



FEBRUARY 2025



PASTOR’S NOTES

As I was brainstorming ideas for the February newsletter, of course because February is known for Valentine’s Day on February 14, there are those who consider this month to be the month of love. I’m not sure why, but for some reason as I was thinking about February being the month of love, this song popped into my head – *Love Is In the Air* written by John Paul Young which was released in 1978.

If you’ve never heard the song or are trying to remember it, I encourage you to “google” it and take a listen. Here are the lyrics:

*Love Is In The Air
Everywhere I look around (I look around...)
Love Is In The Air
Every sight and every sound (and every sound...)*

*And I don't know if I'm being foolish
Don't know if I'm being wise
But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when I look in your eyes (your eyes...)*

*Love Is In The Air
In the whisper of the trees (whisper of the trees...)
Love Is In The Air
In the thunder of the sea (thunder of the sea...)*

*And I don't know if I'm just dreaming
Don't know if I feel sane
But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when you call out my name (call out my name...)*

*Love Is In The Air
Love Is In The Air
Oh oh oh*

*Love Is In The Air
In the rising of the sun (of the sun...)
Love Is In The Air
When the day is nearly done (is nearly done...)*

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*And I don't know if you're an illusion
Don't know if I see it true
But you're something that I must believe in
And you're there when I reach out for you (reach out for you...)*

*Love Is In The Air
Everywhere I look around (I look around...)
Love Is In The Air
Every sight and every sound (and every sound...)*

*And I don't know if I'm being foolish
Don't know if I'm being wise
But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when I look in your eyes (in your eyes...)*

*Love Is In The Air
Love Is In The Air
Oh oh oh, oh oh oh, oh oh oh*

Yes, I realize this is a love song intended for two people in love, but as I looked at the lyrics, I realized that they could also describe our relationship with God. Our God who loves us so much that He is willing to allow His Son to be the atoning blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, and then conquer death with His resurrection so we can live with Him forever – praising and thanking Him for His love that rescued and redeemed us from our bondage.

We know God's love is in the air. According to Galatians 4:5-6 at the right time God implemented His plan to rescue and redeem us as He promised He would at the beginning of time.

Galatians 4:5-6

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Throughout history, we see in His Word reminders of how deep, high, and immense God's love is.

1 Timothy 2:4

who **wants all people to be saved** and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

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John 3:16

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.

Ephesians 3:16

This mystery is that **through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel**, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Because of that unconditional, generous, and sacrificial love God provides.

Psalms 3:6

Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep.

You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.

Psalms 145:15-16

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.
¹⁶You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

He provides for all, the just and the unjust, the good and the evil. But many have been raised to believe this is unfair. However, we forget God's love is unconditional. He loves His enemies here on earth and wants us to do the same – to share unconditional, generous, and sacrificial love with others – even our enemies.

Romans 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Matthew 5:44

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Indeed, *God's love is in the air, everywhere I look around. Love is in the air, every sight and every sound.*

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

God reveals Himself in the natural world. However, because sin has corrupted the natural world, what people see is distorted. And because of the distortions, they often come to false conclusions about God.

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PASTOR'S NOTES

That is why God gave us His Word. In His Word, God reveals who He is and what He will do for us.

Anyone who has experienced or continues to experience poor eyesight or poor hearing knows how frustrating it can be because they can't see or hear clearly. I remember the first pair of glasses I put on when I was about 12. I was amazed when I walked outside. It was like I could see each individual blade of grass in the lawn.

God's Word is our glasses, our hearing aids, that help us to clearly see, hear, and experience who God is, what He has done for us, and how we are to live our lives.

2 Corinthians 2:10-12

Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake.

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

And it is because it is through God's Word that we have a clearer understanding of who He is, as well as the love He has for all of His creation, then this line from the song is true as well –

*But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when you call out my name*

February is the month of love. Let it always remind us of the deep, unconditional, generous, and sacrificial love God has for us and the He wants us and asks us to share that same type of love with others – not just our family and friends, but even those with whom we disagree, even our enemies.

Yours in Christ
Pastor Craig Mathews



Church: www.redeemerfl.com
Child Care: www.redeemerfl-cc.com
School: www.redeemerfl-school.com



Redeemer Lutheran Church of Englewood
Redeemer Lutheran Child Care
Redeemer Lutheran School

Unofficial Report

Congregational Meeting

January 19, 2025

RE: Ministry Assessment Team

At the January 19th informational meeting, the Ministry Assessment Team handed out additional information regarding each of the three ministries at Redeemer – the church, the child care, and the school.

