

## So. Montrose Community Church February, 15' Newsletter



**Keeping a Holy Lent**

### **Pastor's Message . . .**

“Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always “me first,” doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't take revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies.”

#### **I Corinthians 13:4-8a The Message**

Love is one of the Fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23. We as God's people grow in faith and this growth produces Christ-like virtues such as love and joy. The fruit of love is self-giving love. It is generous and unconditional. It is the kind of love God offers each one of us without price. Love is the most important gift we can give to anyone during our lifetime. This love is expressed in our words and actions whether we be at home, at work, at school, at worship, or simply in our neighborhood.

I read a story that described love in a simple yet moving way. A group of elementary students were asked to honor a teacher who had passed away by drawing a picture of something that reminded them of her. One young boy finished his work of art quickly. When asked why he colored the entire page red, he explained, “I wanted to draw a picture of her heart, but it was too big for the paper.” What a wonderful way to be remembered.

We love others because God loves us so lavishly. As God's people we can't help but love because it is a part of who we are and a reflection of who we serve. Why not decide this month to give the gift of love to your partner, your family, your neighbors and your friends. You will change their lives and yours. Have a fabulous February! Pastor Jane

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**Lent 101:** Lent is a season of the Christian year where Christians focus on simple living, prayer, and fasting in order to grow closer to God. It's the forty days before Easter. Lent excludes Sundays because every Sunday is like a little Easter. Basically, it's about one-tenth of a year (like a tithing of time). This year it's from February 18th till April 4th.

**Ash Wednesday** usually begins with a service where we recognize our mortality, repent of our sins, and return to our loving God. We recognize life as a precious gift from God, and re-turn our lives towards Jesus Christ. We may make resolutions and commit to change our lives over the next forty days so that we might be more like Christ. In an Ash Wednesday service, usually a minister or priest marks the sign of the cross on a person's forehead with ashes. In Jewish and Christian history, ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. Mortality because when we die, our bodies eventually decompose and we become dust/dirt/ash/whatever. Repentance, because long ago, when people felt remorse for something they did, they would put ashes on their head and wear "sackcloth" (scratchy clothing) to remind them that sin is pretty uncomfortable and leads to a sort of death of the spirit. This was their way of confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness.

On what we now call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem while people waved palms and cheered him on. Less than a week later, Jesus was killed. The palms that were waved in joy became ashes of sorrow. We get ashes for Ash Wednesday by saving the palms for Palm Sunday, burning them, and mixing them with a little water (like tears). It is symbolic.

At an Ash Wednesday service, folks are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. The minister will make a small cross on your forehead by smudging the ashes. While the ashes remind us of our mortality and sin, the cross reminds us of Jesus' resurrection and forgiveness. It's a powerful, non-verbal way that we can experience God's forgiveness and renewal as we return to Jesus.

**So what is Lent?** At Jesus' baptism the sky split open, the Spirit of God, which looked like a dove, descended and landed on Jesus, and a voice from

heaven said, "This is my Son, My Beloved, with whom I am pleased." Afterward, as told in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was sent into the wilderness by the Spirit where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. During this time there he was tempted by Satan and found clarity and strength to resist temptation. Afterwards, he was ready to begin his ministry. Maybe Jesus needed some time with God to sort through the major changes happening in his life. Maybe he needed to get away from family, friends and the familiar routine in order to see God (and himself) more clearly. Perhaps he wanted some intentional time with God as he searched for direction and answers, like you. Like Jesus, we may need to take some serious time to pray and listen for God.

**Why Do Lent? How do I start?** Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, not really living life with direction, purpose or passion? It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of classes, relationships, family, and work. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God. Lent is a great time to "repent." to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40 day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart. You might try one of these practices for Lent:

**Fasting:** Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, TV, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like worry or reality TV to spend time outside enjoying God creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do?

