

# Valley Views



VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2020



Pastor Mike Hill

## The Kind of Love That Marks a Christian

Jen Wilkin

### Who God Loves above All Others

Why does the Great Commandment instruct us to love God first, others second? Because this is the order in which God himself loves. God's love did not begin in Genesis 1:1. It is eternal, existing before creation, having found eternal expression within the Trinity. It required no object outside the Godhead. We love because he first loved us. He loves us, having first and eternally loved himself.

Self-love is not always commendable in humans. While loving ourselves accurately is good, and even necessary for loving our neighbor, the Bible also speaks to the negative category of those who are "lovers of self" (2 Tim. 3:2). We have all known people whom we would label as an egotists, those who think of themselves more highly than they should. Egotism is an impossibility for God. He is irreproachably a lover of self, being the only one worthy of total love. For God not to love himself would be irrational. God's worth is infinite, making him alone worthy to receive infinite self-love, as well as the unqualified adoration and veneration of everything in creation. It is impossible for anyone, including God, to love God too much.

But it is possible for us to love the love of God too much. We do this when we emphasize the love of God at the expense of his other attributes. Sin can cause us to love a version of God that is not accurate. This is the basic definition of idolatry, a disordered love. Ironically, one of the most common forms our idolatry takes is the disordered love of the love of God. The overemphasis of God's love is even evident in non-Christians. They may know very little of the Bible, yet many know and

are quick to quote the truism that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). The statement “My God is a God of love” often has as its subtext the idea that his love precludes him ever acting in wrath or justice, or in any way that does not fit our human conceptions of love.

But God’s love is both holy and infinite, which means that all his actions are loving, even when we cannot perceive them to be so. Not only are all his actions loving, but all he withholds or refrains from doing is also loving. When God acts in Scripture in ways we perceive to be unloving, the problem is not with his actions but with our limited perspective. When we endure hardship or loss, we may be tempted to question whether God loves us. This is why the Bible takes such care to remind us that hardship and loss are to be expected in this life. Hardship and loss are agents of separation, but nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. It is high and long, wide and deep, and if we fix our eyes on it, perhaps we may be able to begin to grasp some of that even in this lifetime.

And as we grasp it, we can then press it upon our neighbor.

### **Love without Bounds**

Once we recognize that the love God has bestowed upon us is not merely an emotion but an act of the will, we are forced to reevaluate how we love others. Specifically, we must reevaluate our categories. No longer can we parse our fellow humans into the categories of “lovable” and “unlovable.”

If love is an act of the will—not motivated by need, not measuring worth, not requiring reciprocity—then there is no such category as “unlovable.” This is what Jesus teaches in the parable of the good Samaritan. When the lawyer seeks to qualify the meaning of the Great Commandment by asking, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29), Jesus responds with a story about a man who shows love to the “unlovable.” It is, of course, a story about himself—and a story about everyone of us who has received rescue at his hands. As the parable is careful to illustrate, it is a costly and unsought rescue, an unsought rescue, bestowed upon an undeserving recipient.

### **Love, No Matter the Cost**

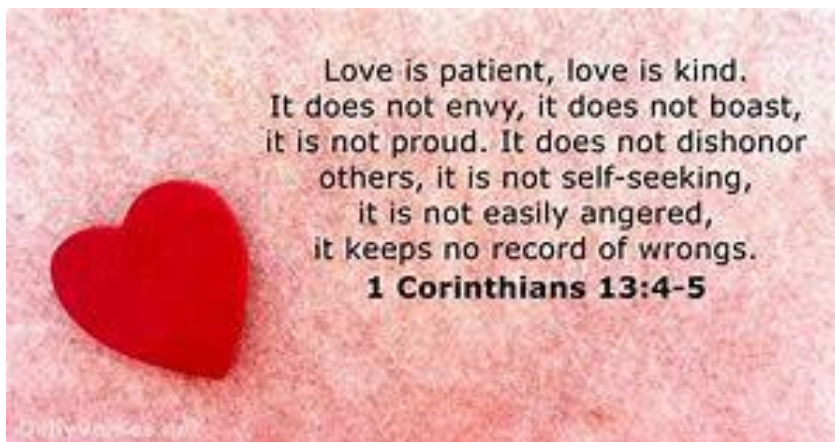
The costliness of *agape* is evident in the cross. Thus, those who resolve to take up their cross resolve to love as Christ loved, in a costly manner.