(Copies of these additional reports and the other hand-outs are available in the church narthex.)

The information for the child care showed the income, expenditures, enrollment and staff numbers for the years 2021-2024. The information also included maximum enrollment potential for each age group from infants to VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) It was also noted that VPK is paid for by the state. Families are not charged for this program. A final note mentioned was that the total enrollment for the Child Care, also includes the children who are enrolled in the After School Care Program.

The information for the school also showed the income, expenditures, enrollment, and staff numbers for 2021-2024. The following was also noted. Grade level groupings for the 2024-2025 school year are K-1, Gr 2-3, Gr 4-5, and Gr 6-7. There are 4 rooms in the school building and each room has a capacity for 15 students.

Regarding the church, statistical information that was shared was also from 2021-2024 and showed average worship attendance for the year as well as income from offerings.

A question was asked regarding the debt of the three ministries. The Treasurer for Redeemer was not available due to a family emergency, but it was estimated that the total debt for the entire ministry was approximately around \$325,000.00

Pastor Mathews reminded the group that in regards to the church ministry, the following needs to be kept in mind. His contract as Redeemer's Intentional Interim Pastor ends June 30, 2025.

Collins Sita begins his training as a Specific Ministry Pastor with a 4 day orientation at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis on February 3. His SMP training will be a 4 year process. The first two years he will be a vicar. After the 2nd year, he will be ordained, but still have two years of study left.

During this entire 4 year process, Pastor Mathews will be his mentor and will be available once a month to be on site to visually evaluate and supervise his ministry development, especially preaching and teaching.

During his 2 years as Collins is a Vicar, he will be able to help with distribution of communion, periodically preach, lead worship, lead Bible studies, and be a leader-

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PASTOR'S NOTES: CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

ship figure in church meetings. He will not be allowed to consecrate the elements for communion. Therefore the congregation will need to develop a plan to find other Pastors, including retired Pastors, who will be able to consecrate the elements for communion 3 times per month between July 2025 and January 31, 2027.

There will be a lot to consider as Redeemer reconvenes February 16 for another meeting, hopefully to decide the structure which this ministry will use into the future.

Continue to pray about God's will for the future of Redeemer.

Continue to pray for discernment and wisdom as this congregation seeks to wisely and effectively use the blessings with which God has blessed them.

Read the Bible passages posted in the hand-out for encouragement.

Honestly wrestle with and answer these questions:

For the Child Care and the School:

- What is the current perception/identity/brand of the Child Care / School?
- Why should this ministry continue?
- Why should this ministry be discontinued?

For the Church Ministry:

- What kind of growth is Redeemer Lutheran Church seeking?
 - * Lutherans moving to the area?
 - * New believers who live in the community?
 - * Young families?

Be able to explain why?

What does this ministry look like 3-5 years from now?

What will it take to get to that point?

What are the resources – financial, manpower, time – available to use?

What are you willing to personally commit to in the terms of time, talent, and treasure to keep this ministry moving forward?

How will preaching/communion be handled from July 2025 through Jan. 2027?

Should this congregation partner with another LCMS congregation in the area?
Why or Why not?



Financial information is available to all members upon request.



“Christ’s Life, and Love, and Light”

Open our eyes Lord to see Your love’s intent,
To know with minds and hearts its depth and height
May thankfulness be days in service spent
Reflection of Christ’s life, and love, and light. (*LSB 788*)

As stewards enter the month of February, it is fitting that we look at the last stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB 788*). It is in these words that we see that the heart of stewardship is indeed love. Love has flowed from our Lord to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This love is then to flow from us to others. Being a conduit of love is really the central task of what it means to be a steward. The Lord entrusts us with His love that reconciles us to Himself, so that we might be stewards of the Gospel reconciliation that is freely given through us to those around us.

If we don’t see this love from God to us, then through us, to others, our eyes will be closed not just to the needs of those around us. They will also be closed to the very heart of the Gospel itself. This is why the hymnist prays that the Lord would “Open our eyes, Lord, to see Your love’s intent, To know with minds and hearts its depth and height.”

Only when we are immersed in God’s Holy Word, washed in Holy Baptism’s life-giving water and fed on the holy, precious, body and blood of Jesus in the Holy Supper, will the Spirit be able to open our eyes to see the Lord’s loving intent for us, and those we know and love. Sin blinds us. It makes us think that we are the center of our world, and our pleasure is the key.

