

PASTOR SCOTT'S

MONTHLY MESSAGE



“The Month of Love”

Many declare February as the “month of love.” It takes a bit to get to the reason for this proclamation. First we have to wade through Ground Hog Day and see if more or less winter is in store. Given we aren’t going out much - if you are up for a movie with a mild science fiction bent (time warpage) / that is mainly a romantic comedy / and chronicles personal growth you might want to rent or stream “Groundhog Day” starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell.

After climbing that hurdle comes the love of sports in the form of the Super Bowl. This has been an unusual football season due to the pandemic, and we’ll see how it works out for the championship. They anticipate about 22,000 live spectators (including 7,500 vaccinated health care workers that will get in for free) compared to last year’s attendance of roughly 62,000. Already some usual advertisers are opting out.

Then comes the distraction of Valentine’s Day. You can go all out this year, because we get a holiday (President’s Day) to recover the day after! Yes, I said “*distraction*” because this only appears to be why February gets labeled the month of love. Again, this year it may be hard to take your loved-one out, so plan ahead for flowers, chocolates, or a delivered meal - and any of the multitude of Valentine’s related movies.

How about a little contest: can you watch (preferably) or guess what Valentine’s movie I might reference in an upcoming sermon (I don’t know yet, so some ‘psychic ability’ will help in this).

But then comes the real reason for love. Ash Wednesday. It falls on the 17th of February, and marks the beginning of Lent. While Easter may fall in March or April, Ash Wednesday is always in February. Lent is the season we celebrate true love, *agape* love. The love of God, for “God is love.” - 1 John 4:16b. The love of Christ, for Christ is God incarnate. The love of Christ coming to this world to save it, not condemn it (John 3:17). The love of bearing our sin that we might be made righteous, “right” before Love, God.

While Valentine’s Day focuses principally on *eros* (romantic / passionate love), it also includes doses of *lupus* (playful, flirtatious love). Of course *storge* (familial love), and *philia* (friendship) may be part of requesting one to be your “Valentine,” but what really deserves celebration this month, and all of Lent, is *agape* (the unconditional love of God and Christ for humanity, and the reciprocal love of humans for God/Christ).

You are unconditionally loved! Let that sink in. That is reason to celebrate. If you desire to break out *ash cloth* for Lent, or give up chocolate (you have three days to eat all that Valentine’s chocolate before Ash Wednesday) do so. But also celebrate, recognize, become convinced of the fact that you are *agaped* beyond your imagination. It may take a bit to “get your head around this.” Don’t wait until the beginning of Lent - this is the month of love, start now!

Peace and the *Agape* of Christ,

Pastor Scott