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**LENT**  
– 40 Days Of Renewal –



## **FEBRUARY 2021 Newsletter**

### **All you need is love?**

The Beatles famously sang 'all you need is love'. Perhaps because of the repeated closing lines 'love is all you need' with additions of other lyrics including 'she loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah', it is usually assumed that the song is about romantic love. However, one line might throw doubt on that interpretation – 'you can learn to be you in time.' The film 'Love Actually' uses this track in its score and celebrates all kinds of love, not just the romantic.

February 14<sup>th</sup> is traditionally called 'St. Valentine's Day' and has become a bit of an excuse for sentimental and excessive celebration of romance. However, the figure of St. Valentine is not a particularly romantic one! Whilst there is some confusion about exactly when the saint died and even who he was (perhaps two people with the same name who died on separate dates), the core of the story is about a Christian priest or bishop in Rome, who healed a girl or young woman, but also cared for Christian believers – which was illegal at the time. Although the healing won people of influence over, when he tried to persuade the Emperor of the truth of the gospel, he was executed. His connection with romance seems to come from the fact that he conducted weddings and, mythically, that he signed a letter to the healed woman as 'your Valentine.' The love he offered her, though, was not romantic love.

Jesus was once asked what was the greatest command and his answer was to love God and to love your neighbour. He suggested that all the other commands are out-workings or exemplars of these two. The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that 'faith, hope and love remain, and the greatest of these is love.' The apostle John's letters state that those who follow Jesus must show their faith by obedience to the 'new command' – to love one another. It was, of course, one of the last things Jesus said to the disciples before His crucifixion. So, perhaps we are right to say, 'all you need is love'? The short letters

from John, right near the back of the Bible and which we have been looking at in the Sunday evening Bible study group, tell us a lot about what love really means and how we can tell it is authentic or real. It means submission to God and obedience to the commandments – why would you choose to hurt someone who loves you through and through? It means offering hospitality and welcome to all who come in the name of Jesus, whether they are friend or stranger. It means holding to the truth even if all around you, others tell you that you are wrong or a fool to do so. It means laying yourself open to hurt as you offer love to your neighbours and seek what is good for them and for the community. It means not lying, gossiping or slandering others

So, rather than spending lots of money on roses or chocolates this Valentine's Day, are you prepared to offer the more costly gift of your time, by ringing someone who is lonely, shopping for someone who is isolating, or putting something you have made in your window to raise a smile and the hope of those who walk past?

### **Important Date for members!**

We postponed deacons' elections last year, but really cannot do it again, as we have four vacancies and two deacons stepping down (who may be willing to be re-elected). We would like to hold the election using postal votes.

However, to do that, we do need a provisional decision by the Members to permit postal voting, that can be ratified in a face-to-face meeting at a later date.

So, 7<sup>th</sup> February, the post service zoom meeting at 11.30am will be a Virtual Members' meeting. The link for those with devices will be sent out by post (to those receiving the printed service), by WhatsApp to the church group, and via social media (just before, or on the day), on the church Facebook page and YouTube channel.

As far as you can, stay safe and stay warm! Members will also hear about the critical issue with the boiler in that meeting... Sarah