In the Word, the Lord shows us the depth and height of His love. The depth of that love is what moved Him from His throne in heaven into our world. There He would don our human flesh, walk the dusty roads of Palestine, and set His face toward Jerusalem. Once there we get to see the height of His love, as He is elevated on a Roman cross to die a death that we deserve. But that would not be the end. He would be lowered into a tomb for three days. On that third day we then see the heights of love ascended to in His resurrection. This resurrection is already ours too!

The depth and height of this love poured out on us by the Holy Spirit then is distributed through us to others. Christ’s servant love is shown in our servant love. The hymn utters the prayer of every Christian steward:

May thankfulness be days in service spent
Reflection of Christ’s life, and love, and light.

This is the task for which stewards were originally created. Bearing the image of creation and redemption, we reflect Christ's love to those around us. The light of Christ shining through us to others is the true stewardship to which we are called. It takes place in our homes. It is lived out in our workplaces and classrooms. As we bear the life, love and light received in Word and Sacrament, we carry it out in service to our neighbor and for the glory of God!

Forgive us, Lord, when our stewardship of thankfulness is shallow or lacking! Fill us with Your life, love and light! Not just for us, but through us to those we know and love, that they may know Your life, love and light for them!

Prayer Requests

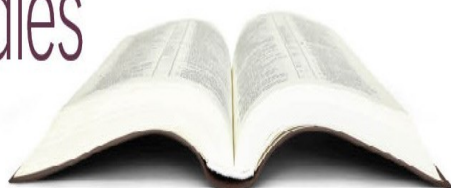
Healing for members: Ed & Jan DeTrow, Don & Lana Garay, Judy Guastella, Jane Harty, Steven Horvath, Jerry Lindberg, Chuck & Elaine Malecki, Lillian Miles, Mike Nagel, Tom & Sue Poyer, Jim & Bonnie Schluentz, Bob Varone, and Pauline Vickey.

School & Child Care staff & families: Brandi Fordham (Child Care staff), Karis Russell.

Friends and relatives: Carol Brasington, Joseph Caivano (Lucia's son, urgent health issue), Michelle Cote, Charlie Finkenbine, Glenn Galway, Nick & his son, Frank (close friends of the Garay family; Frank, 22, recently lost his mother, Amy), Mikayla Hacksunda, Peter Hanson (nephew of Kitty Hill, recovering from surgery), Major William (Bill) Lindberg, USAF(son of Jerry & Jan Lindberg, being deployed this month to Middle East), Jesus Mathews, Dave McMullan, Esther Murphy, and Wava Zeitlow.



Bible Studies



Sunday Morning Bible Study: Please join us after the morning service (and after a cup of coffee – approximately 10:30 a.m.). We are currently studying the Book of John.

Table Talk: Table talk is a very informal Bible study held on Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM, immediately after the 8:45 school chapel service. Participants come with any sort of question. We work to answer those questions from God’s Word and from our Lutheran Confessions. In doing that we all learn more about God’s Word and its application in our lives. We are currently focusing on the book of Acts. One way or another there is always friendly and interesting discussion. All are welcome and encouraged to come early to attend the chapel service. Who can’t be cheered by the sound of the children’s voices? There is always coffee and usually doughnuts.

Please consider joining us! **Pastor Mathews** is leading the discussion.

SERVING THE LORD

Interim Pastor Rev. Craig Mathews
 Office Admin Asst Caitlin Tilton
 Organist
 Choir Director
 Newsletter Pat Finkenbine
 School Admin Wendy Horvath
 Child Care Director Debby Buel
 School Admin Asst

OFFICERS

President James Kruse
 Vice President Mike Nagel
 Treasurer Lucia Kruse
 Secretary Caitlin Tilton

BOARDS

Head Elder Rob Tilton
 Christian Ed. Catalina Bakas
 Human Care Jean Cote
 Outreach
 Assimilation Joyce Krug
 School Board

Stewardship
 Youth Cherylann Galway
 Financial
 Secretary Sherrie Keesee
 Property Mgmt. Steven Horvath

GROUPS/GUILDS

Altar Guild Catalina Bakas
 Coffee Hour Joyce Krug

***The deadline for the March 2025 Newsletter is February 18th.
 PLEASE have all your submissions sent to patchas123@gmail.com
 OR drop them off at the church office by the date indicated above. Thank You!***

