



Bethesda Church

Newsletter

Congregational letter

March 2024

“If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

1 Corinthians 5:13-15

“The things we do for love...” So goes the saying.

Love can make us make choices that people call crazy. There is a kind of constraint in it. Even though love doesn’t technically override our will, it can certainly make one path more enthralling than all the others, even when it proves to be the hardest one.

Can you imagine the depth of God’s love for you? How crazy is it to volunteer to be cut off from eternal bliss, from infinite knowledge, from limitless power? To be “immensity cloistered”¹ in a womb, a human frame ... or a tomb? And even though it wasn’t compelled (who could compel God?) there was a kind of constraint in it. There was one path – one path alone – that expressed all his will.

And (contrary to another saying) Jesus’ love for us wasn’t blind. God the Son knew just what he was getting into when he “made himself nothing [...] being made in human likeness” (Phil 2:7); he knew who he would be dying for: deadbeats,

cheaters, hypocrites, violent offenders. The fickle. The flakes. He knew. And still, that’s precisely what he came to do: to die for me and to die for you.

This unimaginably “crazy” love is *agape*: divine love. That *agape* is “divine” means that it is the love that is shared and enjoyed by God in himself: *agape* is the love that God the Father has for God the Son and for God the Holy Spirit; *agape* is the love that the Son and the Holy Spirit have for the Father and it is the love that they each have for one another.

That *agape* is divine means that it does not come naturally to humans. We can’t manufacture it. We can’t muster it up. *Agape* is a selfless love, an unconditional love, an impossible love. It is a humble love. It is a joyful love.

God’s own *agape* motivated him to take on flesh – to be human *agape* – the God-man dying to save us, rising to give us a new nature: an *agape* nature.

¹ John Donne, “La Corona”

Simply put, *agape* was the reason Jesus “died for all”. And *agape* is why we “who live should no longer live for ourselves”. Who should we live for? “For him who died for us and was raised again,” and through him, for others.

God shares his divine love with us! By God’s grace we have been invited to enjoy it and to participate in it. In him, we cultivate it and share it in turn. As we find *agape* in him, *agape* takes over our whole selves: our emotions, our will, our actions.

God’s love makes us do things that people call crazy. But they aren’t. The emotions, the desires, and the actions that *agape* provokes are healthy, right, and good. In fact, they are more than sane: they are holy. Transformed by *agape* we can slip

down the path of greatest resistance without even noticing it, filled with freedom and hope in the teeth of the many trials we face.

As we all know, we have had some visitors to our Sunday services over the last few months who have put this love to the test. I have been moved to my depths by the love that I have witnessed in you, my Bethesda family! At the same time, we have a responsibility to make sure *each one* who gathers with us on a Sunday morning is safe, particularly children and other vulnerable people. Sometimes love’s demands feel like they are pulling from opposite directions. But we can trust in the One who is stretching us!

This week I presented a paper to the Council entitled “Encounters for Eternity: Engaging, Evaluating, Encouraging, Embracing &

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Bible Reading Plan

- Pr 11:18-21
- Mk 10:17-27
- Gen 36:31-43
- Job 6:1-13
- 1 Cor 15:1-11
- *Ps 118
- Gen 37
- Job 6:14-30
- Pr 11:22-25
- Mk 10:28-31
- 1 Cor 15:12-28
- Job 7
- Gen 38:1-19
- Pr 11:26-28
- 1 Cor 15:29-44a
- Mk 10:32-34
- 1 Cor 15:44b-58
- Pr 11:29-31
- Job 8
- Gen 38:20-30
- 1 Ch 2:3-9
- Mk 10:35-45
- 1 Ch 2:9-17
- Gen 39

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- Job 9
- Pr 12:1-3
- 1 Cor 16:1-9
- Mk 10:46-52
- Mk 11:1-11
- 1 Ch 2:18-24
- Gen 40
- Pr 12:4-6
- 1 Cor 16:10-18
- Job 10
- Pr 12:7-9
- Mk 11:12-19
- 1 Ch 2:25-33
- Gen 41:1-40
- Job 11
- 1 Cor 16:19-24
- 2 Cor 1:1-7
- 1 Ch 2:34-41
- *Job 12:1-13:19
- Pr 12:10-11
- Gen 41:41-57
- Mk 11:20-25(26)
- Pr 12:12-13
- Gen 42:1-28
- 2 Cor 1:8-14
- 1 Ch 2:42-45

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- Mk 11:27-33
- Job 13:20-14:22
- Mk 12:1-12
- 1 Ch 2:46-50a
- Job 15
- Pr 12:14-16
- Gen 42:29-43:15
- Gen 43:15-44:13
- Pr 12:17-19
- Job 16-17
- 1 Ch 2:50b-53
- Mk 12:13-17
- 2 Cor 1:15-20
- Gen 44:14-34
- 1 Ch 2:54-55
- *Job 18-19
- Pr 12:20-22
- Mk 12:18-27
- 2 Cor 1:21-2:4
- *Mk 12:28-34
- Pr 12:23-25
- Gen 45:1-15
- Job 20
- 1 Ch 3:1-4a
- 2 Cor 2:5-3:3