When we begin to follow Christ, we resolve to love God *even if it costs us*. And it does cost us—it costs us our pride, our comfort, our self-will, our self-

sufficiency. At times, it costs us amicable relationships with family, our expectation of safety, and more. But in laying these aside, we learn the worthiness of the object of our love in a deeper way. We find increasing freedom, and as we mature, we resolve to love God *no matter what it costs us*.

When we begin to follow Christ, we resolve to love our neighbor *even if it costs us*. And it does cost us—it costs us our preferences, our time, our financial resources, our entitlement, our stereotypes. At times, it costs us our popularity, respect, and more. But in laying these aside, we learn the brokenness of the object of our love in a deeper way. We find increasing empathy, and as we mature, we resolve to love our neighbor *no matter what it costs us*.

This is the kind of love that marks believers as distinct from the world. What is the will of God for your life? That you love as you have been loved. When faced with a decision, ask yourself: Which choice enables me to grow in *agape* for God and others? And then choose according to his will.



# American Rescue Workers *Williamsport*

## Community Outreach Ministries

The Men's Center Program  
Men's Transitional Shelter  
ARW Community Church  
YMAC (Youth Making A Change)  
Retail Thrift Stores  
Toys for Tots Distributor  
4<sup>th</sup> Largest County Recycler  
United Way partner programs  
Saving Grace Shelter  
Social Service Center

Pastor Sam Astin, *Executive Director*  
Dawn Astin, *Business Administrator*



November 25, 2019

Elmsport United Methodist Church  
5 Gap Road  
Allenwood, PA 17810

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your gift of \$300.00 to the American Rescue Workers.

Through your kindness we will be able to continue to assist thousands of families and individuals with basic daily needs such as food, clothing, shelter and emergency financial assistance. American Rescue Workers continues to provide 25,000 annual bed nights of shelter to men, women, and children who would otherwise be homeless. At the cost of \$16 per person per day, we truly could not do it without you.

Thank you again, and I look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

Valerie Fessler  
Director of Development and Community Engagement  
valerie@arwilliamsport.org

*Thank you for  
your support of  
our ministry!*

No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution



643 Elmira Street • Williamsport, PA 17701 • Phone: 570-323-8401 • Fax: 570-323-0980 • [www.arwilliamsport.org](http://www.arwilliamsport.org)  
A Church with a Mission – Clothing Bodies, Warming Hearts, Rescuing Souls



Ti 717-766-7652 • Fi 717-766-5828  
5120 Simpson Ferry Rd  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050  
umhc.org

January 13, 2020

Elimsport UMC, Congregation  
5 Gap Rd  
Allenwood, PA 17810

Dear Friends:

Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your generous November 2019 gift of \$300.00 to the United Methodist Home for Children, a Board of Child Care Program.

The programs at BCC's Mechanicsburg campus offer an extensive range of services to meet the unique and often complex needs of those we serve. Our staff provide healing and recovery utilizing therapeutic interventions that are trauma informed. As a team they bring our purpose statement – enriching communities, one family at a time – to life, and we could not be prouder of the efforts of both the kids and staff.

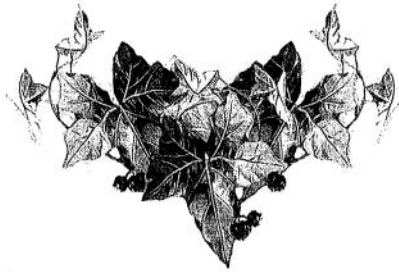
Thank you again for believing in our kids and supporting this vital ministry. We appreciate you!

Warmly,

Jeffrey A. Glass, MSW, LSW  
Director of Programs in PA

Laurie Anne Spagnola, MSW  
President and CEO  
Board of Child Care of the United Methodist Church, Inc.

