

LIVES OF FRAGRANCE

2 Corinthians 4:14-17

The card ministry brings comfort, refreshment, and encouragement to those who are undergoing a time of difficulty. Mary Anderson, Lilis Thng, and Wendy Wendland serve in this ministry of care for the Tulsa Bible Church (TBC) body. Marcia Thutchley has leadership oversight of this ministry.

HEALING WORDS

By Mary Anderson

Once every week my mailbox gets a stack of cards that are picked up and sent to other mailboxes. The cards express many different thoughts and prayers on many topics: thank you, so sorry, praying for you, and encouraging words. This is the ministry that God gave to me quite a few years ago. Hi! I am Mary Anderson. Shortly after starting to attend Tulsa Bible Church, I attended a Women's Ministry meeting. I was looking for what God wanted me to do to serve Him and His church. After several presentations, the Card Ministry was focused on. I was still working fulltime, had a family full of people and a husband, so time was not always my friend. But my heart said, "You can do this." So, I signed up and was given the Lighthouse Flock to minister to. It has been a blessing for me. I have gotten to know so many lovely people and made new friends. My prayer life increased as I now focus on what is going on in the lives of the people around me, taking those needs to God.

What do I do to prepare a card? I now receive prayer requests from both the Lighthouse and Ambassador classes each week. So first I pray that my heart might be in sync with the needs of the people I am writing to. Then I pick a card from my collection that will focus on the type of need, add a little note and sign it from Women's Ministry. As I put them into my mailbox, I pray that they will minister to each one who opens the card. I have had women comment the next Sunday that they were uplifted, happy or the scripture was especially meaningful. Some keep the cards as reminders for when their hearts need a reminder from God later.

I am not the only one doing this ministry. Lilis Thng and Wendy Wendland also minister with cards. Give them a big thank you the next time you see them.

FEBRUARY 2023/ Vol. 1 Issue 8

WHAT'S NEW

FEBRUARY 18

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Ruth Stevens, who refreshed our hearts at the Fall Retreat, will be at TBC to teach us about Prayer Walking! Come prepared to learn about prayer walking, then put what you have learned into practice! Bring a sack lunch and your walking shoes. Ladies are also needed to remain in prayer at TBC while others are walking.

MARCH 29

6:30 p.m.

Sisters to Sisters Book Club will discuss *Calm My Anxious Heart* (Linda Dillow), chapters 1-6. This book gives Scriptural insights to help us overcome patterns of worry, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow in trust and contentment.

JANUARY BIRTHS

Congratulations to Kinsey and Brandon Biggs on the arrival of Emelia Grace!

Congratulations to Melanie and Jim Specht on the arrival of Ava Loren!

Word Search

I	B	Z	V	U	H	L	M	W	S	A	D
E	E	O	M	X	W	Z	H	R	G	D	V
M	L	O	D	G	K	L	A	L	O	V	E
K	I	N	D	E	R	E	S	X	V	U	E
S	E	K	S	N	B	Q	R	M	G	L	S
S	V	T	N	E	I	T	A	P	B	F	E
E	E	C	H	R	C	S	R	M	G	A	P
L	S	E	Q	O	G	I	U	O	I	I	O
D	O	F	B	U	F	H	O	Z	J	T	H
N	D	R	I	S	N	A	Y	J	T	H	Z
E	S	E	R	F	H	H	U	N	E	A	I
Q	A	P	P	U	A	P	V	H	I	R	H

bears believes endless faith generous hopes
humble kind love patient perfect rejoices

Artwork by Stacy Condie



THE GREATEST LOVE STORY

By Karen Krueger

A famous poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, once penned the question, "How do I love thee?" She then answered her question, recounting the ways in which she loved her husband, in a sonnet which contains some of the most beautiful expressions of love in the English language. Elizabeth and her husband, Robert, composed a beautiful story of love, not only with words, but also with their lives.

