

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—ELKO  
1559 SEWELL DR., ELKO, NEVADA**



**Pastor.....**  
LaVonne Alexander

**Office Manager.....**  
Naomi Tanner

**Financial Secretary...**  
Dalana Tognini

**Pianist /Organist.....**  
Connie Muir

**Choir Director.....**  
Patty Fisk

**Nursery Attendant....**  
Marilyn Robinson

**Desert Pulpit Editor....**  
Naomi Tanner

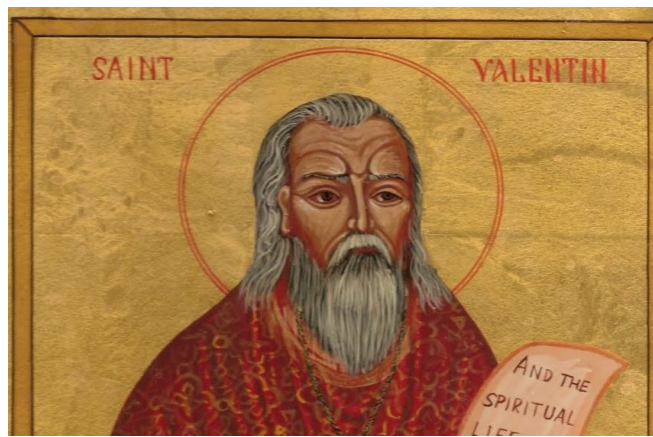
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On February 14th many folks will celebrate Saint Valentine's Day by giving flowers, cards, and candy. Not too mention having intimate dinners, spending time with loved ones, going to parties, and giving other special gifts to friends; but who was the real Valentine and why is this most romantic of holidays named after him?

### **Oh Claudius**

The legend of Valentine's Day is said to have originated during the third century in Rome, under the reign of Emperor Claudius II. During his reign, Claudius decided that single men made better soldiers, so he outlawed marriage for young men to keep them focused and away from potential familial distractions. A young priest named Valentine decided the law was unjust and began defying the Emperor's decree by continuing to perform marriages for young lovers in secret.

### **First Valentine Card**

Claudius eventually discovered Valentine's actions, had him arrested and soon after sentenced to death. During his time in jail, Valentine fell in love with his jailer's daughter, who visited him in prison. Before he was put to death, Valentine sent a letter to the girl signed "from Your Valentine", the basic expression we still use every year during this holiday. Valentine was executed on February 14, 270 AD.

### **The Saint of Couples**

Over 200 years later, around 496 AD, Pope Gelasius established the feast of St. Valentine on Feb. 14 to honor his memory, however, the Pope referred to the martyr and his acts as "being known only to God" because not much was really known about Valentine the priest. One account from the 1400s describes Valentine as a temple priest who was beheaded near Rome by the emperor Claudius II for helping Christian couples wed. A different account claims Valentine was the Bishop of Terni, also martyred by Claudius II on the outskirts of Rome. Accordingly each year on February 14, we continue to honor Saint Valentine's final efforts by celebrating our love for significant others, spouses, family, and friends but what if that's not really the reason we do it?

### **Chaucer & The King**

The medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer often took liberties with history, placing his poetic characters into fictitious historical contexts that he represented as real. No record exists of romantic celebrations on Valentine's Day, Feb 14th prior to a poem Chaucer wrote around 1380. In his work "Parliament of Fowls," he links a tradition of courtly love with the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day—an association that didn't exist until after his poem received widespread attention. The poem refers to February 14 as the day birds (and humans) come together to find a mate. Pardon the middle English but when Chaucer wrote, "For this was sent on Saint Valentine's day / When every foul cometh there to choose his mate," he may have invented the holiday we know today. Of course, history also tells us that 150+ years later, the 14th of February was finally and officially designated St. Valentine's Day in 1537 by King Henry VII of England.

