

*So we have come to know
and to believe the love that
God has for us. God is
love, and whoever abides in
love abides in God, and
God abides in him.*

~ 1 John 4:16

*"Let us continue to love
one another, for love
comes from God."*

- 1 John 4:7



Bill and Steve are discussing the possibility of love. "I thought I was in love three times," Bill says.

"Thought?" Steve asks. "What do you mean?"

"Three years ago, I cared very deeply for a woman who wanted nothing to do with me," Bill explains.

"Wasn't that love?" Steve asks.

"No, that was obsession," Bill explains. "Then two years ago, I cared very deeply for an attractive woman who didn't ever even understand me."

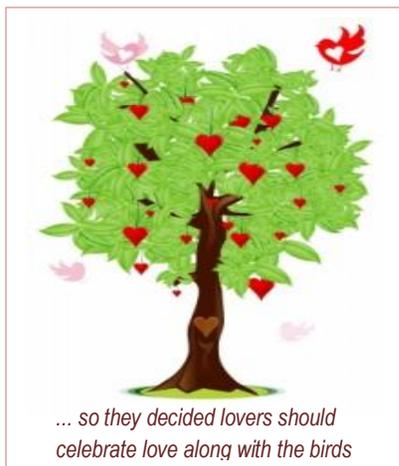
"Wasn't that love?" asks Steve.

"No, that was lust," Bill replies. "And just last year, I met a woman while I was on a cruise. She was gorgeous, intelligent, a great conversationalist and had a super sense of humor. Everywhere I followed her on that ship, I would get a very strange sensation in the pit of my stomach."

"Well, wasn't that love," asks Steve.

"No. That was motion sickness!" Bill replies.

Where Christ is cherished, family is loved and everyone is family!



... so they decided lovers should
celebrate love along with the birds



If you have only one
smile in you give it to
the people you love.
Maya Angelou



GETTING CONNECTED

Publication of...

Mt. Brydges Baptist Church

Mt. Brydges, Ontario N0L 1W0 519-317-8659

mtbrydgesbaptist.ca, Edited by Pastor Dave Adams

February 2016



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- Is it Love?

"In order to find incredible love with another person, you have to love and respect yourself." ~ Shelley Bullard

God's Valentine Gift

God's Valentine gift of love
to us

Was not a bunch of flowers;
It wasn't candy, or a book
To while away the hours.

His gift was to become a
man,

So He could freely give
His sacrificial love for us,
So you and I could live.

He gave us sweet salvation,
and

Instruction, good and true--
To love our friends and
enemies

And love our Saviour, too.

So as we give our
Valentines,

Let's thank our Lord and
King;

The reason we have love to
give

Is that He gave everything.

By Joanna Fuchs

Join us each Sunday for Worship...

3 p.m. worship and praise

22243 Allan Road (@Adelaide Road) South of Mt Brydges

Thot: "Love does not increase or decrease in response to its environment...love is not an emotion." — *Karla McLaren*

The Woman of His Dreams

A young man called his mother and announced excitedly he'd just met the woman of his dreams. Now what should he do to show his love?

His mother had an idea: "Why don't you send her flowers, and on the card invite her to your place for a home-cooked meal?"

He thought this was a great strategy and arranged a date for a week later. His mother called the day after the big date all excited to see how things had gone.

"The evening was a disaster," he moaned.

"Why, didn't she come over?" asked his mother.

"Oh, she came over, but she refused to cook."



Something to Think About...

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." – John 3:16

Is there any example of love greater than that the Lord God, creator of the universe, perfect and all-knowing, should choose to love sinful humankind? Theologian William Barclay has said, "The essential fact of Christianity is that God thought all humanity *worth the sacrifice of His Son.*" (Italics added) What does "all humanity" mean except that it should include everyone? That includes your neighbour, your family members, your co-workers, those who serve you in the store and at restaurants – everybody! That doesn't take away our free will to elect to accept God's love or reject his offer.

But isn't that exactly the Gospel message we share as we live lives transformed by the Christ who took our place and paid our cost for sin on the cross? As the song says, "*He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay.*"

As we set aside the month of February to remember those we love and thank them for being in our lives, let us not neglect to offer a special thanks to God for sending us His Son. God chose His Son Jesus to come and rescue us from our wayward state which separated us from our creator, God. He did this not because He had to – but because He wanted to – God initiated all that was necessary to establish a relationship with us out of love. It's that relationship that I want us to consider this month. Not only as we celebrate

Valentine's Day, if you are one of the many Christians that participate along with our friends, neighbours and families, but as we prepare our hearts during Lent for Good Friday remembrance of Jesus' supreme sacrifice, including our annual Walk of Witness here in Mt Brydges, and His glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. Don't get me wrong. In today's society where love is totally misunderstood and redefined through our own terms and fancies, the last thing we should do is equate God's love with Valentine's in its present commercially motivated context. Let's consider how God's love is greater and deeper and longer and wider than any sense of love we can create on our own terms.

There's a couple of thoughts come to mind as we meditate on that famous verse, John 3:16. First we're told that God "gave". Giving often is the last thing we think of when we think of love. Often we're more absorbed by our emotions, by what we're getting from being in love than we are of giving anything because we love. In a quote from the actress Julia Roberts, which may surprise you, we find the essence of a giving heart if we will risk loving... "*You know it's love when all you want is that person to be happy, even if you're not part of their happiness.*"

Secondly, John writes, "Believes". It's been said there are three essentials to enjoying love - believing in yourself, believing in those who you care about, and believing in the possibility for relationships. If you think about it, that's what God sent His One and Only Son Jesus to accomplish so that we would enjoy an eternal relationship with God our Heavenly Father. I've come to understand how only as we have

our love massaged and increased through Jesus' sacrificial example can we begin to reach out in love to those closest to us, and to the strangers we meet and find ourselves able to love. While relationships can be difficult, they remain an amazing opportunity for us to feel connected, supported, loved and appreciated by others.
Happy Valentine's Day!

Mark your Calendar...

Sun Feb 7th – Communion

Feb 10th - Ash Wednesday 7pm
(evening prayer at Pastor Dave's)

Sun Feb 14th – Valentine's Day

Sun Series: *Preparing our Hearts
for God's Sacrificial Love*

Mon Feb 15th – Mar 21st 3-5 pm
Bible Study (Pastor Dave's)

Thurs Feb 25th - MLHA Council