



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



Getty Images

- ▶ “Crazy Little Thing Called Love,” Queen, 1980
- ▶ “Love Stinks,” J. Geils Band, 1980
- ▶ “Love is a Battlefield,” (my wife’s favorite for some reason), Pat Benatar, 1983

I’m sure that many other bad love songs have been written since 1983, but that’s about when I stopped listening and anyway, today’s love songs are more than likely inappropriate for a Lutheran publication. I also doubt that many of you reading this article know any Miley Cyrus or Justin Timberlake love songs anyway.

When you add country and rap songs about love, it gets even crazier. Add social media posts, soap operas, movies, books and magazine romances, internet pornography, one-night stands ... and what have you got? Pretty much variations of Valentine’s Day love!

We love to love. We have no idea what real love is, but we don’t care because we love to hurt on some level too. We are starved for love so we’ll take what we can get. We are a lonely people, so much so that we tend to be “looking for love in all the wrong places.”

Jesus quotes the Law of Moses concerning the two greatest commandments ever given: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” All of the Law and Prophets — in other words, the whole rest of Scripture, everything else God teaches us in the Bible, Jesus says — hang

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By Rev. Charles Neugebauer

Senior Pastor,
Christ the King,
Memphis
First Vice-
President,
Region 3

Let me see: I’ve been assigned the February *Lutheran Witness* supplement article. What happens in February? Nothing. Well OK — Valentine’s Day. Candy, flowers, cards! People love being and falling in love. Popular love songs, no matter how bad they are, always outsell songs written about society, war, God, nature and so forth, all of which generally have better lyrics and music but are never as popular as songs about love.

How many of these do you know? Think about what they say about the popular concept of love.

- ▶ “You Always Hurt the One You Love” (that’s nice), 1944
- ▶ “A hunk, a hunk of burning love,” Elvis Presley, 1959
- ▶ “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” The Shirelles, 1961
- ▶ “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” The Righteous Brothers, 1965
- ▶ “Stop! In the Name of Love,” The Supremes, 1965
- ▶ “All You Need Is Love,” The Beatles, 1967
- ▶ “Hello, I love you, won’t you tell me your name?” (very romantic), The Doors, 1968
- ▶ “Love the One You’re With,” Steven Stills, 1970
- ▶ “I think I love you ... I’m afraid that I’m not sure of a love there is no cure for,” The Partridge Family, 1970

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

on these two great commandments, to love God and to love His people.

Sin entered the world, causing both Adam and Eve to no longer celebrate, but rather for the first time to be ashamed of their God-created male and female differences. That separation and alienation from each other caused what we now know as an epidemic of loneliness. It was the original loneliness caused by original sin, and we all have it inside us. No matter how many people surround us, no matter how many friends we have on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, deep within each of us there is the sense that nobody really knows us, and that we are separate from others on a level we can't even describe.

Our world is a lonely place, even in the crowd of our schools and corporations, even in the place we call home, and there is only one kind of love which can conquer that loneliness we all have known ... God's kind.

On the cross at Calvary, our Savior Jesus experienced the maximum impact of loneliness. His disciples fled, his best friends betrayed and denied him and then beyond all comprehension His Heavenly Father from eternity forsook Him. He was alone in a sense we will never know — to bear the wrath of sin, death and hell — as alone as anyone ever was or will be.

It was a bottomless agony, but it was also a bottomless, miraculous love in action. God so loved the world with the kind of love that has nothing to do with feelings and everything to do with sacrificial action. It is a love that can be commanded by God for us to do for each other because it is a love of our will, not our emotions. "Love God and your neighbor with all you have and are, just like I did for you — that is an order!" Jesus commands. That is real love God's way.

