

St. Andrew's Anglican Church  
18001 94<sup>th</sup> Ave., Tinley Park, IL 60487  
(708) 614-7404 [www.andrewrec.org](http://www.andrewrec.org) TO:

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## MARCH 2016

The Very Reverend  
**Frank M. Levi, M.A.**  
*Rector*

**Rev. Derrick Hassert, Ph.D.**  
*Curate*

**Rev. Phil Tjoelker,**  
*Assisting Minister*

**William Nash, Yemi Onayemi,  
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### FIRST LOVE

(Bishop *Franklin H. Sellers*)



was taken to be with the Lord January 17, 2016. The Most Rev. Royal U. Grote led a Memorial Service at St. Andrew's on February 6, 2016. In honor and memory of the ministry of Bishop Sellers we have here imprinted an article he wrote for the April 1976 edition of the Parish Register.)

The choice of the title for this article alerts us to the fact that there should be something special about "first love". The use of the important word "first" indicates by itself that we write of an event or happening that shall not occur again, an experience on the pathway of life that stands by itself because not only the quality of the shared moments, i.e. a relationship of love, but also because of the time in our life the experience came to us.

Now there are some who would question their ability to even remember back that far, assuming that first love always comes at an early age. We benefit from the practice of reminding ourselves that life strikes each of us with differing

patterns of light. Certainly, for some, the soul-shaking experience of a loving encounter such as Jacob's, which led this ancient Hebrew to work in bondage seven years for lovely Rachel, (only to face the necessity of working seven more years due to his father-in-law's cunning), is easy to recall. Yet for others whose total environment was that of love, it is a far more difficult task to identify that first real awareness of love.

As a people, we speak often about love. It is, above all else, a choice topic of many discussions. We write much about it and publish much on the subject; yet, strangely, we rarely master the practice of this great moving force. It remains an elusive goal for many of us and the very fact that much of what we call first love ends in a relationship of hate still mystifies our generation. It is reminiscent of the family car. We may know the technology of the modern gasoline engine, about carburetors, chokes, and the theory of air passing through the venturi vaporizing gasoline, but still we are unable to start our balky cars on cold, damp mornings.

It is much the same with love. Intellectual knowledge of it, or even about it, doesn't guarantee its appearance in our life. There has always been an aspect of love that escapes rational explanation. Yet, when it comes to us, when we are caught up in its delights, we know it. George Buliver Lytton wrote along this line as follows, "It seems to me that the coming of love is like the coming of spring. The date is not to be reckoned by the calendar. It may be slow and gradual; it may be quick or sudden. But, in the morning when we wake and recognize a change in the world we know spring has come."

Like Lytton, many other literary figures have written of love. Victor Hugo writes, "Life is the flower of which love is the honey" and, "The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved – loved for ourselves, or rather in spite of



## A Parish of The Reformed Episcopal Church

ourselves.” And Leo Tolstoy adds, “Where love is, there is God also.” Certainly it is good for us to review what God has said about love. I am most interested in presenting two thoughts about love expressed by the inspired writers of our Scripture, - two views that are certainly not common in our 20<sup>th</sup> century world, yet two views that help us understand, the Easter season and two views that could actually change your life.

In our English Bible there are approximately as many references to love as there are days in our year. These range from the most familiar, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world,” etc. and the passage usually read in public schools, I Cor. 13, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love,” etc. to the much lesser known selections as I John 4:18, “Perfect love casteth out fear.”

It is to this little-read Epistle of John that I would like to direct your thoughts, specifically, to I John 4:10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us...” and the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of the same chapter, “We love Him, because He first loved us.”

The “first love” that really counts is when God loves us! Now some uninformed souls may say, “Isn’t this egotistical? Isn’t this putting the cart before the horse? Shouldn’t we seek out God in love? Is this verse anything more than just a platitude to make us feel better when we are down?” You can be sure it is far more than a platitude; it is reality in all its sharp and concrete being.

Looking closer, we can see how true this verse is, “Herein, is love, **not that we loved God!**” Read that phrase again – “not that we loved God.” What an understatement that is if we take the “we” collectively. Look at our world, its confusion, hate, malice war, and its poverty of righteousness – or, look at our own lives, at what we do to ourselves, let alone to each other. The collective

behavior of man at the time in history, let alone the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is a long way from being that of a race that is expressing love for God. That’s reality, but also in the pragmatic world we find a startling, thrilling truth – and this is it – “While we were less than perfect, God loved us.” Not that we loved God, but that God **first** loved us! Recall again what Victor Hugo wrote, “The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved! – loved for ourselves.”

Are there problems in our society caused by insecure individuals, uncertain about themselves, confused and frightened because of a sense of inferiority, a sense of not being worthy of approval, affection or love? There certainly are. These are sick people who in their paranoid state strike out first against all supposed enemies. Charles Manson is a perfect example. What is the cure for the inferiority complex and the depression related to the realization of lack of value? Simple-knowledge that you are loved, i.e. that you are worthy of esteem – knowledge that God values you!

Let us tell you about one such soul – in his own words. His name, John Newton. He wrote his own epitaph in a rare glimpse of self truth. These are his words, “John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, (in our 20<sup>th</sup> century language that translates to a swinger), was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had labored to destroy.” Then he translated his inner feelings about a God who could first love him while he was in such a wretched state. He wrote these words in 1779 and I’m sure you can hear the melody in your mind as you read them:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see!”

Yes, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us!”