**Service:** Some Christians take something on for Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend everyday of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

**Prayer:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

**Self-denial:** Focusing less on myself in order to focus more on God. How will you use the time to grow closer to God?

### Things You Can Try For The Lenten Season

10. Try an electronic fast. Give up TV, texting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week (or everyday of Lent). Use the time to read and pray.
9. Start a prayer rhythm. Say a prayer every time you brush your teeth, hear an ambulance, or check your email. Before you text someone, pray for them.
8. Read one chapter in the Bible each day. (A good place to start is with Matthew or Psalms).
7. Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (maybe even yourself.)
6. Give up soft drinks, fast food, or coffee. Give the money you save to folks in crisis.
5. Create a daily quiet time. Spend 30 minutes a day in silence and prayer.
4. Cultivate a life of gratitude. Write someone a thank you letter each week and be aware of how many people have helped you along the way.
3. Be kind to someone each day.
2. Pray for others you see as you walk to and from classes or drive to and from work.
1. Volunteer one hour or more each week with a local shelter, tutoring program, nursing home, prison ministry or a Habitat for Humanity project.

Thanks to the Rev. Penny Ford for this handy introduction to Lent. She is the pastor of a small UMC church in Carrollton, AL. Reprinted with permission from [www.alivenow.upperroom.org](http://www.alivenow.upperroom.org)

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February 4, 1965 was a day that God gave the world a great blessing! We all wish Pastor Jane a Happy 50th birthday on February 4th!! Hope you have a great day!

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### SOUP NIGHT

On Monday morning I pulled into the church parking lot to make the soup & set up for soup night. I wasn't feeling very positive honestly. The forecast was snow. Levi was sick & I had dropped him off at my mom's. I was also making a soup (Sausage Stew) that I had never made before & wasn't sure how good it'd be. I had had a bowl of soup at a restaurant before that had sausage, white beans, & kale in it. So on Sunday night (wait til the last minute why don't I?) I got on Pinterest and used sausage, white beans & kale as my key words. The recipes were interesting, but didn't sound like what I was looking for...so I made up my own recipe. This would generally not be a big deal. But considering I already advertised it in the paper & was making about 4 gallons of it, I really was hoping it'd turn out good! I took a picture of this mystery soup & had my mom & Mary post it on facebook. I went home to change & pick Chloe up from school when Mary called & said Gracious Living Senior Center had a fire happening as we spoke & that the residents were coming to our church for safety until they were placed somewhere for the night. The night before I had asked the Lord for 112 people! He provided. All the residents & the staff & fireman & EMT people were there. Praise God no one had been hurt. I'd also like to say that none of them look too terribly stressed out. Their staff along with the fireman & EMTs & people from our congregation had everyone comfy, warm & content. So at 4:30 when soup night started I joked with some of them, "Hi. Welcome to soup night." (They'd been there already for hours.) Some of the residents that were still there were able to enjoy soup. We also fed fireman, ambulance workers, Red Cross volunteers, & some of our regular soup night quests. Sue & Kelly Pratt played and sang. On top of all that excitement it was my Grandma's birthday. Kelly led us in singing her Happy Birthday. As always the dessert table was full of delicious goodies, as well as birthday cake. I had written in my little letter that I always write, "I am always looking forward to the night we serve 112 people" & break the record of 111. Would you believe we tied the record? HOW AWESOME! I was tempted to cheat & count everyone in the room, but I decided to do the right thing & only count the people

we served :) And to my surprise & happiness, tons of people loved the sausage stew.

