

# The Lamp Lighter



## True love

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to *remember the serious side of love*, as indicated by these quotes:

- "When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be." —Leo Tolstoy
- "You don't love someone because they're perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they're not." —Jodi Picoult
- "Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses." —Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

"We love Him because He first loved us."  
—1 John 4:19

## Greeter Schedule :

8:30 AM		11:00 AM	
Feb 2	Gary Boston	Dave Bode	
Feb 9	Kevin Guiffre	Ken Doyle	
Feb 16	Glenn Miller	Patrick Hancock	
Feb 23	Glenn Miller	Scott Nupson	

## Sunday Morning Security Team :

8:30 AM		11 AM	
Feb 2	Norma S., VACANT	Patrick H., Robert H.	
Feb 9	Kevin G., VACANT	Paul M., Bob M.	
Feb 16	Marion S., VACANT	Al Law, Jennifer M.	
Feb 23	Courtney H., VACANT	Jerry P., Jim M.	

## Sunday Morning Nursery :

Infant		Toddler	
Feb 02	Norma S., Donna F.	Jill H., Ruth D.	
Feb 09	Norma S., Karla M., Abby P.	Katie L., Kristen G., Erin H.	
Feb 16	Norma S., Ruth D., Carlesh N.	Stephanie W., Ruth D., Adrielle L.	
Feb 23	Norma S., Cecelia S.	Amanda N., Fran W., Gracelynn N.	

## Children's Worship :

Feb 02	Stephanie Walton, Jonathan Miller
Feb 09	Jennifer Cooke, Chloe Cooke
Feb 16	Amanda Nicklis, Ashley Miller
Feb 23	Katie Lusk, Kristen Gibson, Abby Pankhurst

## February Tellers :

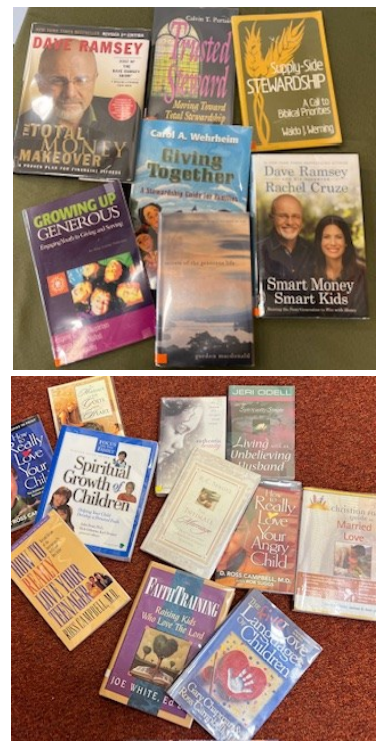
Shannon Pankhurst, Jeni Irwin

# Library News by Karen Law

CHECK IT OUT!

February is known for LOVE.... and TAXES!

Come check out what books we have to offer on these topics in our Church Library! We are located next to the Welcome Desk. There are books about dating, singleness, marriage, raising children, God's love, stewardship and finances, and more. Take a look today!



It's time to start thinking about VBS again! Our first planning meeting is 2/10 @ 6:30 PM at FBC. See Donna D. or Shannon P.



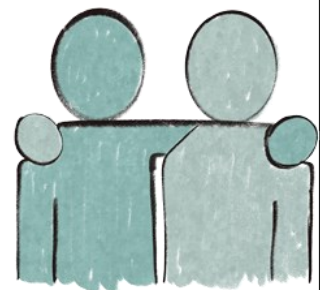
**Special dates:**

African American History Month  
Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 2025  
Presidents Day, Feb. 17, 2025

"I am here"

In *Bread for the Journey*, theologian Henri J.M. Nouwen calls consolation — from "to be with" (con-) "the lonely one" (solus) — "one of the most important ways to care." He writes, "Life is so full of pain, sadness and loneliness that we often wonder what we can do to alleviate the immense suffering we see."

Although consoling doesn't necessarily remove someone's pain, Nouwen notes that it serves a deeper purpose: To console means "to be there and say, 'You are not alone, I am with you. Together we can carry the burden. Don't be afraid. I am here.' That is consolation. We all need to give it as well as to receive it."