In the newspaper years ago there was a story of a small plane that



“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8

crash-landed in the icy waters of Alaska. In the plane were three adults and one 12-year-old boy who were going fishing. They all survived the crash, and after praying, they abandoned the sinking plane and began to swim toward shore, fighting the cold waters and vicious riptide. Two of the men, strong swimmers, reached the shore exhausted. But looking back out onto the water they saw the third man — the father of the boy — cradling his son in his arms as they were being swept out to sea. The father could have made it to the shore alone, but his son, much smaller, could not. The father decided to act on his loving will, to die with his son rather than to leave him to die alone.

Your loving heavenly Father, while you live and when you die, will never forsake or abandon you to be alone. Jesus said:

“Greater love has no one than

this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” — JOHN 15:13

And St. Paul wrote:

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” — ROM. 5:8

St. John would later write:

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

— 1 JOHN 4:10-11

How's this: If you want more real love in your life, even if nobody seems to love you at the moment, even if you don't love yourself very much, love someone else with the love you wish you had, the kind Jesus has given you and then watch what happens. What comes around goes around. People say: “If only I could see God face-to-face one time, then I would love and obey Him with all my heart, mind and soul. If God would just open up the sky and holler at me one time, then I'd get focused real fast.”

Jesus responds that God *has* shown Himself to you — over and over again every day — in your neighbor, in those lonely people around you who need God's love from you as only you can give it! Loving others who don't deserve it is the best way you show love to God. Jesus says: Whatever you have done unto the least of these among you, you have done unto Him.

Popular silly love songs are fine. Valentine's Day is sweet. Falling in love is crazy. But God's kind of love, the Bible says, is patient and kind, does not envy or boast, it is not proud or rude or self-seeking. It keeps no record of wrongs and does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. God's love never fails.

In other words popular music lovers (hit the music): When you actively love others the way your Savior, Jesus Christ, has first loved you: “Looove is a many splennndored thing!”

Hall receives ministry award

The Mid-South District is pleased to announce John Hall as the 2018 Ralph C. Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award recipient for his work for Trinity HOPE. The award was given to John posthumously on Sunday, Dec. 16, at his home congregation, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, Tenn.

Introduced in 2016, the award recognizes the dedication and ministry-building work of a Mid-South District layperson. The award honors the life and work of the late Ralph Weiser, a long-time friend of the Mid-South District whose example of leadership, service and faith impacted his congregation and community, as well as ministries across the entire district.

John Hall was the founder of Trinity HOPE, beginning the ministry in 1999. While on a mission trip to Hai-

ti, he witnessed a school where children were disengaged in learning and very lethargic because of hunger as their parents weren't able to feed them. John began a feeding program at that one school of 42 children.

Through God's abundant blessings, John kept raising funds to help feed children at more schools. Under his leadership, Trinity HOPE served more than 26 million meals throughout Haiti.

"An empty stomach has

no ears," is a well-known phrase in Haiti. But Haiti's future depends on the education of the upcoming generation. "Ain't God good!" was one of John's favorite phrases, and he was known to use it often when talking about the work God accomplished through Trinity HOPE.

John Hall went to be with the Lord in November 2016. He and his lovely wife, Carol, were married for more than 50 years and have two grown daughters and two grandchildren.

As the words in Matthew 25 state, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Like the award's namesake, John exemplified service to God's Kingdom. Congratulations and many thanks go out to the family of John Hall.



Presenting the Ralph C. Weiser Award to Carol Hall (left) is Cassie Weiser-Herrington, daughter of the late Ralph Weiser. The Mid-South District is pleased to honor Weiser's legacy of leadership and faith with this annual award.

SEMINARY PRESENTS LAUDAMUS TOUR

Laudamus, Concordia Seminary-St. Louis's, select choir of seminarians, will perform for audiences across Michigan and Indiana as part of its spring 2019 tour.

Spring 2019 tour dates are:

- ▶ March 15, 7 p.m., Cornerstone Lutheran Church, Fishers, Ind.
- ▶ March 16, 10:30 a.m., Lutheran Life Villages, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ March 16, 5:30 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, Utica, Mich.
- ▶ March 17, 8 a.m., Immanuel Lutheran Church, Macomb, Mich.
- ▶ March 17, 11 a.m., St. John Lutheran Church, Rochester, Mich.