*Please consider this letter as a receipt for your contribution. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your donation. BCC is a 501c(3) tax exempt organization under IRS section 170(b)(1)(iv) for both federal and state tax purposes*



*Son Light House*  
*130 Carpenter Street*  
*Muncy, Pa 17756*

*Elmsport United Methodist Church*  
*16145 S Route 44 Hwy.*  
*Allenwood, Pa 17810*

*January 10, 2020*

*To: Members and Friends, Elmsport United Methodist Church:*

*On behalf of the Recipients, Volunteers and Board of Directors at the Son Light House, I thank You for the donation of "Cereal" we received on January 9, 2020 for the Son Light House.*

*We are truly thankful for your thoughtful support. This donation will be distributed in January at the Son Light House.*

*The month of December 2019, 546-Households received Food and Clothing, 1,492-Individuals 501- Youth, 696 -Adults, 295-Seniors and (9) New Households registered in December 2019 at Son Light House.*

*Son Light House depends on the Community and local support with both Food and Monetary donations and not to forget our Volunteers making it possible to provide this service to the many families in need during the year.*

*With God's Blessing and wishing everyone the very best in the "New Year."*

*Ken & Delores Frey*  
*Ken and Delores Frey*  
*Directors, Son Light House*  
*Muncy, Pa 17756*



**DISTRICT MISSION CHALLENGE !!**

As United Methodist Christians, we have a long history of putting hands and feet to the prayers that we lift. Built into our DNA as a faith tradition are two incredibly important truths: 1) Our faith is never separated from our actions. What we believe about Jesus is lived out in the ways that we seek to make a difference in the world. 2) We believe that we are able to do more together than the sum of our individual contributions. When it comes to the Body of Christ working together – being one with each other and one in ministry to the world, 1 plus 1 always equals more than two.

In order to experience that, the Susquehanna Conference (that's all of us, friends) is being issued an invitation, or a challenge. **Between now and the 2020 session of Annual Conference, to be held at Hershey Lodge next May 28-30**, churches in all seven districts are each being asked to collect one item which is used to make up Mission Central Care Kits. Churches are then asked to send those items with their pastor and/or lay member to Annual Conference. During Annual Conference, participants will have the opportunity to work together to tangibly live out our call to work for the transformation of the world by assembling those care kits – which will then be distributed through our partners at Mission Central and UMCOR.

Lewisburg District is asked to collect hand towels, good quality, preferably 15X25 – 17X27 inches in size. Our goal is to triple the goal set for the annual conference by collecting 3,000 towels to be used in those care kits. That's an average of 27 towels per congregation. For some of us, that will be a good, reachable goal. For others, that will be a goal easily blown by over these next seven months.



However many we collect, I thank you for the hearts for mission that I have seen in action in so many profound ways, and can't wait to see what God will do when we unite our hearts "in ministry to all the world."



*We love  
because  
he first  
loved us.*

1 John 4:19

Dear Church Family,

We would like to thank  
you for the beautiful flowers. They were  
very much appreciated.

Love,

The Robert  
Kahley Family



St. John's UMC,

Thank you so  
very much for your donation to the  
Montgomery Food Bank. Your gift  
was very much appreciated. Thank  
you for caring for the needy peo-  
ple of the Montgomery area.  
Thank you so very much for your  
monthly money gifts you gave to  
the Montgomery Food Bank for the  
year of 2019.

Thanks again,

Footprints of Montgomery



**Psalm 136:26** Give thanks to  
the God of heaven  
His love endures  
**forever**

This is my  
commandment, that  
you love one another  
as I have loved you.

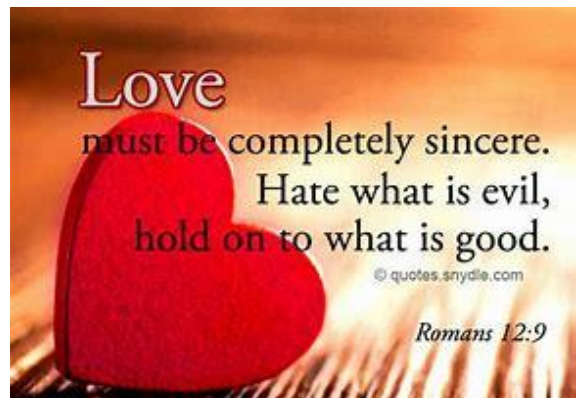
John 15:12



**Love**  
must be completely sincere.  
Hate what is evil,  
hold on to what is good.

© quotes.snydle.com

Romans 12:9







Community Breakfast is held Wednesday mornings from 7:00 - 9:00 am at the Elimsport Church.



