

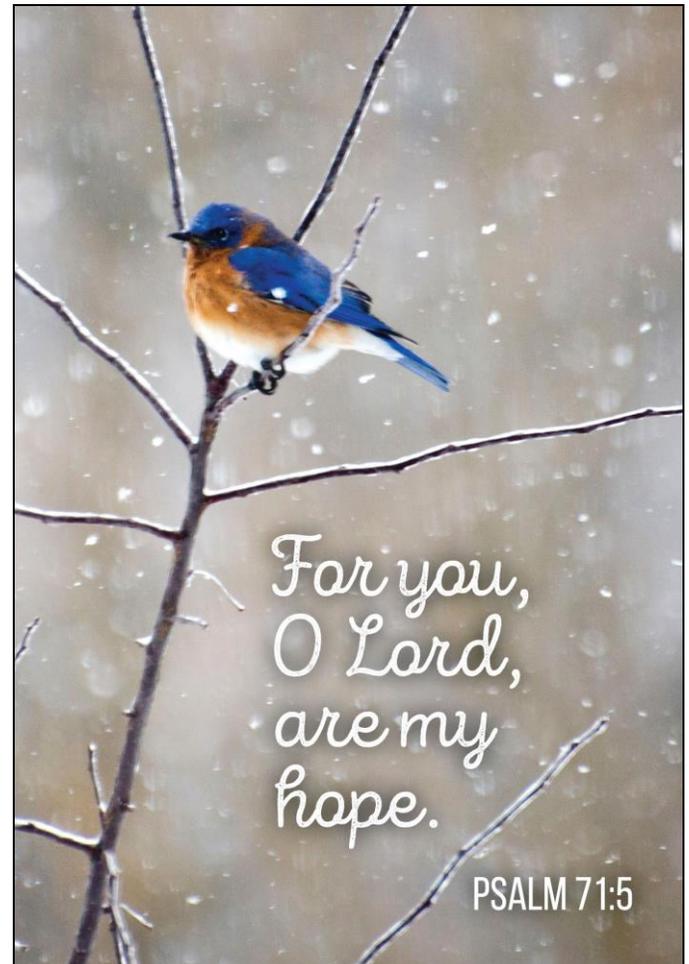
## Thoughts About Hope

By Jean LaRosa

I'm one of those people who is really affected by the lack of sunlight during the winter. The short gray days of winter weigh heavily on me. One of the things I did to give myself hope and something to look forward to in the new year was to write down the sunset times on my new calendar. At this time of the year, the sunset time is getting later by a minute or two every day: eight or nine minutes a week. For someone like me, that makes a difference. I can reassure myself that these dark days won't last forever. The other day I noticed daffodil shoots coming up in the flowerbed next to my house. Even though the ground is now snow covered, the flowers know that spring is coming.

We observe Groundhog Day on February 2. According to folklore the groundhog is supposed to predict whether we will have an early spring. February 2 is also the date of the ancient Christian feast of Candlemas. You don't hear much about Candlemas anymore, but it is still observed in liturgical churches like the Roman Catholic church and the Anglican and Episcopal churches. The feast commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the Temple forty days after his birth.

While they were at the temple, Joseph and Mary encountered Simeon, an elderly man who had been praying for the coming of the Messiah. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah. The Spirit led him into the temple courts while Jesus and his parents were there, and his hope was fulfilled. The whole story is in Luke 2:22-38, right after the story of Jesus' birth. Simeon told God that his life was complete after seeing the Messiah with his own eyes. He had a hope that was based on what God had already revealed about himself and about his character. His hope had a sure foundation. Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus



also met an elderly prophetess, Anna. Anna was a widow who had spent most of her life fasting and praying at the temple, and she too was blessed with the fulfillment of her hope, an encounter with the Messiah.

I found these comments on the passage from Luke in a blog: "I want to be like Simeon and Anna. I want the kind of hope that is absolutely certain in the kinds of things I can be absolutely certain about. I want to know God's promises, and then believe them with my whole heart. And I want to live like God's promises are true." Another writer asks, "What would it look like to seek God so fervently that your circumstances would almost become ancillary? ...I want to be alive to God in the

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**"Thoughts About Hope," continued...**

daily moments of the ordinary days because I know that trouble finds us all."