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus. Hebrews 12:1-3

K-1 This month our Kindergarten and 1st Grade students began their 3rd Quarter learning about the Boyhood of Jesus. They read stories about his baptism and his first miracle. During this week a packet was completed and were able to bring home the story of "The Man Beside a Pool" to show their parents. Next week the "Jesus Heals & Helps" series will introduce them to the "Woman at the Well". When the children came back from Christmas break, they were introduced to the Abeka Health book, they are currently learning the 5 senses. This week we learned about "taste" and each child sampled a few different tastes (spicy, sweet, salty, sour). They have so far enjoyed the activities! We look forward to next week when we set up sensory tables for each of the 5 senses. *Ms. Pam and Ms. Leslie*

2nd & 3rd Our class has been concentrating on the application of scripture to our own lives as verses are read, especially in The Primary Bible Reader and the Science textbook. An example is in Psalm 34:8, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." We referenced this verse when the question was asked, "How could Joseph's life be prosperous when he was sold into slavery?" One student offered the suggestion that Joseph was prosperous in his faith in God. He was able to trust God even when he was treated badly. It does not mean that he is wealthy. As we progress through the story of Joseph's life, the class is extending their application and use of story elements in order to improve comprehension. Joseph's life can be understood from considering the beginning, middle and end of the story. As the suspense or interest increased, the concept of a story reaching a climax and then winding down to a conclusion, was introduced to the class. The goal for understanding the elements of a story is for students to use them in their own writing. Participation in class is improving as evidenced by the use of "I Wonder", "I have a question," and "I can make a connection to what has happened to me." *Ms. Donna*

4th & 5th Fifth grade students have been working diligently on Arithmetic with the least common denominators for adding and subtracting mixed numbers. Fourth graders have been practicing estimating quotients with two-digit divisors. In Language, 5th graders are learning to use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns correctly in sentences. Fourth graders are proof-reading for capitalization, quotations, commas, and underlining in sentences. The class has been studying the life of Jesus as a boy. They are practicing our school's memory verse song from Hebrews 12:1-2 for our Spring Concert. In Science, the class is studying their circulatory and nervous system. In History, the fifth graders are studying the ancient world of the Middle East, and the fourth graders have studied our three branches of government and their functions. *Ms. Fran*

6th & 7th So far this new year the class has been busy. The 6th grade in History has been learning about Medieval Europe and 7th has been learning about the World War I up to the Great depression. In Science both classes have been researching and writing about a famous Scientists to write a paper on. In Math 6th grade have been doing Area and Perimeter of different shapes. 7th has been Graphing numbers and Plotting Numbers. In Bible both classes have been writing in their respective Bible Journals creating stories of being in the presence of Jesus dur-

(Continued on page 11)

ing his days on Earth. In Health both classes have been learning basic first aid either inside or outside. From our class to you we hope you have a safe and Happy New Year. God Bless
Coach Don and Class.

Upcoming events:

February 12 – Early release day

February 17 – President’s Day no school

March 1 – School Open House

March 17-21 Spring Break

Happy Valentines Day!

●●—————●●
Redeemer Lutheran Child Care



Letters of the month: Bb, Ll

Number of the month: 8

Shape of the month: Heart

Color of the month: Pink

Bible Lesson: **JESUS** Tells His Children to Come-Jesus Blesses the Children (Mark 10:13-16)