Weather permitting, Parish Bible Study is on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 at the Elimsport church. We are continuing in the Book of Psalms.



Dear Friends,

We thank you for thinking of us. We really appreciate the "Big" goodie bags.

Tanner & Tyler Shadle



Please note the new address for Eleanor Taylor:

Nippenose Valley Village Room 51  
7190 South State Route 44  
Williamsport, PA. 17702



There will be a blood drive on Tuesday, February 4th from 2-7 pm at the Elimsport Church Fellowship Hall.

BLOOD  
DRIVE



The Christian Crusaders will meet at 1pm on Friday, February 28th in the fellowship hall. Please bring a dish to share and your own table service.



Council of Ministry meeting will be held February 6th at 6:30 pm at Elimsport church. All are invited to come and share ideas for our parish for the upcoming months.





#### Acolyte Schedule:

2/2 Garrett & Jackson  
 2/9 Samuel & Mitchell  
 2/16 Jackson & Mallorie  
 2/23 Garrett & Elizabeth



PPRC will be meeting on Monday, February 3rd at 6:30 pm at the Elimsport church. This includes: Retta Moore, Christa McCormick, Jeremy Kennedy, Lauren Bryson, Julie Taylor, Charlie Ulrich & Kay Showers.



## Elimsport Volunteers

#### Greeters for February

Feb. 2 Polly Kahle  
 Feb. 9 Dave & Peg Kennedy  
 Feb. 16 Katy Moser  
 Feb. 23 Monte Temple



QuotesIdeas.com

- Items for March's newsletter are due February **20th**.
- Items for the weekly bulletin's need to be to the church office by **Wednesday morning** each week.

*(Items received after these dates are not guaranteed to be printed.)*



Thank you so much for thinking of me this last Christmas. The goodie bag that was given to me was great. Also, thanks to Hilda for being the person to deliver it. What a great church family!

God Bless,

*thank you*

Larry Foresman

Elimsport UMC Members,  
Thank you for continual support of the Montgomery Christmas Committee. We know that without your donations, we would not be able to provide for the less fortunate members of our community. Please know that I received many phone calls thanking the committee for the food boxes. I even had one child call to thank us for the gifts. Delivered 169 boxes! Thanks again for your support.

Virginia Hill  
Montgomery Christmas Committee



Dear Friends,

You helped make a big impact in our community. Thank you so much for your generous donation to Kingdom Kidz recently. We appreciate your kindness and will use it to do the work God has called us to do. May God richly bless you for blessing us.



