



I Want to Hold Your Hand*

There are cynics who will tell you that the feelings we call 'falling in love' are nothing more than the drive to procreate in fancy dress. There's no denying that humans are animals with a strong drive to mate, but there's more to loving than mating.

Love seeks expression. This holds true for romantic lovers and for parents and children, for siblings and friends, even for patriots and fans of sports teams.

Our expression of love can be thwarted. We may find our love is not met by a reciprocal response. Or circumstances may not permit the expression of the love that people have for one another. Novels, plays and films have portrayed the heartache and tension of unrequited and forbidden love forever. We expect the story tellers to resolve the problem by the end of the story. Even as outside observers we want love to find its expression.

Obviously, it is not just romantic love that can be blocked by a lack of mutuality or by circumstances in life. The pain is different, but not necessarily less, when the love of a parent or a child is not reciprocated; when siblings can't navigate their relationships in ways that allow them to express their love; when friends find the binds of love stretched thin by distance and the press of life's demands.

Prayer: *Prayer: I'd send flowers, but FTD wouldn't be able to deliver them. This kind word, this patient ear, this one's for you. I hope you like it!*

Love wants to express itself, and, if the expression is denied thoroughly enough and long enough, the love will begin to fade too.

The familiar story of John the Baptist's preaching of repentance reminds us of the urgency we feel to express our loves – to act on our feelings and convictions. The crowd who listened to John's preaching heard more than prophetic scolding. They heard God's call to turn towards home, to return to the heart of love that is God's gift to us.

When they heard this call and felt the pull towards home, they asked John, "what then should we do?" John told them a few practical ways to express their re-kindled love for God: if you have two coats, give one to the poor, share your food with the hungry; don't exploit the vulnerable, don't abuse your power. (See Luke 3:1-14)

Prayer and faith, interior devotion and trust are surely marks of the Christian life, but it would be a strange kind of love for God if it didn't seek expression; if it didn't ask, "what then should I do?"

*What lover hasn't thrilled to the thought of taking the hand of one's beloved? These guys got it.



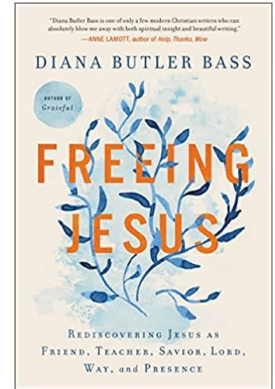
You probably know Julia Child as a famous American chef and TV host. According to US National Archives in 2008, she worked for the Office of Strategic Services (which would become the CIA) and developed shark repellent to protect Navy men in shark-infested waters.

St. Matthew's Book Club Spring Edition

On Tuesday, May 23, the bibliophiles of St. Matthew's will gather to discuss *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence* by Diana Butler Bass. This book is exploration of how the author (and her readers) experience Jesus.

The book weaves memoir and theological reflection together, inviting the reader to do likewise – looking for the ways we have experienced Jesus in our own stories. Her writing, like her preaching, is engaging and vivid.

If you would like to participate in this discussion, please let us know (so we know who and how many are participating). There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex; please sign up by Sunday, May 14th. You can also contact the church office (716-245-1692).



An Evening with The Ridge Ramblers

Wednesday, May 17 * 6:30-8:30pm

Come enjoy the music of The Ridge Ramblers Folk Group!

The Group rehearses at St. Matthew's during the winter months and this is the last time they're playing here before moving to Chestnut Ridge Park. We will have refreshments and there'll be plenty of seating in the Fellowship Hall for this free event. Please sign up in the Narthex by May 14th.

Supporting Refugee Family

St. Matthew's continues to collect necessary items along with other Churches In Action members to set up another refugee family in their apartment. If you'd like to help them begin a new life in Buffalo by donating, click here for the list of items.

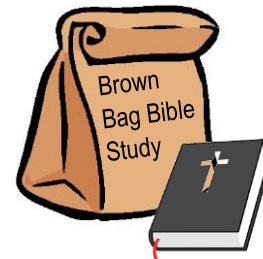
Collection bins are in the downstairs hallway. If you have furniture to donate, please contact the church office. (The list is also posted on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall, on wall next to bins, and there are copies on the table in the Narthex for you to take home.)

Brown Bag BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays 12 noon

Come with your lunch and bible to the Council room to visit with each other and learn and grow in the Word with Pastor Lynn.

All are welcome ... bring a friend!



1. Take a word for a piece of furniture, change one letter and find a set of linked pieces.
2. Insert standard mathematical symbols, like +, -, /, or x to make this statement true: 54243=234 (If you don't put a symbol between digits, then they become a multi-digit number.)

(see page 5 for answers)



John & Karen Kaitanowski, Joyce Kaupa, Kristy, Donn Mergenhagen, Peggy Scales, Bob Yager, Lynn Yager; elderly in assisted living or homebound: Lola Donner, Joan Haft, Marilyn Fenske, Jewell McFarland, Reta Rauker, Yvonne Shearer, Helen Wilson; those serving in the military: Alex Steinbroner, Aydan Stormer



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday!

MAY: Dawn Goetz (5/5), Anne Kanaley (5/7), Debbie Zdrojewski (5/7), Bob Velazquez (5/11), Denise Woodruff (5/29), Stan Kaznica (5/31)

JUNE: Marilyn Fenske (6/1), Joann Ertel (6/2), Aaron Ertel (6/3), Andy Federmann (6/4), Chris Wilson (6/5), Joyce Kaupa (6/6), Steve Jankowski (6/12), Joan Haney (6/15), Keith Kanaley (6/16), Mike Meyers (6/17), Gary Burdick (6/18), Roger Corlett (6/27), Tammy Kruszka (6/30)

Happy Anniversary!