- ▶ March 17, 3 p.m., Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, Detroit, Mich.
- ▶ March 18, 7 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Mich.
- ▶ March 19, 7 p.m., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.
- ▶ March 20, 10 a.m., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

The concerts are free and open to the public. Freewill offerings will be collected to support musical arts programs at the seminary.

To learn more about Laudamus and the spring tour, visit csl.edu/laudamus.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Nov. 30, 2018 (11 months)

Anticipated amount (75 percent of budget)	\$1,449,627
Actual receipts	\$1,377,474
Over (under) anticipated amount ..	(\$72,153)
Use of mission commitment receipts	
Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$390,326
Allocated to Tanzania	\$22,917
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70 % of receipts) ..	\$964,232
Total receipts	\$1,377,474

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Nov. 30, 2018	\$1,377,474
Actual receipts as of Nov. 30, 2017	\$1,401,633
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$24,159)

MISSIONS

Equipment up and running at LIME

District support helps school purchase computers



Rev. Joseph Randianasolo of the Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise (LIME) in Madagascar recently sent news of its progress, which is supported by mission donations received through its ministry partnership with the Mid-South District. The institute has received printers, a video projector, computers, chairs, and tables.

Randianasolo reports: “There were unexpected expenses which forced us to cut the numbers of computers from 15 to 10, tables from 30 to 20 and consequently chairs from 60 to 40.

“We had to bring an expert on updated printers and video projector from Fianarantsoa to Antananarivo to choose them and to test them at the stores. ... In Fianarantsoa, this expert had to initiate our computer man (regarding) how to use them.

“For the tables and chairs, we asked the factory to make larger tables for multiple uses (like tables for eating in case the school organizes a party) and to paint them to protect them. In addition, we had to pay the delivery to LIME from the factory, which is located



five kilometers away.

“We also bought two small speakers for each computer to allow students to listen to their lessons and research. All of these unexpected expenses forced us to reduce the numbers of the items.

“Thank you and thank you! May Jesus bless you!”

‘Sign’ of things to come in Sharps Chapel

By Renae McElwain

The congregation of Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sharps Chapel, Tenn., is excited about the blessing of property acquired in late 2018 for the ministry to build a permanent structure.

In December, Congregation President Jeff Landis and member Jeff Garretson (pictured) installed an eye-catching sign to share the excitement with the community and proudly proclaim the site as Chapel of the Good Shepherd’s future home!

The congregation looks forward to more great news from Chapel of the Good Shepherd as plans to build unfold.





**45
YEARS**



Pastor honored in Chattanooga

Rev. Barry Hildebrandt, pastor of Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, was recently recognized for 45 years of ministry. The congregation presented a hand-carved Luther Rose to him in gratitude for his many years of service. The rose was placed on display following the presentation from Larry Zehnder, congregation president (in photo). Hildebrandt, a 1973 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, has served Cross of Christ since 1994.



ON GOING TO CHURCH

Teddy Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States, offered his reasons for going to church in Ladies Home Journal (1917):



1 In this actual world a churchless community where men have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on the rapid downgrade.

2 Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others and the sense of braced moral strength which prevents a relaxation of one's own moral fiber.

3 There are enough holidays for most of us which can quite properly be devoted to pure holiday making... Sundays differ from other holidays — among other ways — in the fact that there are 52 of them in every year... On Sunday, go to church.

4 Yes, I know all the excuses. I know that one can worship the Creator and dedicate oneself to good living in a grove of trees, or by a running brook, or in one's own house, just as well as in church. But I also know as a matter of cold fact the average man does not thus worship or thus dedicate himself. If he stays away from church he does not spend his time in good works or in lofty meditation. He looks over the colored supplement of the newspaper.