Well....the awesomeness doesn't stop there! Pastor Jane had told me a couple donated \$200 to soup night for me to use for supplies or anything I chose to support soup night. So Tuesday morning when I counted the money in our jug there were 2 \$100 bills I assumed was what Pastor Jane had mentioned. With that plus the other money in the jug the total was \$366. That broke the record of the most ever donated! So I put \$166 in an envelope and set the \$200 aside thinking I'd pray about something cool to use it for for soup night and then let this couple know what they had bought for us. When I got to bible study Wednesday I found out Pastor Jane had not given me that \$200 yet. The \$200 in the jug was from someone else! So our actual total was \$566!! THERE AREN'T WORDS TO EXPLAIN HOW I FEEL ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT SOUP NIGHT. My helpers are so good to me, the guests are so special to me, & the givers are over the top generous. I love our church. I love soup night. I love the community we live in. We are so blessed. Thank you all. You're the best of the best. I just love ya!

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm 34:8:  
You Lord are my shepherd. I will never be in need.  
Psalm 23:1

Let's PRAISE God! He listened when I prayed,  
and He is always kind. Psalm 66:20

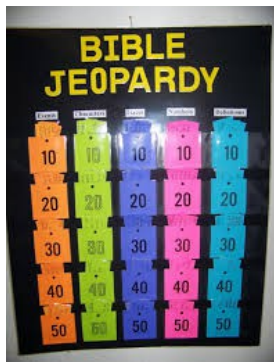
The Lord loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7  
Chris Smith

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I don't often put an article in the newsletter personally, but I want to this month. Tammy Ruhf, administrator, owners; Tom Dean and Jon Howell of Gracious Living Estates would like to thank the people at our church and the community for all the help with the evacuation of the residents, and for everything done for them while at our church . . . from the community that helped feed them, making them comfortable, emergency workers that assisted with their evacuation and unloading them at the church and then loading them back up to their temporary living quarters and to the GLE staff that helped and worked tirelessly to make sure they had what they needed for the days they wouldn't be at GLE. Words can't express how much all the help and kindness was appreciated.

Happy to report that the residents will return to GLE Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. They have been so missed!!



### Kids J.O.Y.

The J.O.Y. group has sure been having a lot of fun the last couple months & is going to continue their pattern this month. The kids & the adults who participated in the Jeopardy for Jesus game show did an amazing job entertaining the congregation with their knowledge of our Lord & the bible. What a bunch of smarty pants! I love hearing laughter & cheering in church! Even though we had just learned about the 3 wisemen coming to see & worship Jesus....we had 3 wise young ladies win our game show. Congrats to Peyton in 1st place, Sierra in 2nd & Chloe in 3rd.

I would like to give Pastor Jane a special thank you. I had talked to her about some of my concerns with the children being in Christmas programs. Some children love the "stage." They love singing & acting. But the children we have in our church all seem either shy or uninterested. My own Levi & Chloe do not want to sing or talk in front of people. (Anyone who knew me as a child knows they obviously got this from Tim!) So when I asked Pastor Jane about doing something different, her, Mary & I came up with the game show. Thank you Pastor Jane for being open to letting us try new things and live outside the box.

At our January meeting, we learned about David. How he was a shepherd turned king. He was the teenage warrior who defeated the giant Goliath. He wrote most of the psalms. He was a musician, even inventing many instruments. He had a heart for God and was a worshiper in good times or in bad. He committed a terrible sin during his lifetime but did not let that stop him from following God. He repented, received forgiveness and moved on. What an excellent role model for our children.

For our February meeting we are going on a field trip. We are going bowling & then to Sweet Frog. Remember Pastor Jane's sermon last year FROG?

Fully Rely On God. We're going to go out for the day & have fun together. Please continue praying for our kids & their families for their education, safety, health, peers, and spiritual growth.

Chris Smith

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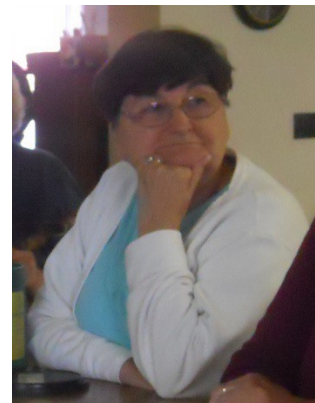
### Twice As Sweet

Written by Joanna Fuchs



On Valentine's Day, we show our love; we express our deep affections. Those who are important to us get cards and sweet confections. But Christian love is not just for the ones we hold most dear, Jesus said, "love everyone." He made that very clear. For Christians, it is every day we should care and love and serve everyone we meet in life, whether they do or don't deserve. Let's follow Jesus' good command to love everyone we meet. Valentine's Day every day will make life twice as sweet.