Bill & Mary Hamm
May 12, 1973

Jeff & Robynn Rich
May 18, 2002

Carl & Joann Ertel
May 22, 1992

Ken & Tammy Kruszka
June 10, 1989

Ken & Shirley Haberman
June 24, 1967



In Loving Memory

We remember the life of long-time member and friend *Jean Roth* who entered into rest on April 16, 2023.

A service will be held at St. Matthew's on Wednesday, May 31, with a reception to follow.



The youngest members of St. Matthew's visit the live stream booth on Sunday! Vanessa Rich holds her granddaughter *Rose Asboth* and dad Martin Rozewicz holds his son *Theo*.



Great Great Grandma Peggy Scales and Great Grandma Brenda Carver welcome the new addition to their family...

Emerson (Emmy) McComb

Born April 8, 2023; Parents: Shana & Clinton McComb of Tallahassee, FL

Coming in
JUNE...



Potluck Lunch and Speaker Program

Thursday, June 29, 2023

Fellowship Hall

Come enjoy fellowship, food and learn about the USS Sullivan from a Naval expert.

More information to follow.

Mark your Calendar!

Mercy Workers

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” (Psalm 103:8)

‘Mitigation specialists,’ are a group of professionals who work in a very small niche of the legal world. They represent convicted murderers and others whose crimes were so grave that they were sentenced to death. Their job is to seek mercy in the courts for those whose crimes were merciless. The goal is to present the convicted person as just that, a person. They don’t try to excuse the inexcusable. That’s not their mission. They seek to present a more comprehensive picture of the person than just the crime they committed, including the factors that have contributed to their criminality.

There is no question of innocence. The people they represent are guilty. These legal advocates want to spare the lives of those who didn’t spare others. They get to know the offenders and strive to see in them the common humanity that their clients failed to see in their victims. In turn, they hope to make us as a society see these people as fellow humans, in hope that we (acting through the justice system) will be unable to kill them.

I learned about this legal specialty because I saw an article titled, “The Mercy Workers,” and I just had to know who these ‘mercy workers’ might be.

As I read the article and reflected on the title, I thought being a ‘mercy worker’ should not be a specialist’s job. If there ever was a job that everyone should learn it is to be a mercy worker. There’s a huge need for mercy workers. It’s not just murderers and criminals who need mercy. All of us ordinary sinners need mercy too – all the time.

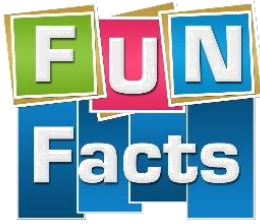
We non-specialist mercy workers need to use the same basic techniques as the professionals. We need to see each other in context, to see that we are more than the worst things we do. We need to see the one in need of mercy as a human – as one of us.

Jesus tells us, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

God is the original mercy worker. Mercy depends on truly identifying with the wrongdoer, seeing him or her as a person like me. God in Christ identifies with us fully, living a genuinely human life, dying a genuinely human death, an innocent victim of human sin. Instead of destroying sinners, God in Christ absorbs the violence and sin of those who are guilty as hell. This is the ultimate model of mercy.

It was a costly mercy. It cost Jesus his life.

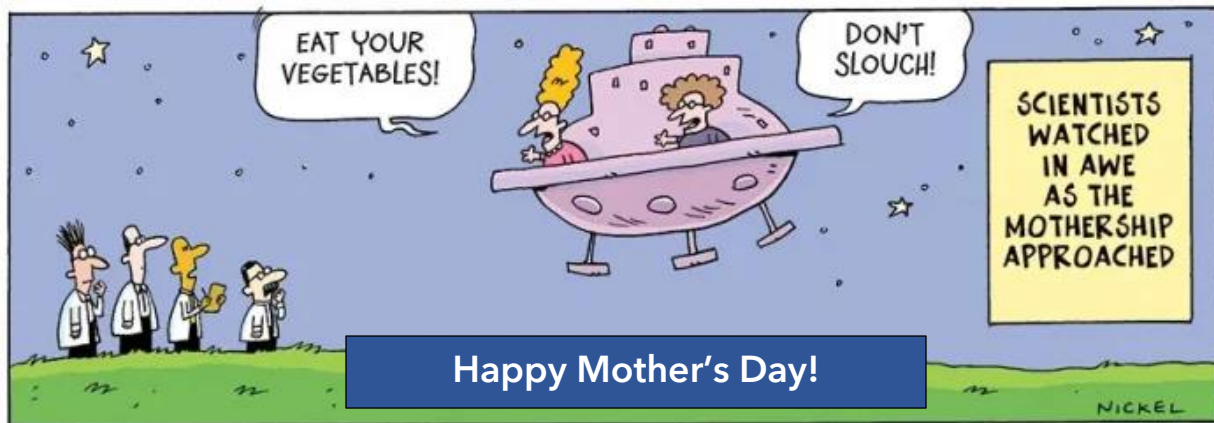
Prayer: *God, be merciful to me, a sinner who is reluctant to extend mercy to my fellow sinners.*



In the TV show Ironside, Raymond Burr injured his eyes working on the series. Being in a wheelchair, he had to look up directly into the hot lights used to film his scenes and his eyes were slightly burned.

Shaking ketchup makes it 1,000 times thinner. Why? Spherical tomato particles form into thinner ellipses when shaken, making your ketchup 1,000 times runnier.

King Charles III has a car fueled by wine because of his environmental causes. His vintage 1985 Aston Martin was reworked to use wine as its primary fuel. The engineers at Aston Martin urged the King not to switch out the fuel because it would ruin the car. Not to take no for an answer, the car now runs on wine and it smells delicious.



Brain Teasers' Answers

1. Chair Chain
2. $54 + 24 \times 3 = 234$

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