I've been dealing with some personal challenges the last few months, and I've been leaning into the hope that I have in God, reminding myself that he loves me, that he has a good plan for my life, that he always keeps his promises, and that he is always with me. I recently resumed the habit of daily scripture memory which has comforted me in the past. I made a list of verses mentioning hope and have added some of them to my scripture memory list. Here are a few of the verses that have reminded me of the foundation for my hope:

Psalm 25:5: ***"Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."***

Psalm 62:5: ***"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him."***

Lamentations 3:25: ***"The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him."***

Micah 7:7: ***"But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior, my God will hear me."***

In Romans 15:4, the apostle Paul wrote, *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."* Hope from God's word has become my anchor in a difficult season.

For Windsor Chapel, too, this is a season of transition, and a time of waiting on the Lord and of hope for the future. These verses from Psalm 33:20-22 may provide comfort:

***We wait in hope for the Lord;  
he is our help and our shield.  
In him our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in his holy name.  
May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,  
even as we put our hope in you.***

**Happy Birthday!**

Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Helen Cull	February 3
Xueliang Yang	February 6
Tom Taylor	February 16
Sandy Ober	February 17
Ella Bernheisel	February 21
George Hill	February 24

***Farewell Luncheon for  
Pastor Andy and Janice***

Join us after the worship service at the chapel on Sunday, February 18, at 11:00 am, for a special luncheon and an opportunity to appreciate Pastor Andy and Janice after 13 years of faithful ministry. We are very grateful to Pastor Andy for his inspiring sermons, dedication, and reflection of God's love to others. Pastor Andy and Janice have truly been a blessing to Windsor Chapel and will be greatly missed.

***"How beautiful are the feet of those who  
preach the good news!"  
(Romans 10:15)***

## Elders' Corner

By Pastor Andy Straubel

### Transitions

Transitions are never easy. As kids we transition into teenagers, then teens into adults. Transitions are part of life. Truth be told we tend to resist them. It's been said that the only one who likes change is a wet baby. But as William Bridges has said, "Transitions begin with an ending." That is why they stink, and we feel so bad.

Transitions necessitate a "letting go." When I was a child I spoke as a child...when I became a man I gave up childish ways (1 Corinthians 13:11). What the text doesn't say is how hard that is to do. Outwardly, we connect with the old and familiar. But then we grew up. Inwardly, we hold on to connections to the people and places that act as definers of who we are. I am from \_\_\_\_\_ and went to \_\_\_\_\_ high school. Then we go to college or begin working as a \_\_\_\_\_. Even so called "positive transition" can be difficult. Whether moving out, getting married, having children, buying a house, all announce a transition is in the making. Whether we like it or not, transitions are inescapable. It is how we handle them that counts.

Two things stand out to me in times like these. First: **transitions signal progress**. It was true when we first trusted Christ as our Savior. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "*If anyone be in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.*" We grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Life is a series of growth steps.

Second: **transitions signal opportunity**. The "putting away" of childish things spoken of in 1 Corinthians 13:11 gives way to becoming a mature adult. Without these opportunities we might find ourselves "stuck" in adolescence. God's intention is that we all grow to full maturity (Colossians 1:27).

I want to challenge the Windsor Chapel family to transition well. See transition as a signpost of progress and an opportunity to see what God is going to do next, "*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2 ESV).

## Believers Baptism



Emily MacQueen, Shelby Elizabeth Nelson, Eva Bernheisel and Gino D'Amelio were baptized by Pastor Andy in a Believers Baptism on January 21.

## 11th Hour Sunday School

Our Adult Sunday School class will begin its Winter/Spring term on Sunday, February 25, at 11:00 am, in the sanctuary basement. Larry and Janet Berrill and Ken and Cindy Bills will continue to facilitate our study of Romans. All men and women are invited. No commitment or preparation is required.



Thank you to all who volunteered to help on our clean-up day in December. We appreciate the hard work provided by the Boy Scouts and their fathers, Janet Berrill, Ed MacQueen and his children, Tom Taylor and Pastor Andy.

***Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.***

**Luke 6:38**

## Financial Update

(Through December 31, 2023)

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."*

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$188,929	\$219,000
Expense	\$224,322	\$219,115

Windsor Chapel has sent \$21,257 to our missionary partners this year. That is 11% of your giving!

Total giving in December was \$53,068, praise God!

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### A Question of Timing

February has arrived, and we find ourselves in the "Love Month." As I have thought about this, I find it puzzling that February has become associated with love in general and romantic love in particular. I know no one who declares February as his/her favorite month, but many people hold love in the highest regard. At least in our part of the world, flowers are available only if you want to purchase hothouse grown or imported varieties. Taking a romantic walk on the beach or in a garden has little appeal in February. February may be the Love Month, but it is easy to understand why most weddings are celebrated in the summer months.

And so I did some research about the history of Valentine's Day. I expected to find that February was somehow associated with a St. Valentine. But there is a good bit of debate as to what historical figure is really connected with our celebration of Valentine's Day, and the association with February is even less clear.

If I ran the world, would I move Valentine's Day to a warmer and fuzzier month? Although Valentine's Day is largely a secular holiday, I think I can make a good Biblical case to keep it right where it is. God's love is unconditional and remains consistent and passionate regardless of circumstances. And He calls us to love with His love. Regardless of cold temperatures, grey skies, trying circumstances, and "unlovable" people, we are to love. The love God lavishes upon us and calls us to share is not the sentimental (and sometimes insincere) love that is commonly expressed on Valentine's Day. God's love pursues the

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**“A Question of Timing,”** continued...

“target” and works for his/her good; it expresses acceptance and grace; it offers second chances.

Valentine’s Day in February is a helpful reminder to us that love is not about easy, or comfortable. It is also an encouragement to rejoice in our Lord’s love for us and to invite the Holy Spirit to enable us to bear His fruit of love not only on Valentine’s Day, not only in February, but every day and every month. Indeed, this unbelieving and hurting world desperately needs to see God’s love in us, among us and through us.

*Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557) or [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com) to continue the dialogue....*

***“For I know the plans I have for you,”  
declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you  
and not to harm you, plans to give you  
hope and a future.”***

**Jeremiah 29:11**

## **Important Prayer Chain Reminder**

If you would like to submit a prayer request to our faithful prayer warriors, please remember to email it to [prayer@windsorchapel.org](mailto:prayer@windsorchapel.org). Clicking on “Reply” to a previous prayer request may delay your prayer request, since [wcprayerchain@windsorchapel.org](mailto:wcprayerchain@windsorchapel.org) is mainly used for sending out prayer requests and not monitored for new requests. If you would like to join the prayer chain ministry and receive prayer requests, please note your interest on the enclosed chapel card or send an email to [chapel@windsorchapel.org](mailto:chapel@windsorchapel.org). We thank you for the privilege of praying for you and your loved ones.

## **Loving The Unlovable**

By Janet Berrill



Upstairs, in a closet, is a ragged, dirty, worn, old stuffed toy rabbit. He has been patched so many times that the front of him hardly has any of its original material left. There are smaller holes in his legs and back that need patching so his stuffing doesn’t come out.

If anyone were to find this stuffed animal they would not think twice about tossing it in the garbage can. Yet I can’t bring myself to do it. Why? Because Rabbit (yes, that’s his name) was the beloved toy of one of my sons.

Rabbit and my son had so many adventures together over the years of my son’s childhood. Rabbit flew through the air, served as a crash dummy, was a partner on trips my son went on in his imagination, rode in vehicles my son made with K’NEX, slept together every night, and did countless other things. From the time my son was a toddler until he became a teenager, Rabbit was his favorite toy. And because Rabbit was so dear to him, Rabbit is important to me. I love my son, so I value the things that he values. By itself, this stuffed rabbit would not be very meaningful to me, but it becomes meaningful to me because I love my son and the rabbit is meaningful to him.