### **Why All the Flowers**

For centuries, flowers have long symbolized fertility, love, marriage, and romance, but the romantic history of giving your loved one Valentine's Day flowers comes from the old-fashioned custom of sending floral bouquets to pass on non-verbal messages. Introduced in the 18th century by Charles II of Sweden, each flower had a specific meaning attached to it, making it possible to have an entire conversation using only flowers. Today, people continue to send flowers on special occasions or to express sentiments of love and admiration.



## New

As we enter a new year, we have an opportunity to think about newness in a variety of ways. Yes, it is 2021, and I imagine no one is sad to say goodbye to 2020 given all that happened during the year just ended. But, for followers of Jesus, *new* takes on a deeper meaning.

For generations God has been preparing a new thing for his creation; to create new heavens and a new earth (Is. 43:19, 65:17), and part of that new creation is not only new heavens and earth, but new, renewed, people as well. God has been reaching out to his people for their (and our) renewal throughout all of time.

In Ezekiel, God speaks of the renewal of his people saying, “I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” (Ez. 11:19-20) And, again in chapter 36: “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (vs 26) The Psalmist prays the same: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.” (Ps. 51:10)

Of course, Jesus was (and is) the fulcrum and apex of God’s new thing. He addressed the need for renewal in his conversation with Nicodemus, telling him: “Very truly, I tell you, unless one is born again, [they] cannot see the kingdom of God.” (Jn. 3:3) The scriptures teach us that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor. 5:17)

While the scriptures affirm that we are no longer burdened by the law, but are freed to live a new life in the Spirit (See Rom. 7:6), that doesn’t mean that we are without obligation. We are to offer our entire being to God as a holy sacrifice. We are not to pattern our thoughts or actions in the manner of the culture. (See Rom. 12:1-2) Rather, we are “to be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds, and to clothe [ourselves] with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph 4:23-24)

From Christ, we have just a few commands: To love God above everything and everyone else and to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the whole creation.

We just celebrated the beginning of something wonderful and new: God with us in the birth of the Messiah. But Christmas is already fading into a memory as we take down the tree and pack away the ornaments. So, how will you keep the true joy of Christmas alive? Can we, like Scrooge after his visits with the spirits, be those who know how to keep Christmas well?

- \* I will leave you with some questions that I hope challenge you to think in new ways about your faith.
- \* In this New Year what are the ways you will seek renewal in your journey with Christ?
- \* How are you living out the reality that God IS with us?
- \* What new commitment is God inviting you to?
- \* What parts of your life, your Self, have you been withholding from the Holy Spirit’s work in you? And, are you willing to surrender those parts of your Self to the Spirit’s renewing power?
- \* What new thing are you willing to let God show you about yourself? About your neighbor?

A lifelong journey with Christ is challenging and demanding. Let us see what new things God will work in us and through us in 2021.

Wishing you and your families a truly Happy New Year!

Pastor LaVonne

## DESERT PULPIT ARTICLE January 2021

### SESSION

Special Congregational meeting was held December 13 for the purpose of election of officers for the class of 2021-2023. Installation and ordination will occur in January 2021.

The following nominees presented were elected:

#### ELDERS

Kathy Reyes            2021-2023  
Diana Jones            2021-2023

#### DEACONS

Pam, Anderson        2021-2023  
Priscilla Mason       2021-2023  
Matt Niday             2021-2023  
Mike Jones             2021-2023  
Susan Merschel        2021-2023

At the December meeting items addressed were:

By-law changes to address number of Elders and Deacons required for our congregation and preparing for increase or decrease needed for service. This will return to the congregation for final vote in January.

Communion dates were set which included the regular first Sundays and additional Holy Communion recognition.

The budget was crafted to meet the church needs and pledges received which will be presented at annual meeting of the Congregation.

## Mission and Outreach

This is the first year the Mission and Outreach Committee assisted Janet Strickland and Clarice Gamboa for the Birthday Party for Jesus. Safely shopping for baby items made it a little trickier this year, but you donated 13 onesies, a dress, 4 blankets, booties, hats, Q-tips and 6 bags of diapers. Janet provided Christmas cookies to take home to eat safely.

Difficult shopping didn't stop your generosity this season. Some people donated money to send to the Department of Child and Family Services to help buy gift cards for children that come to DCFS without any personal items.

