



Circuit Writer

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Special Dates:

- February 9 - Guest Speaker
- February 12 - Lincoln's Birthday
- February 13 - Sister Friends' Coffee & Chat
- February 14 - Valentine's Day
- February 18 - United Methodist Women
- February 17 - President's Day
- February 22 - Washington's Birthday

Blountstown United Methodist Church

True Love

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present others flowers, chocolate, a fancy card—maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:



- "When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be." - Leo Tolstoy
- "You don't love someone because they're perfect; you them in spite of the fact that they're not." -Jodi Picoult
- "Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses." - Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love—actions, not just feelings—only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

- "We love because God first loved us." - 1 John 4:19 (NCV)





Leave It to God

Fourth-century theologian Augustine urged again and again that we focus on practicing love in the here and now, not on worrying about our lives in the hereafter.

In *Beautiful Bodies*, Margaret Miles writes that especially regarding complicated doctrines like predestination and challenges like “The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13), we can’t do anything *but* leave those to God. It’s impossible for humans to take responsibility for ourselves in such matters. If we could determine our afterlife destiny by means of effort, persuasion or bribery, self-pride would surely be the accompanying sinful result.

“In fact,” Miles writes, “preoccupation with one’s eternal destiny distracts from a Christian’s present business. ‘Leave it to God,’ St. Augustine said, and place your attention on living lovingly in the body of Christ here and now.”



Somewhere in the annals of ancient history, when I was a kid growing up, February was the month we celebrated the birthdays of two of our greatest presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The first for his leadership in the founding of our nation, and the second for guiding us through the Civil War that preserved our nation so that we would continue to be the beacon of hope for the rest of the world.



In our world where wisdom is at a premium and common sense is a rare commodity in the public discourse, we need to reflect on the values these two leaders that guided their lives and reflect on the principles they laid out for us to follow.

In his farewell address to the nation, George Washington reminded us of this. “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men & Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man ought to respect & to cherish them ... And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure— reason & experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious people.”

During the furor and carnage of the Civil War, when President Lincoln was asked about the justice of the cause and whether God was on his side, Lincoln replied, “Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God’s side, for God is always right.” Mr. Lincoln went on to observe “the philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.”

With the new administration, I hope we will find a renewed emphasis on the bedrock principles and values that have made us the exceptional nation we are. Without reservation, we can assert that we are a nation like no other. Why? We have been founded on the irrefutable truth that God is the Creator of all mankind and we are the product of His creative genius. He has designed us with two genders, male and female. He has a unique purpose for each of us.

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Our satisfaction and completion for our lives can be found only in Him. When we come to Him, we discover life and life to its fullest. That's what Jesus promised us.

The Scriptures tell us, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6 [NIV] It is imperative that we teach the children the principles of holy living, the value of morality and the essence of purity for lives well lived. Then they will know the benefits of success and personal satisfactions and pride that makes for greatness passed on from one generation to the next.

Bro. John King

All the Ways God Helps Us

When young adults land in difficult situations and desperately call home, parents respond in various ways. They might remind their son or daughter of guidelines learned years back—behavior and problem-solving skills to get back on track. Or maybe parents direct their kids to a mentor, expert or resource for assistance. But if the crisis is severe, no doubt these loving parents hop in the car, or even on a plane, and go to their child. They embrace and support them, perhaps even taking initial steps to bring them through the chaos to a new beginning.

When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, exile and countless difficulties in between, God lovingly used each of these strategies. God reminded Israel of the Ten Commandments and other laws he gave to guide their life together. Sometimes he sent prophets and other leaders to direct the people into better ways and times. God does the same today, reminding us of Scripture's guidance and sending us prophetic voices and wise leaders.

Above all, when nothing less would save people, ancient and modern, from the dangers of sin and death, God came to us as Jesus. God's only Son walked with us, lived through our troubles alongside us, taught us new ways directly and brought us out of the problematic place where we were trapped and into a new beginning.

-Heidi Hyland Mann,
based on a sermon by Pastor Dave Sonnenberg

Love Makes Us Worthy

Unlike God, who loves unconditionally, humans often make choices and set limits when doling out affection. But Thomas Merton reminds us, "Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody's business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy."

As for how to develop and maintain that type of love? Merton shares, "It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my [neighbors]."





FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Communion Gail McCaskill Offering Marcus Register Fund	Flower Calendar 02 Mrs. Hester Leonard 09 Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Kimbrel 16 Mr. & Mrs. Henry McCrone 23 Mr. & Mrs. Joe Mike McCaskill			Ushers Joe Mike McCaskill Marc McCaskill Standby Billy Jordan		1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
♪Dresa Barfield ♪Eileen Hatch			♪Glenn Kimbrel ♪John David House			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	♪Addison Whitfield			Sister Friends' Coffee & Chat 10 a.m. ♪Heath McClellan		♪Joe Mike McCaskill
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		UMW 10 a.m.	♪Joan Sheppard			
23	24	25	26	27	28	
				♪Steve Cox		



Our Caring Ministry List

Short Term Concerns

Gale Ferguson
George McNew
Theresa Merchant
Tim Mowrey

Intercessory Prayer

Larry Carter
Phyllis Miller

Those Battling Cancer

Melissa Bailey
Jimmy DeVane
Vivian Eckerson
Heather Leonard

Our Shut – Ins

Betty Ann Cayson
Virginia Williams

Our Military

Ukraine soldiers and citizens
Israel Citizens
Middle East

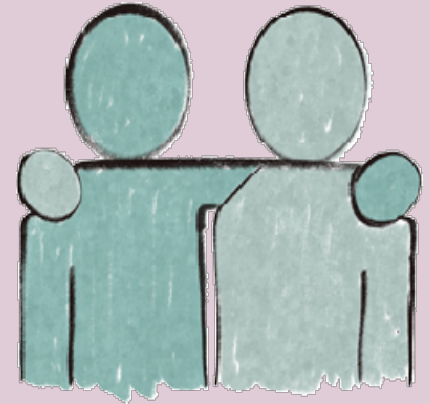
Persecuted Christians

UM Missionaries

Caregivers

Please contact the office with any updates to this list — Thank You!

“I am Here”



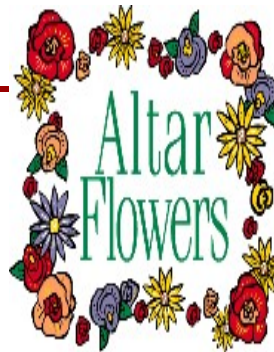
In *Bread for the Journey*, theologian J.M. Nouwen calls consolation — from “to be with” (con-) “the lonely one” (solus) — “one of the most important ways to care.” He writes, “Life is so full of pain, sadness, and loneliness that we often wonder what we can do to alleviate the immense suffering we see.”

Although consoling doesn’t necessarily remove someone’s pain, Nouwen notes that it serves a deeper purpose: To console means “to be there and say, ‘You are not alone, I am with you. Together we can carry the burden. Don’t be afraid. I am here.’ That is consolation. We all need to give it as well as to receive it.



February Flower Calendar

- 2 Mrs. Hester Leonard
- 9 Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Kimbrel
- 16 Mr. & Mrs. Henry McCrone
- 23 Mr. & Joe Mike McCaskill



“Time”

Time is
too slow for those who wait,
too swift for those who fear,
too long for those who grieve,
too short for those who rejoice.
But for those who love,
time is eternity.

— Henry Van Dyke

Blountstown United Methodist Church

Post Office Box 299
20500 Central Ave, West
Blountstown, FL 32424
Phone: 850-674-8254/3144
Email: bunitedmc@gmail.com
www.blountstownumc.org

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Family Prayer List

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1. Norma Failes /
Gale & Joe Ferguson
2. Mary Flowers /
Frank Gates
3. Gina Gate Family /
Bill Gaskin
4. Montez Golden /
Peggy Hall
5. Norah Handley /
Louise & Sonny Harrison
6. Trevor Haser Family /
Eileen Hatch
7. Brooks Hayes Family /
Cheri & Quentin Henderson
8. Mark Herndon Family /
Jackie & David House
9. Nick Hughes Family /
Laurie James Family
10. Sandra & Jim Jines /
Seth Jones Family
11. Billy Jordan Family /
Becki Kastli Family
12. John King /
Cathy & Glenn Kimbrel
13. Jonathan Kimbrel Family /
Clay Knight
14. Annie Jo Landers Family /
Hester Leonard
15. Alva Martin /
Sally & Mike Mayo
16. Gail & Joe Mike McCaskill /
Marc McCaskill Family
17. Barbara & Hentz McClellan /
Danita & Glen McClellan
18. Heath McClellan Family
Kyle McClellan Family
19. Sharon & Henry McCrone /
Perry McGhee Family
20. Phyllis & Frank Miller /
Kathryn Mitchell Family
21. Karen & David Murrell /
Brenda Parrish
22. Gary Parrish /
Michelle Pettis Family
23. Jeremy Proctor /
Charmian & Jerry Register
24. Diane & Russell Scholz /
DellAnne & Michael Schroefer
25. Tracy Cox– Stanton Family
Ken Sheppard Family
26. Stacy Sims /
Rodney Smith Family
27. Donald Stanley Family /
Sue & Don Stanley
28. Virginia House Szrowicz /
Betty Sue & Ken Taylor