As we enter the month of February, we see messages of love on cards, balloons, shirts, and candy. These thoughts of affection are often superficial and trite, rather than sublime, but they may serve to remind us that we are participants in the greatest love story of all. God's love for His people encompasses creation, provision, sacrifice, redemption, relationship, and eternal presence with Him.

The Bible, God's Word, is filled with references to God's love, and indeed, the whole of Scripture is the story of God's love and redemption of us, His fallen creation. God's love is a victorious, royal love. He is King of all - sovereign, all-powerful, and omniscient - yet He is also our Shepherd, who loves us with a tender, redeeming love.

God is love.

This short sentence exhibits the glory and grandeur of God's love. God is love, and His attributes, thoughts, and actions proceed perfectly from His love. God's perfect love has been demonstrated in His redemption of sinful humanity. The sin and chaos of man's anarchy and rebellion against God was met with Christ's propitiation for our sins. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10, ESV)

Consequently, we must ask, "How, God, do I love Thee?" As image-bearers of God, we are blessed with the capacity for love. However, in our natural sinful state, we are rebels and haters of God. With the transformation of salvation, believing in His atoning work, we now love Him, because He first loved us, even while we were sinners (1 John 4:19, Romans 5:8, ESV). We love Him gratefully and repentantly, thankful for His great salvation; joyfully, as we walk onward in Him with His presence in us; and with reverent fear, as we see His greatness. Through trial and adversity, we have hope, because God pours His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5, ESV)

"Since God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4:11, ESV) Because of God's love, we can love our families and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Believers, bound together in the body of Christ, have a deep, unique love for each other. Love in our relationships, though flawed by sin, is nevertheless a dim reflection of God's transcendent love.

1 John gives us clear insight into how this should look: as we keep God's commandments and love one another, His love is perfected in us; whoever loves God must love his brother; and we are to love one another to the point of giving our lives for one another.

1 Corinthians, chapter 13, describes positive and negative values of love. True love is not merely an action, not merely a spiritual exercise, and chillingly, not even a surrender of one's life in a demonstration of spirituality. Love must precede and infuse our speech and our actions; Christ's love, flowing through us, imbues even simple actions and words with His grace and kindness.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (ESV)

We are drawn to love stories; we look for the beauty of life shared in marriage and in friendship. We see glimpses in human relationships of that perfect love and joy which can only proceed from God. Amazingly, we have the privilege and joy of being part of God's love story. God loves us, and we, in turn, love Him and are the conduit to share His love with others.

God's Word to Your Heart

Ronda Palmer's cards, three of which are pictured below, may be used by the card ministry, and they are also available for purchase in the TBC library. The money received is donated to the Deacon's Fund.

By Ronda Palmer

I call my line of greeting cards, "God's Word to Your Heart" because I have found the Bible to be the best source for appropriate words in every situation. God's Word says everything best!

The inside of all but my holiday cards are blank because a personal note means so much, and because Scripture verses can speak to many different circumstances.

Isaiah 55:11 (NASB1995) says, "So shall my word be which goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."



RECIPE

Cheri Biggs says that this recipe has been a staple in the Biggs' home for years, and that it was put in the first TBC Cookbook years ago!

CREAMY BAKED CHICKEN

From Cheri Biggs

- 6-8 boneless, skinless, chicken breast halves
- 1 can cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- ¼ c. dry white cooking wine
- 1 c. herb-seasoned stuffing mix, crushed
- ¼ c. butter or margarine, melted
- 8 (4 x 4) slices Swiss cheese

Arrange chicken in a lightly greased 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Top with cheese slices. Combine soup and wine, stirring well. Spoon sauce evenly over chicken and sprinkle with crushed stuffing mix. Drizzle butter over the crumbs. Bake at 350° for 45-55 minutes. Serves 6-8.

Lives of Fragrance is a publication of the Women's Ministries of Tulsa Bible Church. For questions, corrections, or comments, please contact fnewsandviews@gmail.com.

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