The Two Cents a Meal collection was \$188.50 for the final quarter of 2020, and that amount will be sent to Community In Schools for their program of providing food for hungry school children.

The Joy Offering was collected before Christmas and your generosity meant that \$665.00 will be sent for support of Racial and Ethnic Schools and Pensioners.

Thank you

## Oregon Travels By Henry's:

### From Jen -

Like many people staying at home, I feel like I don't have a lot of fascinating life to talk about. I'm very happy when I can see Megan and thrilled that Sarah is able to stay with me during her winter break from school. We've done some fun seasonal activities, despite social distancing restraints. We've driven through the city looking at Christmas lights and attended a concert and a showing of The Nutcracker (not ballet - hip hop dancing).

We also said good-bye to our beloved bulldog, Max, who leaves a big hole in our hearts and household, as all God's creatures' departures do. I am happy he is not suffering anymore though and blessed with many memories...from him chewing up various furniture pieces to his big love and soft cheeks we loved to smooch. All in all, the Henrys are healthy and that is a lot to be thankful for in this crazy year. Now if only we didn't miss our Elko family so much.

### From Megan-

Well these two months have been a roller coaster. I'll share some highs and lows. Thanksgiving this year was pretty great. I went and spent two weeks with my aunt, uncle, cousin, Sarah, and my mom. I had a great time! We cut down our own Christmas tree!! It was a lot of work, phew! We also went and looked at Christmas lights. All in all I had a great time with them. I've also been baking like crazy with my grandmother. She's the one that taught my dad and me everything I know about baking! We've made so many cookies, I can barely count them. Apparently we haven't even made a dent on how many cookies she used to make when my dad was a kid. I've also had some pretty sad events. I got completely blown off by an architect that I was supposed to meet with. That wasn't fun. I know that I don't have any skills but my time is still worth something. I also lost my dog Max. He was our big American Bulldog. We found out that his liver was failing and that he was in a lot of pain. I miss him so much but I know it was the only decision that was right for him. Now he is up in heaven with Jesus running around with all the other dogs. I have found a college and young adults Presbyterian group that meets every Monday on zoom. I absolutely love it. It is pretty awesome to get to hang out with other young adults that have the same values that I do. I can't thank you guys enough for the Christmas cards. I miss you guys so so so much!!! I hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas. I'm going to spend the morning with my dad and grandparents then I'm going to drive an hour and spend the evening with my mom, aunt and family. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season! Love, Megan Henry



## DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE A REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION FROM YOUR IRA?

Consider giving some of your RMD payout directly to First Presbyterian Church. You won't get a charitable deduction on your tax return, but your contribution will be excluded from your taxable income. You must direct your IRA custodian to make the check directly to the church. If it's made out to you, it will be counted as taxable income even if you turn around and donate the money to the church. The IRS calls this a qualified charitable contribution (QCD), and it only works for IRAs, not 401(k)s and other plans.

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN DEACON NEWS

The Deacons November/Thanksgiving Project involved reaching out to many in our congregation that we have not seen for a while. We distributed 30 "Thinking of You Bags" to friends that we hope are doing well so that they can come back to church soon. We sincerely hope everyone is staying healthy.

The December/Christmas Projects are still evolving. With all of your help, we have fulfilled the Christmas wishes for 15 families whose names were on the Angel/Sugar Plum Tree. We are so happy to be helping those in need in our Church and community.

We are so excited to welcome Mike Jones back and Susan Merschel as a new member of Deacons for the Class of 2023. Other Deacons in this class are Pam Anderson, Priscilla Mason & Matt Niday. They will continue on for three more years.

The Class of 2021 includes Robbie Nickel, Vicki Matys, Kathy Mcleod & Heather Norero.

The Class of 2022 includes Jerry Cooney, Donna Gary, Barbara Pearson & Brett Pearson.

We would like to thank the Deacons that went off this year which include: Youth Deacon Megan Henry, Glen Hanington, Toni Mendive and Jenny Byars.