- 2 Cor 3:4-18
- Gen 45:16-46:7
- 1 Ch 3:4b-9
- Mk 12:35-37
- Job 21
- Pr 12:26-28
- Gen 46:8-15
- Job 22-24
- Mk 12:38-40
- Pr 13:1
- Gen 46:16-27
- Job 25-28
- Mk 12:41-44
- Pr 13:2-3
- 1 Ch 3:10-14
- Job 29
- Gen 46:28-47:12
- Pr 13:4-6
- Mk 13:1-13
- 2 Cor 4:1-12
- 1 Ch 3:15-18
- Zephaniah 1:1-13
- Job 30:1-16
- Mk 13:14-27
- Gen 47:13-26
- 2 Cor 4:13-18

- Gen 47:27-48:20
- 1 Ch 3:19-20
- Zeph 1:14-2:3
- Mk 13:28-37
- Job 30:17-31
- 2 Cor 5:1-10
- Mk 14:1-9
- Job 31
- 1 Ch 3:21-24
- Zeph 2:4-7
- Gen 48:21-49:7
- 2 Cor 5:11-15

*Memory Verses:

- #1: Ps 118:14 –
The LORD is my strength and my ... etc
- #2: Job 13:15 (NAS)
Though he slay me, I will hope in him. Nevertheless, I will argue my ways before him.
- #3: Job 19:25-27 –
I know that my Redeemer lives ... etc
- #4: Mk 12:30 – *Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... etc*

Evangelizing the Homeless and the Poor in Bethesda's Neighborhood". It is the beginnings of a strategy to make sure that we follow love's commands towards all those he is calling to our corner: to protect the vulnerable who regularly worship among us and to provide for those with obvious spiritual and physical needs but whose involvement may be less predictable. The core of the strategy is the establishment of expectations – namely, that everyone who joins us on Sundays must participate in the activities of the main group, not disrupt them or wander around doing their own thing – and the development of a rotating team of Ushers who will ensure that those expectations are being followed. Since the new Usher team will be responsible for far more than simply taking the morning offering, they will receive professional training to help us learn to engage, evaluate, encourage, embrace & evangelize those in desperate need as well as to identify risks and ensure we have adequate safety protocols in place. I would ask that you seriously and prayerfully consider if God may be calling you to such a ministry!

In his love,

Patti Yuri

Announcements

LADIES FELLOWSHIP, SATURDAY MARCH 16, 9:30-11:30am.

Breakfast will be served from 9:30-10:10:15. Wear something green, bring your favourite coffee/tea mug, and a friend! Please sign up by March 10.

NEEDED: APARTMENT OR HOUSE FOR THE FRIESENS

Andrew, Courtney Joy and the kids will be on home assignment from July – Sept. Would you be able to give them a place to live, or be willing to donate money to rent a temporary living space? Please contact Patti Poirier.

30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD: MARCH 10-APRIL 8

Prayer guides (a grown up version and a kids version) are available for download online (Cost: \$2.50 at pray30days.org). Please let Pastor Yuri know if you would like to order a hard copy (costs slightly more).

Prayer & Intercession

- Afghan Refugee Families
- Gail Barnes
- Mona Behrens
- Betty Campbell (Personal Care Home)
- Lawrence & Selma Churchill
- Venus Coté (kidney function)
- Ron De Hoff (Patti's brother)
- Andrew Friesen (our AIM missionary)
- Bernice Gruenke (health)
- Edwin & Kamala Henry (Esther's Dad & Mom) surgery recovery, stamina & rest
- Marion Hill (Susanne's Mom)/Susanne
- Valentyna K. (Kathy Clow's friend; Ukrainian Christian/deportation)
- George Manalang
- Joan McRae (Misericordia Place)
- Debbie Mogilevsky (cancer)
- Laylee, her sons, and her mother
- Andrew Poirier (mental health)
- Patti Poirier (health and strength)
- Marye P. (Kathy Clow's friend – cancer)
- Don Register (Shelly's dad)
- Sean Smith (Evelyn's son)
- Chris Wilcoxson (mental & heart health; residential program, Seattle)
- Cheryl Warax (Pastor Mark's sister: heart; mass on kidney)
- Andrea & Rick Wittebolle
- Pastors Mark & Yuri
- Bethesda Children's Ministry
- Bethesda Youth Ministry
- Bethesda Young Adults Ministry

Please contact Pastor Yuri to be added (or removed from) this list.



March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 1-4pm Baking Club
3 10am Worship – Pastor Mark	4	5	6 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm English Conversation 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth Bible Study	7 7am Men's Prayer Meeting	8	9
10 10am Worship – Pastor Mark	11	12	13 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm English Conversation 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth Bible Study	14 7am Men's Prayer Meeting	15 7pm SBC Webinar (all are invited!)	16 9am SBC Webinar (all are invited!) 7:30pm Union Gospel Mission
17 10am Worship – Pastor Mark	18	19	20 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm English Conversation 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth Bible Study	21 7am Men's Prayer Meeting	22	23
24 10am Worship – Pastor Mark 3pm Young Adult Bible Study	25	26 7:15pm Council meeting	27 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm English Conversation 7:15pm Prayer Meeting 7:15pm Youth Bible Study	28 7am Men's Prayer Meeting	29 10am Good Friday Service	30 8:30am Men's Breakfast
31 10am Worship – Easter Sunday Pastor Yuri						

Bethesda Church Office Information

Hours: posted weekly outside office door

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BETHESDA CHURCH