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**Our spotlight this month is**

**Mary Jane Long**

**- Where were you born?** I was born at home on Maurey Street, Danville, Pa 11/28/1840 to Margaret Kuhn Erb and Carmon Erb. I was the fifth child.

**-Where did you go to high school?** I graduated from Danville High School June 1958

**-Were you involved in any sports or clubs in high school?** I was a member of the High School Band from the time I was in 2nd Grade through High School. A member of the Chorus.

**-Did you go to college? If so, where? What degree?** After my divorce, I attended college classes

both at Broome County Community College, and Lycoming County College. No degree

**-What was your first job? Other jobs? Any unusual jobs?**

First Job, Mother sent my little brother and I out house to house with a wagon full of vegetables to sell. First Paying job I was a professional acrobat. I performed with a group of entertainers from the YMCA called the Carnegie Hall Entertainers. We performed at the Sheradon Inn in Wilkes- Barre, Forest Lake Inn, Eagles Mere and many other places. I was Lifeguard at

Sunnybrook Park. I have worked at many different locations, I taught swimming lessons all over Susquehanna County, for the Red Cross, worked at Williams Market and Laundromat, Montrose School. For Kelly Girls I worked at 70 different businesses, and schools in the Triple Cities. I am now working at United Health Services doing medical billing.

**- When were you married? Children?**

**Grandchildren?** Married John F. Long, Sr, August 23, 1958

We had three children, John F; Susan Lynn; Michael James (deceased)

Four Grandchildren Daniel Long, Adam Long, Courtney Bauer, Joshua Bauer, and one Great Granddaughter Emily Ayra Long

**-What places have you lived?** We lived in Danville, South Montrose, and Montrose.

**-What is your favorite vacation spot? -Favorite vacation memory?** Knoebels Grove Elysburg. My mother's family has a reunion there every year.

Mother was the oldest of 12, I had 32 First Cousins on that side of the family and when all the generations get together. We are a large group.

**-What do you do in your spare time?** Spare time visit with friends, high school classmates or cousins.

**-Do you have a favorite Bible verse or story?**

Favorite Bible Verse: The 23 Psalm

**What is your favorite room in your house?**

Favorite Room in the House at present the Living room has computer hook up and I can keep in touch with everyone from all over the United States both Family and Friends.

**How has your faith helped you through a difficult time, or was there a specific time that you could feel God working in your life?**

My faith in God has helped me get through so many different and difficult situations. The first difficult one, I was injured in a bicycle accident on my way home from Bible School. A Man picked me up and took me to the hospital. My little brother rushed home to tell mother she's dead. I was unconscious for 3 days with a bad head concussion Doctors did not know then what to do. Unable to stand or walk I was not even able to feel my legs. My father took me

home and he worked with me, making my legs and arms move. He prayed with me.

Ever since then I have leaned on God for help and guidance. I feel he is always there for me.

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Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> – Matthew      Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> Tanner  
Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> Korena      Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> Cole

March 1<sup>st</sup> Kaylee      March 8<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth  
March 15<sup>th</sup> Clay      March 22<sup>nd</sup> Kohen

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Communion Preparation

February 1<sup>st</sup> – Diane Myers  
March 1<sup>st</sup> – Phyllis Valentine  
April 5<sup>th</sup> – Mary Torney

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Greeters

**Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Weeks**  
Mike & Cathy McCain

**Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Weeks** Tom/Darlene  
Bisel

**March 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Weeks**  
Dick Allen

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Weeks**  
Alan & Peggy Jerauld

**March 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday** – Ben Owen

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**-March 14<sup>th</sup>:** Gospel Fest. Dinner at 5:30, music at 6:45. Bring a side dish or dessert.