Submitted by Jerry Cooney, Moderator

## Thank-you

### Presbyterian Women!

We have 36 women who contributed to our No Work Bazaar for a total of \$2,185.00. We use this money to buy things for the church and to support local charities in Elko. This year we have been helping a local church family.



Esther Circle has resumed meeting.

Our next meeting will be January 21st, February 18th in the Parlor at 1:00 p.m.



2¢ a Meal.

If you've forgotten

Is The Mission Committees project to remind us of the abundance we've received. If we, out of gratitude, donate 2 cents for each meal we eat, we can help feed Elkoans who don't share in that abundance.

This quarter's collection will be sent to  
Community in Schools

December's collection was \$54.00

NOTE: next collection January 17th and February 21st

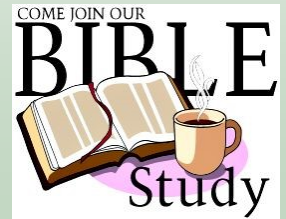


## Women's Bible Study:

Wednesday morning Bible study current study is "Sermon on the Mount" by Amy-Jill Levine. We did a study "The Lion and the Lamb" for Advent. You are welcome to join us.

We are meeting at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall for social distancing. Please join us.

Newcomers welcome.



## MISSION STATEMENT

"We believe we are called by God through the grace and love of Jesus Christ to worship joyfully, grow spiritually, love one another, serve those in need and share the good news of the gospel with everyone.."

**T G I S**

(Take Groceries In Sunday)



The Mission Committee is now collecting non-perishable food items to help FISH re-stock their shelves after Christmas. Any canned or packaged food items would be appreciated. Please check the expiration dates on your contributions and place them in the box in front of the office. Thank you for your previous donations to Underdog.

The Church office hours are,  
9:00am-1:30pm  
Monday –Thursday



Worship service are still available  
Sundays via YouTube.

To find the videos, go to  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=elko+first+presbyterian+church,](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=elko+first+presbyterian+church)  
or open YouTube and search for Elko  
First Presbyterian Church.

To whom it may concern,

My name is JR Green. I am the director of a family services agency located in Reno. The name of the organization is Call To Compassion. One of the many services we offer is specialized family foster care.

Like other programs within a system of care approach, a fundamental assumption of treatment foster care is that the most effective treatment environment for a youth is his/her home, community, and school. Within this model, foster parents pay close attention to the youth's behavior on a daily basis and are in close communication with other members of the youth's treatment team in order to provide individualized, coordinated treatment (Fisher & Chamberlain, 2000). Treatment foster care is a "specialized" or "advanced" version of foster care in which foster parents are provided with additional training and support in order to provide specialized care and support to high-needs youth. Foster parents receive ongoing consultation and support so they are able to provide the best possible environment for the youth.

As you may already know, foster families are in high demand and there are hundreds of kids in specialized foster care, who are in need of a safe place they can call home. The rural areas of Nevada are especially in need of families. We have been in contact with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to assist with this need.

Please, If you know of anyone interested in making an impact in a child's life, please email me at, [CTCDIRECTORJG@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CTCDIRECTORJG@GMAIL.COM)

Thank you and God bless!

JR P. Green

Call To Compassion

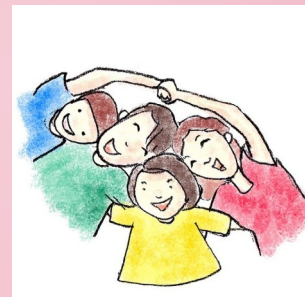
Office: 3100 Mill Street, Suite 204, Reno, NV, 89502

Mailing: P.O. Box 10522, Reno, NV 89510

Phone: 559.250.6938

Email: [ctcdirectorjg@gmail.com](mailto:ctcdirectorjg@gmail.com)

Website: [calltocompassion.org](http://calltocompassion.org)



#### Attention Church Members:

We are looking for volunteers who have a passion for filming or taping our worship services. Since the beginning of Covid-19 we are recording the worship services to be seen on the church website. Contact Rev. LaVonne at the church or Patty Fisk @934-4594. Any age is qualified to volunteer for this important job.

