



# The Lily Pad



**"I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys."**

Solomon 2:1

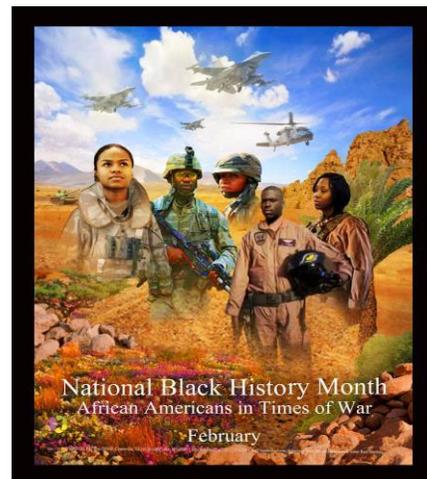
## FEBRUARY - REESTABLISH OUR FOCUS ON RIGHTEOUS LIVING!

Dear Fifth Avenue Family,

Can you believe it? February is here! The hustle-bustle of the holidays are left behind - February finally sees many of us getting our first breath of fresh air. And, by this time of year the pressure of New Year's resolutions is either incorporated itself into healthy habits or dropped by the wayside.

February is filled with several significant observances or holidays - African American History Month, Groundhog Day, Washington and Lincoln's Birthdays (President's Day), Boy Scouts Sunday, Valentine's Day, FAUMC Wonderful Wednesday Community Meal, and Ash Wednesday.

The 2018 African American History Month theme, "African Americans in Times of War", commemorates the centennial of the end of the First World War in 1918 while focusing on the roles of African Americans in every American war, from the Revolutionary War Era to that of the present "War against Terrorism."



On February 2, we will celebrate Groundhog Day with Punxsutawney Phil. If Phil sees his shadow we will have six more weeks of winter; here's hoping for an early Spring!

Boy Scouts Sunday, scheduled in close proximity to the Boy Scouts of America's birthday, February 8th, celebrate the connection between Scouting and their faith-based chartered partners. Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church has been the proud Charter for Boy Scout Troop 780 for 55 years!

Presidents' Day (February 19, 2018) is intended to honor all the American presidents, but primarily George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

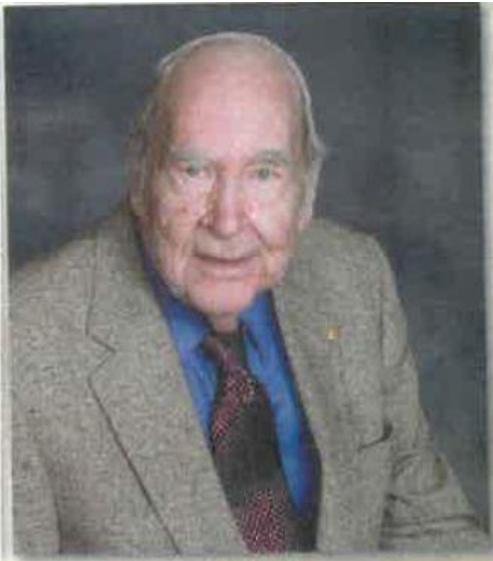
Valentine's Day (February 14<sup>th</sup>) is when we give our sweetie flowers, cards, gifts, and candy as romance fills the air. February, a deliberate time of the year when our thoughts and hearts turns towards love and appreciation. On this treasured day, people that we love are remembered and adored. But why would we set aside one day out of a year to remember the ones we love and cherish? One day out of 365 - is that sufficient to celebrate the love we have for each other? Should we not on a daily basis celebrate that agape love?

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.* 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

February 14th is also Ash Wednesday, a day that begins the season of Lent. Lent is one of the most important seasons of the church year because it is a time of penitence, an introspective period during which we take stock of our lives and our relationships to discover and change what we must in order to prepare for Easter and experience spiritual renewal. We set aside the normal complexities of life and contemplate, mediate, and dedicate ourselves to consider the greatest day dedicated to love – Easter. And it is at Easter that God gave us our greatest Valentine and the greatest message of love anyone has ever received “*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*” *John 15:13.* Jesus laid down his life because he loved us more than anything else in Creation. He willingly suffered and sacrificed his life for ours.

What will you give your loved ones this Valentine’s Day? How about the gift of love with the attributes described in 1 Corinthians 13? These gifts will last long after the long-stem roses have wilted and the taste of the sweetest chocolates has melted away. Allow this love to abide in our thoughts, words, and deeds each and every day.