This month we are learning about *Love is in The Air*

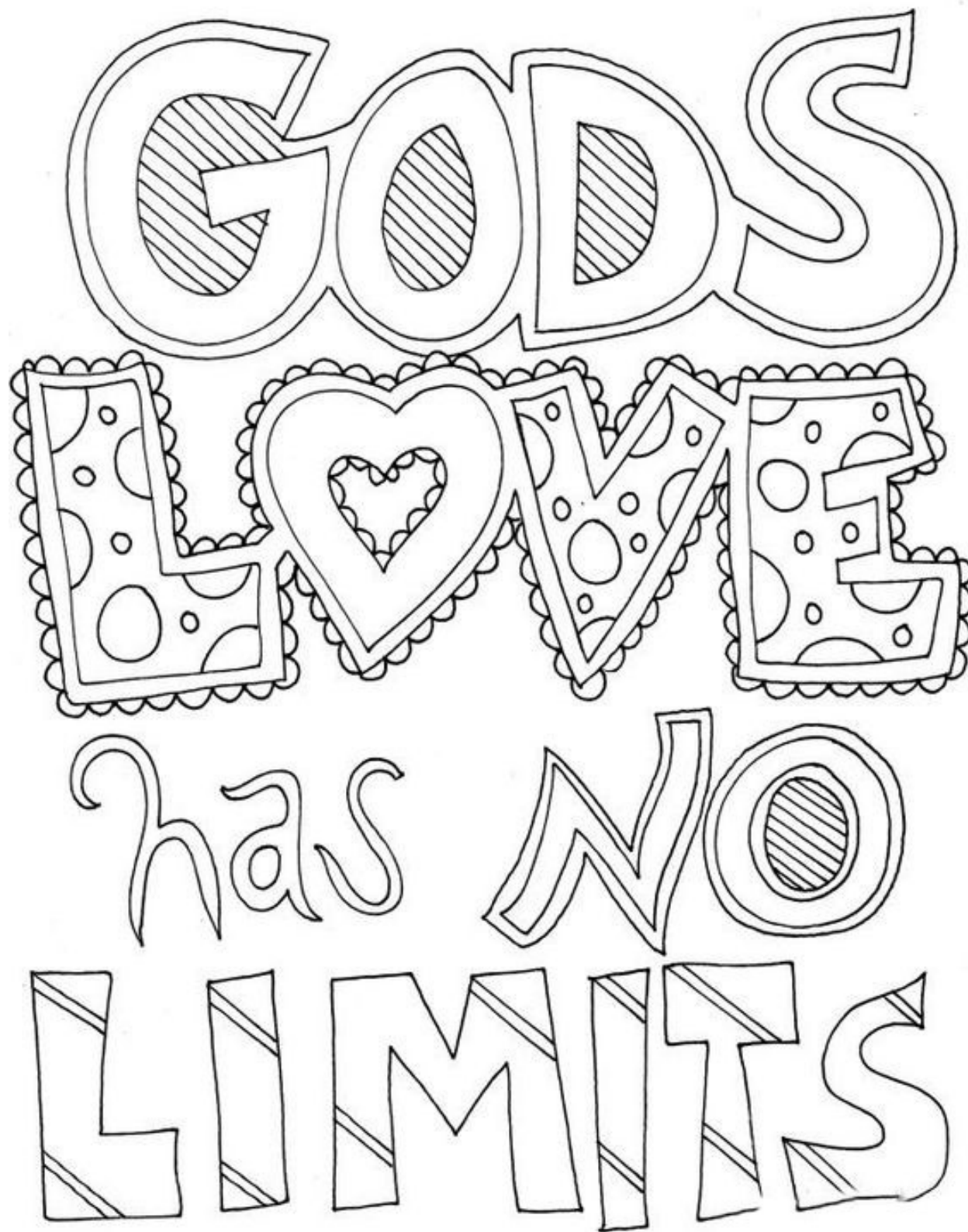
What we are learning in VPK A... This month we are continuing our lesson on Buildings—how they are built and what materials we can use to build them. The children are really enjoying it.

Letters: V, X

Numbers: 7,8,9

Calendar days:

VPK is going to give out flowers at the nursing home on February 13th for Valentine’s day
February 17th , Presidents Day- Child Care Closed



: "We love because he first loved us" 1 John 4:19

you are

BEAUTIFUL.
PSALM 139:14

CHOSEN
1 PETER 2:9

MADE FOR A PURPOSE.
EPHESIANS 2:10

A PRECIOUS CHILD OF GOD.
JOHN 1:12

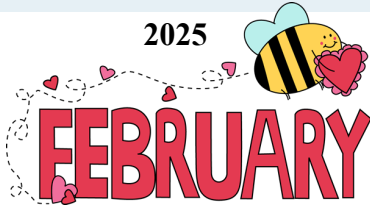
LOVED FOREVER.
JEREMIAH 31:3



REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH,
SCHOOL & CHILD CARE
6970 Mineola Rd.
Englewood, FL 34224

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED - OPTION 1

2025



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Child Care Phone: 941-475-2631

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REDEEMER REPORTER

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WORSHIP SERVICES:

Divine Service: 9:15 am

Bible Study: 10:30 am



The Redeemer Lutheran Church, School & Child Care Family are called into the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by His command (Matthew 28:18-20) to:

- ◆ *Disciple all nations, that is, all people;*
- ◆ *Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;*
- ◆ *Proclaim the Gospel and teach His Word in its truth and purity; and*
- ◆ *Never be ashamed of the Gospel—it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)*