Thanks! Worship/Music Committee.



Submissions for March– April 2021

Desert Pulpit Due

**February 16th**

NEWS  
LETTER





The Presbyterian Coffee Project is a partnership between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Equal Exchange, a worker-owned co-operative offering 100% fairly traded coffee, chocolate, tea. You can purchase these items in the church office during regular office hours. They make good gifts.

### Sunrise Ringers of the Elko Handbells

Great THANKS to all who attended and/or supported the annual concert of Sunrise Ringers of the Elko Handbells on Dec. 13. We had 'unusual' situations this season, like EVERYONE ELSE!!!, but we are grateful we were able to perform and share our joy of the season through our music.

We wish all a very a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!



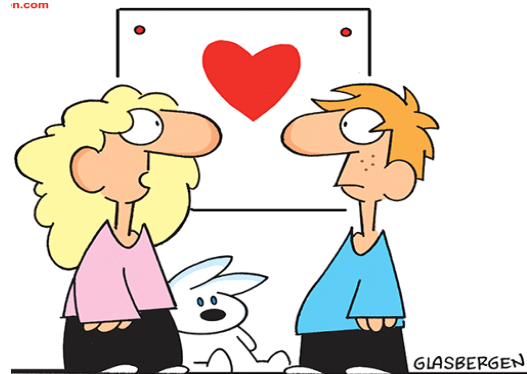
## BIRTHDAYS!

### January

Larry Hall 1/2  
 Rick Glass 1/6  
 Pam Anderson 1/9  
 Liz Better 1/9  
 Vicki Goicoechea 1/10  
 Sally Winsley 1/12  
 Frances Schain 1/19  
 Toni Mendive 1/26  
 Ann Nisbet 1/26  
 Penny Pruitt 1/27  
 Mike Nahnacassia 1/29  
 Evan Munson 1/30

### February

Vicki Matys 2/4  
 Cash Guttry 2/6  
 Mark Ports 2/6  
 Joeseph Norero III 2/8  
 Justin Munson 2/9  
 Nick Bisson 2/13  
 Nathaniel Bisson 2/14  
 Clarice Gamboa 2/17  
 Dennis Petersen 2/18  
 Floyd Fisk 2/20  
 Cherie Welch 2/22  
 Nick Halton 2/25



“Valentine's Day is the holiday where men give presents to the women they love to make up for the way they messed up at Christmas

### ATTENTION!

**IF YOU USE THE CHURCH BUILDING, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THE DOORS ARE LOCKED AND LIGHTS ARE TURNED OFF WHEN YOU LEAVE. HELP KEEP THE CHURCH BUILDING SAFE FOR EVERYONE USING IT.**



**Presbytery of Nevada 31.83**

**Synod of the Pacific 5.22**

**General Assembly 8.95**

**Per Capita is \$46.00 per member**

# January - 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1.	2.
3. 10:15 Worship Service	4.	5.	6. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	7.	8.	9.
10. 10:15 Worship Service	11. 7:00 Joy Circle	12.	13. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	14. 1:00 Esther Circle	15.	16.
17. 10:15 Worship Service Congregational meeting	18. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday  OFFICE CLOSED	19. 6:00 Session	20. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	21.	22.	23.
24. 10:15 Worship Service	25.	26.	27. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	28.	29.	30.
31. 10:15 Worship Service						

There are two Sunday School classes available , on Sundays.  
 8:00am Zoom Sunday school , Contact Mike Jones for information.  
 9:00 am in person class, contact Kathy Reyes.

# February -2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1.	2.	3. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	4.	5.	6.
7. 10:15 Worship Service	8.	9.	10. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	11.	12.	13.
14. 10:15 Worship Service	15. <b>PRESIDENTS DAY</b>  7:00 Joy Circle  <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	16.  6:00 Session	17. <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 9:30 Women's Bible Study  7:00 Service	18.  1:00 Esther Circle	19.	20.
21. 10:15 Worship Service	22.	23.	24. 9:30 Women's Bible Study	25.	26.	27.
28. 10:15 Worship Service						