

# St. Luke's gospel echoes

Monthly Newsletter of St. Luke's UMC  
Kokomo, Indiana

February 2016

## Mark Your Calendar

February 2  
UMW Naomi Circle

February 10  
Ash Wednesday Experience

February 13  
UM Men's Breakfast

February 13  
Youth-Sponsored  
Valentine's Dinner

February 19  
More Than a Movie

## First Love!

By Pastor B.J. Siefert

Bill and Steve were discussing their experiences with first love. Steve began, "Just last year I met a girl 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." "Wow!" responded Bill, "That sounds like true love." "Not really", Steve replied, "I thought it was love but it proved to be motion sickness."

The cultural emphasis during the first half of February embraces the world view of love. As Christians, we need to keep in mind that the term "first love" is not an account of our initial infatuation with a member of the opposite gender, but the supreme command from God. Love for God and for each other is a prerequisite for a true understanding of his word. To understand God, **we must first love.**

The Old Testament claims love as the foremost attribute of ideal character. The highest expression of love in the Old Testament is to love God with all of one's being and to love your neighbor as oneself. (Lev. 19:18) When asked by an expert in Jewish Law what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus reiterated that same command to love the Lord God and to love one another. **We are to first love.**

This Agape love, a sense of mutual love between God and people, is unique to Christian and Jewish religion. Agape expresses a trinity of love distinctive to Christianity: (a) God's love for us, (b) our love for God, and (c) our love for each other. All of this comes to fruition in John 15: 9-16 when Jesus, three times, commands his followers to "Love each other." **We are to first love.**

God is love. His ultimate expression of love toward us is found in John 3: 16, *God so loved the world that he sent his son that whoever believes in him will have life eternal.* We have the capacity to love as God loves. *God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them.* (Gen. 1:27) Because we are created in God's image we have the capacity to love as God loves.

As we begin to celebrate Valentine's Day 2016 in recognition of our love, let us be reminded that true love is more than an infatuation, or a feeling, or a desire, or an obsession. Love is God's ideal expression of how we are to treat each other. If we are to reap the rewards of God's ceaseless, everlasting and undying love **we must first love.**

And the second is  
like unto it, Thou  
shalt love thy  
neighbor as thyself.

– Romans 8:30

Let them know that you,  
whose name is the LORD—  
that you alone are the Most High  
over all the earth.

> Psalm 83:18 <

## Children/Family News

- Friday, February 19th 6:00-8:00pm More Than a Movie
- Faith Builders (Lego building club) - Building Faith One Block at a Time on Wednesday nights for kids aged kindergarten - 7th grade. Family Meal 5:15-6:15pm; Lessons 6:15-7:30pm

If you have a child (3rd grade - Senior High) that is interested in attending camp this summer, please contact Jenny Hancock at (765) 434-3132 or [jenny@stlukesumc.net](mailto:jenny@stlukesumc.net) for more information and to get registered.

## Youth News

- Feb 7 Youth Group 6-7:30
- Feb 12 Valentine's Dinner Set-up 6pm
- Feb 13 Valentine's Dinner 6pm
- Feb 14 Youth Group 6-7:30
- Feb 21 Youth Group 6-7:30
- Feb 28 Service Sunday TBA

## Missions

Dec. Giving:  
\$4,339

Needed: \$3,792

This Month's  
Loose Change  
goes to

**Henderson  
Settlement/  
Red Bird/  
Appalachia**

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

December 1 - 31, 2015

December budget:	\$46,193
Actual expenses:	\$39,573
Tithes/Offerings:	<u>\$51,506</u>
Dec. cash surplus:	\$11,933
Budget surplus:	\$ 5,313

## Prayer Ministry News

24-hour prayer for Kokomo and Howard County on Thursday, February 4, starts at midnight February 3. Sign up now for a time slot and consider praying for one hour that day. Clipboards are in the lobby. Contact Paula at [pjshrock@yahoo.com](mailto:pjshrock@yahoo.com) or 765-860-3220

## JOY Fellowship

Just Older Youth for people over 55!

- ♦ Is on Winter Recess and will NOT meet in February, or March

# February Birthdays

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Jennifer Hensley | 22 John Adler      |
| 2 Larry Ditmer     | 23 Ron Harris      |
| Terry Click        | 25 Betty Schmidlin |
| Toni Miller        | 26 Shawn Tokarcik  |
| Joe Rife           |                    |
| 3 Diana Fain       |                    |
| Julie Householder  |                    |
| 4 Tom Collins      |                    |
| 5 Nancy Slaubaugh  |                    |
| Tristan Wagner     |                    |
| 10 Shirley LeClair |                    |
| 11 Eula Wesner     |                    |
| 14 Ray Silver      |                    |
| 17 Fannie Rody     |                    |
| Nora Wagner        |                    |



## Announcements

- UMW Naomi Circle on February 2, at 2pm, in the church Parlor
- Ash Wednesday Experience at St. Luke's, on February 10, come anytime between 10am and 8 pm for a self-guided contemplative experience
- UM Men's Breakfast on February 13th, at 8:30am, at Waffle House
- Walk A Mile in My Shoes, KRM's annual fundraiser for Open Arms, on February 13. Walkers can begin anytime from 8am to 10:30am. Meet at Kokomo Rescue Mission. Call Rebecca Shultz, 765-776-6610, for more information.

## LIBRARY NEWS:

- New resources are available on the shelves in the hall just outside the Library door, including several new family and kids DVD's!
- There are also new books, puzzles, etc. in the Book Room to purchase. Stop in anytime the church is open and leave your \$ in the marked container.
- Plans are underway to host another Spring Rummage Sale with St. Luke's Youth, so please save your donations and watch for date to be announced in the next Gospel Echoes.

Thank you for supporting your Church Library.  
Nina Sozansky, St. Luke's Librarian

## Valentine's Dinner

Get your tickets (\$10 each) for the youth-sponsored Valentine's Dinner on Saturday, February 13th, at 6:00pm, in the Fellowship Hall.

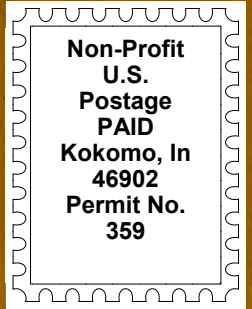
## You're Invited!

To a birthday celebration in honor of Fannie Rody's 80th birthday!! There will be a reception on Saturday, February 20th, from 2:00-4:00pm, in the church Fellowship Hall. Punch, cake, and other goodies will be served.





700 E Southway Blvd  
Kokomo, IN 46902  
**Mitch Norwood, Lead Pastor**  
**BJ Siefert, Associate Pastor**



**Return Service Requested**

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Check us out on the internet [www.stlukesumc.net](http://www.stlukesumc.net)

## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>

**Ash Wednesday Experience**, Come to St. Luke's anytime between 10:00am and 8:00pm for a self-guided contemplative experience.

Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

**Youth-Sponsored Valentine's Dinner**, at 6:00pm.

Wednesdays

**Wonderful E.G.G. Wednesday Meal and Classes**

Meal is 5:15-6:15pm; Classes 6:15-7:30pm