A picture published by an online newspaper showed a row of blackened, burnt-out shells, sad reminders of the homes which once stood there. But there was one exception. Amid the devastation was a luxurious mansion, gleaming white and seemingly unaffected. To quote the article itself: “In a scene that could have been plucked from a disaster movie, there is one home that appears to be standing alone, untouched, amidst a sea of smoldering ruins.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The house belongs to a businessman, one who has made his fortune in, of all things, rubbish. He has taken one man’s trash and literally made it his treasure. His aim in building such a home was to protect it from the sea, just a few metres away, and from the earthquakes which are part of life in that Pacific State.

The effort which he put into disaster-proofing his home are remarkable – concrete and stone walls, a fireproof roof and concrete pilings which were embedded fifty feet into the rock. These protections ensured that when the fires, driven by fierce winds, consumed all around, his home stood fast.

As I write I am reminded of a story in the Bible which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, told about two men; you can find it in Matthew chapter 7 verses 24-27. One man, with a desire for speed, and perhaps with a disinclination for following advice, builds a house on the sand. Sand, by its very nature, is fluid and shifting and so it will be no surprise to learn that almost as soon as the storm bursts, with its rain and wind, this house falls flat.

The second man is much more sensible. He finds rock, he digs into it and, having established firm foundations, builds a house that is meant to last. No amount of rain or wind is going to destroy such a house. Continued on p. 6



Article taken from: Mackie, C. (2025, January 15). Am I Prepared. Understandingthegospel.org.  
<https://understandingthegospel.org/explore-the-gospel/short-articles/am-i-prepared/>

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14272575/trash-tycoon-david-steiner-reveals-malibu-house-survived-la-fires.html>



**S**tephanie Walton has been involved with Children's Worship ministries for over 25 years! If you have any questions regarding what your little ones are learning during the 11:00 worship service OR if you would like to volunteer to help, see Stephanie!



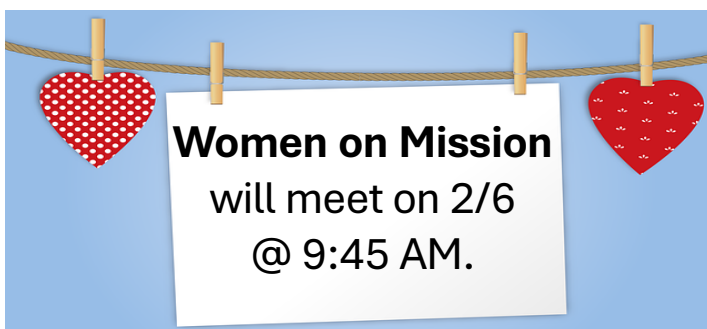
**J**eni Irwin is not only our Church Clerk but she has recently taken over the role of Financial Secretary. She updates the active member directory, takes minutes during business meetings and now, tracks of everyone's tithing... as well as many other things!



**P**atrick Hancock is the chair for our Facilities Use Committee. He ensures that all uses of the facility adhere to church policies, and he manages any issues related to the use of the church property.



We are in great need of 8:30 am door monitors. Please contact Logan Irwin if you're able to serve in this way.





# YOUTH

# AWANA GRAND PRIX™

1st 2nd 3rd  
And the WINNER is...

Sewing Club





Continued from p. 4

What is the point of such a story? I think it is safe to say that it is not about design or construction, nor is it about houses at all; rather, it is an easily understood lesson about building life on a firm foundation. In fact, Jesus begins the parable by saying: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine [referring to what is often called *The Sermon on the Mount*] and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (v.24 ESV). It is not about protecting my home against floods, or even against raging wildfire, but about ensuring that when everything around me fails my life doesn’t collapse with it.

Everything that we can see, and touch is temporal. One day this world will end. One day the temporal will give way to the eternal. Am I prepared for such a day? If everything around me is consumed with fire, have I prepared myself in time so that amid the blackened and charred remains what I have built will stand firm?

The only way to be prepared is to build my life upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Over the next few weeks, the stories coming out of California may be about how certain things have been “saved”. That is a good Bible word, and is often used, not about physical things, but about our eternal souls. In Acts 4:12 (ESV), the Apostle Peter says: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Lord of heaven and earth, we offer you our deepest gratitude for this country and the freedom to worship you. Stir up a sense of stewardship so we all may care for our nation and each inhabitant of it.

We pray especially for our leaders, that you will bless them with wisdom and humility. Prompt everyone in positions of authority to pursue righteousness, justice and the welfare of all.