FAUMC Wonderful Wednesday Community Meal occurs the second Wednesday from September to March displays our intentionality to show Christian hospitality by providing a welcoming place, nourishing food, a listening ear, and acceptance to all regardless of faith beliefs or economic means. Our prayer is that this simple act of sharing a meal together gives hope to all God’s children as we strengthen friendships, discover new relationships, as we inspire our community to be inclusive and loving towards one another. February’s Wonderful Wednesday Community Meal will be especially special as we will honor Mr. John Roth on the eve of his 103rd Birthday! The menu - Barbecue baby back ribs with all the fixings – one of Mr. John’s favorites! Y’all come!



Mr. John Roth said, “*A Sunday without church is an empty day without purpose.*” Born February 17, 1915, and a member of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church since March 1959, Mr. John will celebrate his 103<sup>rd</sup> Birthday this year! When he reached his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Mr. John was asked how he achieved such longevity. “*I think they expected some special diet or exercise as an answer. My only answer could be, I have been richly blessed.*” His church is the anchor of his faith and provides strength, comfort, guidance, fellowship, and gratefulness. During his 59 years of membership, Mr. John has been richly blessed by this lifetime membership as he committedly participates with his presence, prayers, gifts, and service. “*My church is everything.*”

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I don't know if I can say that enough. Mr. John, you have made our life at Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church a better place and you never fail to share God's love in everything that you do. I am very grateful to have you in the spiritual and Scriptural life of our church. You mean the world to us!

Where would we be without your guidance and faithfulness, lovingly reminding us of God's unconditional love and promises. You force us out of our comfort zone, encourage us to take risks, accept our calling, as we spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Beloved Community.

I have personally benefited from your wise counsel you always provide to us as church members as we “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33

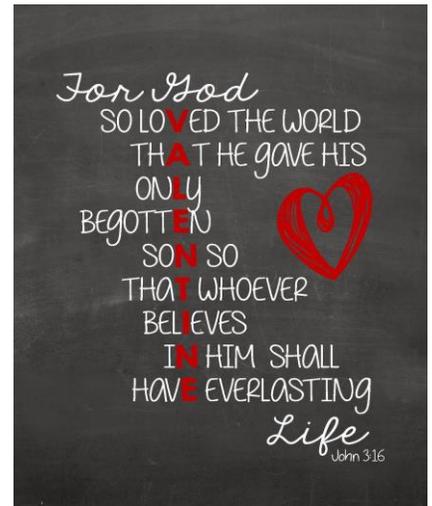
Mr. John, you are one God's most beautiful masterpieces. February 17<sup>th</sup> is a day to celebrate His works and (you) a gift to us all. Thank you for the warmth you have brought to all our lives. May you have a Birthday full of God's blessings.

I hope each one of you feels especially embraced by love this February. Coretta Scott King wrote: “Love is such a dynamic force, isn't it? It is the most inexplicable and yet the most beautiful force in life. O how joyous it is to be in it.” It's there for everyone to embrace—this unconditional love for all Creation. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others and to take risks for what they believe in.

May the month of February be one in which you prepare your heart for the joyous celebration of the rising of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ out from among the dead and may God bless and keep you this Lenten season.

To my heavenly parents, Rev. Willie and Sister Emma Griffin a very happy and blessed 58<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (February 14<sup>th</sup>). I am still learning lessons from you guys. Your marriage is just one example of how you teach me to love others the way our Lord loves us. You are always in my heart, thoughts, and prayers.

Martin, thank you for being my husband, my best friend, the love of my earthly life and a “toadly” awesome Dad! You are truly my blessing and gift from God; bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, and heart of my heart. Thank you for all the years of providing for our family and being an example to our children. You are a devoted man of faith. God has blessed me with a very special and marvelous companion for life's journey. May this anniversary mark the beginning of another year for God to light our path as he continues to bless us with an amazing marriage. I pray that God continues to walk with and beside us and guide us for another 35 years! Happy Anniversary Honey, (February 17<sup>th</sup>)!



**“Happy Valentine’s to one of my favorite person – Ever! YOU!”**

*Pastor Clarissa, Martin, Marissa, Biancha, Sophia, Nicolas, Cookie, Hachi, and Sadie*