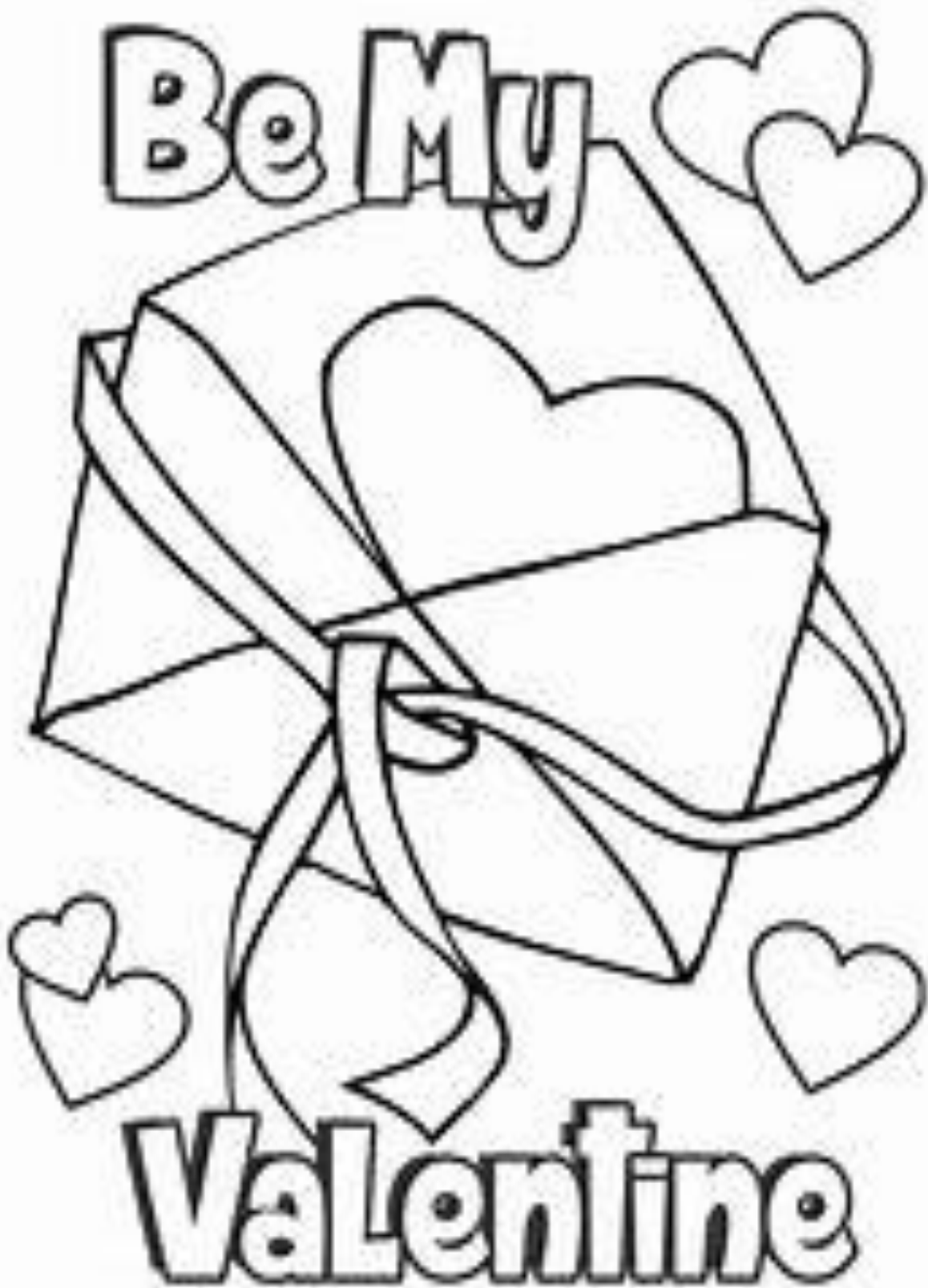
In His service,

Donna Bridge, Founder  
&  
Lisa Derr, General Manager

It's the time again...VBS planning time! Looking for anyone interested in helping brainstorm and pick out our theme for VBS this coming year! It will be held Sunday, July 12th thru Thursday, July 16th from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. Closing program and Carnival will be Friday, July 17th at 6 pm. Looking for teachers, helpers, decorators and most of all kids and lots of kids! Our meeting will be held Sunday, February 9th at 3 pm here in our church! Looking forward to seeing you there!!



# Kid's Corner





# **ELIMSPORT VALLEY UNITED METHODIST PARISH**

## **Worship Schedule:**

### **Elimsport UMC**

Worship 9:00 am  
Sunday School 10:30 am

### **St. John's UMC**

Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30 am

### **Parish Youth Group**

Check weekly Bulletin for current schedule and events  
(at Elimsport)

### **Parish Bible Study**

Varies according to the season.

### **Parish Office:**

16145S. RT 44 HWY  
Allenwood, PA 17810

### **Parsonage Phone:**

(570) 547-1386

### **Pastor Mike's Cell:**

(570) 974-8590

### **Parish Website:**

[www.evpumc.org](http://www.evpumc.org)

### **Parish email:**

[elimsportumc@gmail.com](mailto:elimsportumc@gmail.com)

[www.evpumc.org](http://www.evpumc.org)



If we love one another, God  
lives in us and his love is made  
complete in us.  
- 1 John 4:12

### **Our Mission Statement at Elimsport UMC**



We gather together as a community of Christian believers to worship, fellowship, and to learn more about God. By the unity of the Spirit and the support of each other, we are able to reach out to the community and the world.

### **Our Mission Statement at St. John's UMC**



The purpose of St. John's is to both evangelize and nurture. We are called to show God's love in our world by giving aid and by spreading the Good News of Christ. We in turn provide an atmosphere for nurturing where Biblical truths are shared enabling people to become spiritually enriched. By providing this, people will learn and through learning, become more effective witnesses.