5 He may not hear a good sermon at church. But unless he is very unfortunate, he will hear a sermon by a

good man who, with his good wife, is engaged all the week long in a series of wearing and humdrum and important tasks for making hard lives a little easier.

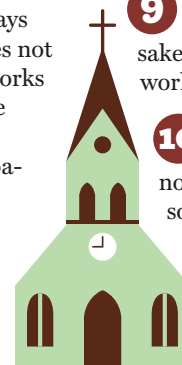
6 He will listen to and take part in reading some beautiful passages from the Bible. And if he is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss.

7 He will probably take part in singing some good hymns.

8 He will meet and nod to, or speak to, good, quiet neighbors...He will come away feeling a little more charitably toward all the world, even toward those excessively foolish young men who regard church-going as rather a soft performance.

9 I advocate a man's joining in church works for the sake of showing his faith by his works.

10 The man who does not in some way, active or not, connect himself with some active, working church misses many opportunities for helping his neighbors, and therefore, incidentally, for helping himself.



The faith of a child



“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly **loved** children and walk in the way of **love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” *Eph. 5:1-2 NIV*

By Frances Bacic

Media/Marketing,
LWML Mid-South District

Children are great imitators of the world around them. As a teacher, I once in a while sit back and watch my class. Sometimes I see great things and sometimes I see some not great traits reflected from me. I wonder “Is that really how I have shown love? Wow, maybe I could have done that differently!”

Children love unconditionally. Children praise God with the faith of a child. Sit back and watch a program performed by children and you will see great

things. They sing, yell, dance and move in uncontrollable ways. God is shining through them. His story is being told by them.

Through them God is praised in ways only a way a child can.

Ps. 146:1-2 says:

“Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.”

Oh that we too could show the faith of a child!



LWML/Erik M. Lunsford



Make plans to attend national convention!

“Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations.”

1 Chron. 16:23-24a

This is the theme verse for our next national LWML convention: “In Praise to the LORD!”

We have a great opportunity June 20-23 in Mobile, Ala., to gather with fellow sisters and brothers in Christ.

Early registration opened Feb. 1 and is \$175 from Feb. 1 through March 13; regular registration is \$195 from March 14 through May

9. As of May 10, registration is \$220 through June 10.

Among business items, delegates will adopt a new mission goal for the 2019-21 biennium, and choose mission-project grants to support with those funds. They also will elect a new president as well as other national leaders.

Registration materials and more information are available in the Winter issue of *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*. You can also talk to your society leaders or visit lwml.org/convention.

In my last article, I wrote about restoration. Are you going to take the time to travel to Mobile for a time to be restored?

The Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Ordained ministers celebrating anniversaries in 2019



70 Years

Rev. Norman Groteluschen (em)
Germantown, Tenn.

60 Years

Rev. Stanley Jones (em)
Bella Vista, Ark.

Rev. Roy Bingenheimer (em)
Concordia, Mo.

55 Years

Rev. Marvin Otto (em)
Kingsport, Tenn.

50 Years

Rev. Clifford Herd (em)
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Robert Mader (em)
Clarksville, Tenn.

Rev. Herbert Swanson
River Valley Grace, Lamar, Ark.

Rev. Louis Trebus (em)
Sevierville, Tenn.

45 Years

Rev. H. Chris Powell (em)
Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. Albert Quoss (em)
Bella Vista, Ark.

40 Years

Rev. Gordon Besel (em)
Rogers, Ark.

Rev. Richard Elseroad
Grace, Knoxville, Tenn.

Rev. Martin Nutter
Faith, Tullahoma, Tenn.

Rev. Paul Wiegert (em)
Crossville, Tenn.

35 Years

Rev. Duncan Cox (candidate)
Pea Ridge, Ark.

Rev. James Dunn
Immanuel, Murray, Ky.

Rev. Robert Kellerman (em)
Casa Grande, Ariz.