Remind us of the psalmist’s teaching: “Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NRSV). May that promise be fulfilled “from sea to shining sea.” Amen.



It’s time to get ready for UPWARD soccer!!!

Register online: <https://registration.upward.org/UPW87961>

Apply to help as a coach, referee, or other position:  
<https://registration.upward.org/UPW87961/volunteer>

**Social Outing for ALL AGES!**

**What:** *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis

**Where:** The Bible Museum in DC

**When:** Saturday, 3/15 10:30 AM

**Cost:** \$51 group rate--sign up & pay by 2/23. Transportation on your own.



**Valentine's event:** Leonardtown escape room (approx. \$60/couple) + dinner at The Front Porch restaurant (pay for your meal).

Sat. 2/22 5-8pm.

Sign up on Welcome Center.



Women on Mission would like to thank everyone for their generous donations of mittens, hats, etc. They have been given to the Children's Aid Society.

THANKS FROM THE HEART

Thank you on behalf of the entire Conant family for the outpouring of love and support, and the contributions to Shane's final expenses. It was a wonderful testimony to the unsaved family members, to see how the Body of Christ supports and cares for one another. We are incredibly grateful.

**Camp Carmel:**

If you plan to attend camp this summer, please let Pastor Gary know. You can register online at [campcarmel.com](http://campcarmel.com).

The scheduled dates for this year are:

6/1 Camp Carmel Sunday

6/15-6/21 Senior High

6/22-6/28 Junior High



Shane & Hannah welcomed Selah Maye on Monday, January 20th. She was 7lb1oz and 19 inches and both momma & baby are both doing well!



On Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 we invite youth (grades 6-12) to join us in the Fellowship Hall for games. See Sarah C. or Jill H.







# Operation Christmas Child

## The Power of a Simple Gift

### Monthly Shopping Ideas:

**February:** fashion accessories

### Box packing tips for you at home:

- Find a closet or a tub that you can put OCC items in all year.
- Set a shoebox goal at the beginning of the year to help you plan and stay motivated.
- Visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ) to order preprinted shoeboxes so you can pack all year.
- When shopping, choose quality items that will last a long time.
- Don't miss out on post holiday deals after **Valentine's Day**

**Please bring in the following craft items all year long:**

old t-shirts  
fabric  
yarn  
buttons  
washers  
pipe cleaners  
beads  
pill bottles (take labels off)  
old glasses cases  
sewing needs  
ribbon



Read Yuliya's story on the back!

*Yuliya received a shoebox at age 9 in a Central Asian country.*

When I lifted the lid on my purple plastic shoebox, the first thing I saw was a stuffed dog. I was filled with exuberant joy! I just remember hugging it.

Even though I had toys growing up, the dog was an item you couldn't find in my country. It was really soft and had puppy eyes. It was my new best friend, my newfound treasure. My second favorite item was bubble gum-flavored toothpaste that came in a pink tube. We didn't know such a thing existed. We would squeeze out a bit the size of the tip of a match so we could get a little bit of flavor and make it last as long as possible.

Word traveled fast. My friends would line up in our bathroom and my sister and I would squeeze out a tiny amount on their toothbrushes. I think we made it last about two years.

My third favorite item was an Etch A Sketch. At first we had no idea what it was. We kept pushing down on the buttons and asking, "Why is it not working?" After having it displayed on a shelf for a couple of months, my sister was dusting and she turned the knobs. When she saw the line going up and down on the screen she was so excited. The item we thought was broken was drawing! The toys were the most important things to me as a 9-year-old but it also stood out that the letter in the box said, "I am praying for you." As time went on, I realized why.

*"Here was someone I'd never met ... yet she was still praying for me."*

We became pen pals and she would always close her letters, "I am praying for you." I always wondered, "Why is she praying for me?" The impact hit me more than seven years later after I became a Christian. She was showing me the love of Christ all along, starting with the shoebox and continuing in her prayers.

The shoebox was a seed. That's how the Lord works. He patiently knocks on the door of our heart and waits until we open the door. Sometimes you see fruit right away and other times it takes years for the seed to grow.

I still have my stuffed dog 14 years later. That's a glimpse of how much the shoebox meant to me because it was packed with love and prayer. It wasn't just any dog. I could tell she specifically chose that dog for me and wanted to use it to communicate God's love.