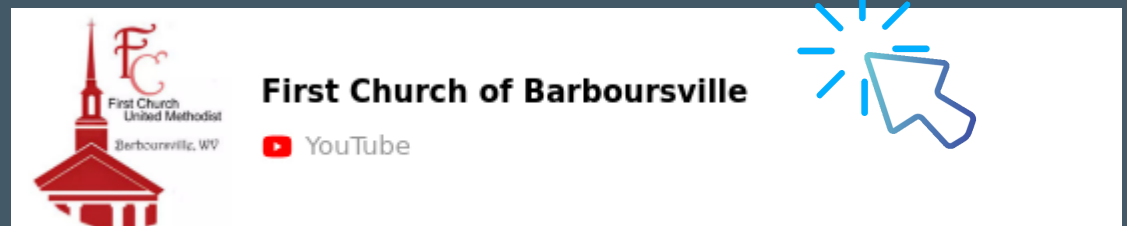
**EVERYTHING YOU NEED!**







DOUBLE CLICK  
ABOVE TO GO TO  
FACEBOOK PAGE



DOUBLE CLICK  
ABOVE TO GO TO  
OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



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