Rev. David Rubke (em)
Tullahoma, Tenn.

30 Years

Rev. Paul Bushur
First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Richard Graves
LCMS Office of International Mission

Rev. Mark Kophamer
Redeemer, Elizabethton, Tenn.

Rev. LeRoy Leach (em)
Conway, Ark.

Rev. Michael Miller
Redeemer, Harriman, Tenn.

Rev. Brian Pummill
Peace, Cherokee Village, Ark.

25 Years

Rev. Daniel Hawkins
GracePoint, Munford, Tenn.

Rev. David Krause (em)
Bella Vista, Ark.

Rev. Nathan Jansen
St. John, Burns, Tenn.

20 Years

Rev. Fasil Alemayehu
Faith, Thompson's Station, Tenn.

Rev. Timothy Henning
Trinity, Mena, Ark.

Rev. Hiram Nunez (em)
Granbury, Texas

15 Years

Rev. Joshua Willadsen
Bethel, Fort Smith, Ark.

10 Years

Rev. Ronald Basic
First, Little Rock, Ark.



LCMS/Erk M. Lunsford

Rev. John Easterling
Redeemer, Mountain Home, Ark.

Rev. Timothy Matthew
Prince of Peace, Dayton, Tenn.

Rev. John Merrill
First, Fort Smith, Ark.

Rev. Edward Rosser
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Michael Schleider
Zion, Alexander, Ark.

Rev. Emil Woerner
Friends in Christ, Bryant, Ark.

5 Years

Rev. David Appold
St. Paul, Paducah, Ky.

Rev. Eric Phillips
Concordia, Nashville, Tenn.

Well done, good and faithful servants!

CELEBRATIONS

Trinity, Pine Bluff, honors veterans

By Rev. Stewart Marshall
Pastor, Trinity, Pine Bluff, Ark.

On Nov. 18, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff, Ark., celebrated Thanksgiving with its annual meal. Following the feast, we returned to our sanctuary as our local Quilts of Valor chapter — Never Forgotten With Honor — joined us and presented 14 of our 19 members who are veterans with a quilt. Quilts of Valor is a non-profit organization that makes hand-crafted quilts for veterans.

The ceremony began with Quilts of Valor members presenting the miss-



A Thanksgiving celebration at Trinity Lutheran Church included the Quilts of Valor presentation to 14 veterans.

ing in action table. The tradition of setting a separate table in honor of our prisoners of war and missing soldiers has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The manner in which this table is decorated is full of special symbols to help us remember those who are missing or prisoners.

Trinity's choir then sang "O Valiant Hearts" and the presentations continued.

The video of the presentation may be seen on Trinity's Facebook page — go to facebook.com/trinityjowr/videos and look for the video from Nov. 18.

Faith, Union City, presents 'GOD'S GIFT TO US'

Guests and participants alike enjoyed the presentation of Faith's interactive Christmas program on Dec. 9, directed by Monica Elling, with music and background sound provided by Linda Holford.

"God's Gift To Us," a play by David Cook, featured two exhausted shoppers who declare fatigue while pressing forward for all the secular reasons of the holiday season. The weary shoppers are astonished to see an excited group of Christmas carolers who are going door to door celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus.

The enthusiastic audience joined in for the joyous songs, led by the carolers.



Brothers Wyatt and Sawyer Richardson, portraying sheep, are joined by Anna McGowan (Mary) and Jace Richardson (Joseph) for rehearsal.

The "God's Gift to Us" cast: (from left) Carolyn Miesner, Ben Hunze, Wyatt Richardson, Sawyer Richardson, Parker McGowan, Anna McGowan, Malcolm Koch, Jace Richardson, Paul Hunze, Jim Holford, Abby Hunze and Rosanne Hunze.



Deadline for the April issue is Feb. 15

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Our submission deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication.

Send email submissions to:
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or send by postal mail to:
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