I believe we should have a similar attitude toward other people. God created all people and He loves everyone of them. Each person is special to God, and He desires to have a relationship with all of them. If we love God, then what is important to Him should also be important to us. This includes people who are kind and considerate as much as it does people who are selfish and rude.

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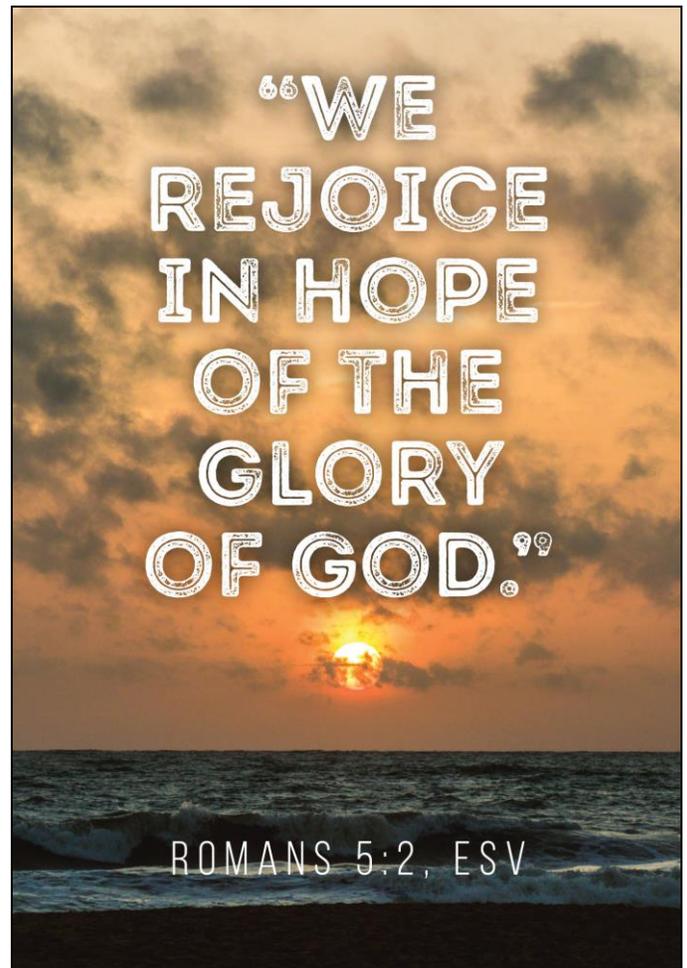
## “Loving the Unlovable,” continued...

It's easy to value people who are thoughtful and courteous, but what do we do with people who are mean and hurtful? God still loves them, but He is God and we are not. Our natural instinct is not to love someone who is mean, so how do we love them? We can only love someone like that if we allow God to put His love into our hearts. But what does that look like?

Let me give you an example. Not too long ago, a friend of mine was driving, and a man riding his bicycle crashed into the side of her car while she was stopped at a red light. The man did not appear to have any injuries, but he went to the hospital anyway to get checked out. A few days later, my friend was contacted by her insurance company and was told that the man was claiming she hit him, that he had suffered serious injuries, and that he wanted a lot of money. Either it was a set up from the start or an ambulance chaser had gotten to him at the hospital. In any case, it was a fraudulent claim and it really upset my friend. She called me and asked me to pray about the situation.

I wrestled with the question of how to love someone who was lying and hurting my friend. My initial reaction was not feelings of love for him! I wanted justice! I wanted this guy to be exposed as the liar he was. But as I thought about that, I was reminded that this man was loved by God as much as God loves me. How could I pray for the situation in accordance with God's love for this man and my desire for justice. Going back to the truth that God desires a relationship with all people, I prayed that God would convict this man of his sin and bring him to repentance, that God would be merciful to him as He had been merciful to me. Admitting his sin and surrendering his life to Jesus is the best thing for that man. Because I love God and I know God loves this man, I prayed for what was best for him.

Many people we come across may look worn and beaten up by life like my son's old rabbit, good for nothing but the garbage pile. But they are still loved by God, and if we love God, we should love these people, too. How this will look depends on the circumstances. God knows what they need, so pray and ask God to show you how you can best love them.



If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:

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