**-March 21<sup>st</sup>:** Chicken BBQ at United Fire Hall

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For more information on any of the above, go to  
[www.skylakecenter.org](http://www.skylakecenter.org)

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### Happenings at Sky Lake

#### **Senior High Winter Retreat February 6-8, 2015**

If you are a youth in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 come spend the weekend with friends old and new. Along with serious times and discussions, there will be plenty of time for serious fun, too. Be sure to bring plenty of outdoor clothing for hiking, sledding and other outdoor fun!

**Location:** Riley Lodge

**Check In Time:** 7:30 p.m. on Friday, February 6th

**Departure Time:** 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 8th

**Cost:** \$105 per person

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#### **Fellows of the Forest March 13-15, 2015**

This new retreat for men over the age of 18 is sure to be a blast! Enjoy the fellowship of other Christian men as you participate in your choice of A Range of the Contemplative to Super-Active indoor and outdoor activities that will be offered.

We will begin with check in from 5-7 p.m. on Friday and depart Sunday afternoon

**Location:** Riley Lodge

**Cost:** Save \$25 when you register by February 20<sup>th</sup>.  
\$200 per person

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#### **Rejuvenate: A Spring Ladies of the Lake Experience April 10-12, 2015**

You are cordially invited to come away and rest awhile at Sky Lake, free of the distractions of the outside world. Women over the age of 18 will enjoy the company of fellow Christian women as they take advantage of the various "mild and wild" activities that will be offered. We will begin with Check In from 5:30 p.m. till 7 p.m. on Friday and depart Sunday afternoon.

Save \$25 if you register by March 20th

**Cost:** Riley Lodge: \$200

**Cost:** Underwood Lodge: \$240



**In the church:** Charmarie Bisel, Chuck Mead, Barb DuMond, Ryan & MacKenzie, Harry Snell, Aggie Holbert, Grace Harvey, Wink Frystak, Joyce & Don Blaisure, Nic Remington, Theresa Owen, Ben Owen, Craig Estelle, June Bishop, Marian Nye, Alice Porter, Belma Herrala, Doris Sebring, Doris Larnerd, Bob Dalrymple, Gladys Barber, Peggy Wood

**In our community:** Family of Lisa Ball, Family of David Book, Family of Eleanor Lewis, Family of Andrew Stevens, Gas company drivers, Amos Hollister, Vickie Wickizer, Carol Jones, Karen Rudolph & family, Jim Ochse, Joyce Lathrop, Patty Bloomer, Mark Bush, Vanessa West, Emergency Service Personnel, Kat, Issac Hobbs, Ron, Parsons' family, Jane Perry, Kyle & Lindsay, Joyce Millard, David Snell, James Walters, Stella Wallace, Joyce Smales, Kelly, Dorothy Wegman, Jan Krupinski, Staff at Children & Youth, Terry Cooke, Dottie Henry, Catalina, Pat Whitaker, Mickey Patrick, Justin & Jess, Sandra Lathrop, those struggling with addictions, our teenagers in Susquehanna County, Sarah & Bill, Robert Atticks, Sr., Randy Ward, Mary Helen Booth, Keith Pratt, Helen Crotta, Lisa Steele, Brooke Arnold, Dee Pierson, Dick Millard, Duane Snell, Dennis Snell, Helen Petersen, Debbie Brewer, Terry Franks, Jonathan & Daniel Snell, Katherine, David and Mary Ann Pierce, Les Hawley, teachers and students, those in the military, the unemployed, those in nursing homes, people in prison, our country, our world, our church and each other.

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#### **Church Website**

<http://southmontrose.umchurches.org>

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