Is there still a need to change the self image of the 20<sup>th</sup> century youth? Is there still a need to change the self-image of the 20<sup>th</sup> century housewife? Is there still a need to change the self-image of the frustrated, disappointed business man of today’s confused world. Yes, indeed there is! We serve them well if we tell them about God’s “first” love for them.

Now for the second idea about love that’s different! Love doesn’t come out of the blue – or even the emotional side of life. It comes from the **mind**. Immediately we can see we are talking about a type of love that few experience. Our aim is to help you see that the love of which we write is a directed **love**, a love governed by your **will**.

Three verses to establish our point follow. One is from Paul, writing to Rome (5:8), “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” and the summary of the ten commandments (Matt. 22:37) by Jesus, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind” – “The second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, “ or his charge to his closest disciples in the Upper Room, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

Perhaps the reason there is so much hatred, hurt, and separation in the world is that we just don’t **want** to love. Perhaps many are waiting for the soul-shattering experience of romantic, Hollywood-style love to sweep us off our feet, instead of the down to earth “I will” type of love. This second, different view of love from the Scriptures, is that of a self-disciplined love, directed by inner strength despite adverse circumstances. In this view God doesn’t ask us to love, He demands that if we are to be found in Him we must direct our love and keep it

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as fresh and new as the day when we discovered that He first loved us. No man can choose what the coming hours may bring – of various needs, of joy, or even of pain and sorrow. But each can choose what resources they will bring into each hour of life, because this is within their power. To meet every challenge, bring some mind-directed love!

The following poem, although meant for the new Year, is very apropos:  
I asked the New Year for some message sweet,  
Some rule of life with which to guide my feet,  
I asked, and paused; he answered soft and low  
God's will to know.

“Will knowledge then suffice New Year?” I cried,  
And ere the question into silence died,  
The answer came, “Nay, but remember, too,  
God's will to do.”  
Once more I asked,  
“Is there no more to tell?”  
And once more again the answer sweetly fell,  
“Yes, this thing, all other things above,  
God's will is love.”  
And we can love God's will, we can love God's work,  
we can love God's servants – because in His amazing grace He first loved us. Remember this first love often. It is the reason Christ died and the reason God honored that death with the Easter resurrection.

## PARISH NEWS

We began our Lenten Services and Soup Suppers on Ash Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. We thank those who have helped thus far in the services, prepared soups, or brought salads and bread.

The Women's Guild Bake Sale was Sunday, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day. Thank you goes to those who baked and bought items.

The 109<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Mid-America was Feb. 25 and 26, 2016 at the Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Communion in Dallas. Rev. Philip Tjoelker represented St. Andrew's at the Synod.

## COMING EVENTS

**NEXT YOUTH MEETING**  
April 10, 2016.



### **LENTEN SERVICES**

There are three more in March on Wednesdays until Holy Week. Soup Supper at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall followed by the service in the chapel at 7:30 p.m. Please plan to continue to be with us as we observe Lent. A weekly sign-up sheet is in the narthex on the bulletin board.



Please purchase **EASTER LILIES** in Honor or in Memory of Loved Ones. Just fill out a form and turn it in by Palm Sunday with your money. The lilies are \$14 each. The lilies beautify the chapel on Easter. Thank you for them!

## HOLY WEEK

**PALM SUNDAY**, March 20, 2016

**GOOD FRIDAY**,  
March 25, 2016

Stations of the Cross at 3:00 p.m.

Good Friday Service at 7:30 p.m.

**EASTER SUNDAY**,  
March 27, 2016

**Easter Egg Hunt and Breakfast at 9:00 a.m.**  
**Easter Holy Communion Service at 10:30 a.m.**  
*Children Singing in the service)*

## TIME CHANGE

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 13. Next week!

## **MISSION of the MONTH**

Please pray for Love, INC and Kim Sullivan, Executive Director of the Tinley Park chapter. Our Lenten Services on Wed. and the Good Friday Service offerings go to help those less fortunate through Love, INC. Please pick up a brochure in the narthex which tells all about the organization of which St. Andrew's is a part along with 11 other churches in our community.



Ian Christenson, Tutu Balogun, Charlie Poole, Allison Klingen, Chidera Mochu, Amy Christenson, Rev. Dr. Derrick Hassert, Igbagbo Olajide, Tola Balogun, Michael Agunloye, Michelle Agunloye

# MARCH 2016 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Soup Supper 6:30 Service 7:30 p.m.	3	4 Choir Practice 9:00 a.m.	5
6 4th Sunday in Lent MP & SS 9:30 a.m., HC 10:30 a.m.	7	8	9 Bible Study 10 am Soup Supper 6:30 Service 7:30 p.m.	10	11 Choir Practice 9:00 a.m.	12
13 Passion Sunday MP & SS 9:30 a.m., HC 10:30 a.m., Coffee Hour	14	15	16 Soup Supper 6:30 Service 7:30 p.m.	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Choir Practice 9:00 a.m.	19
20 Palm Sunday MP & SS 9:30 a.m., HC 10:30 a.m., Vestry Meeting	21 Holy Week	22	23 Bible Study 10 am On Revelation Using book by William Hendriksen, More Than Conquerors	24 Maundy Thursday	25 Good Friday Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m. Evening Service 7:30 p.m. Choir Practice 8:30	26 Holy Saturday
27 Easter Day Easter Breakfast 9am Egg Hunt 9 am Service 10:30 a.m.	28 Easter Week	29	30	31		