



**Worship Service Theme: Love  
(Sunday near Valentine's Day)**

**Helpful Elements:**

Green table covering (Ordinary Time)  
Potted, blooming hyacinth (which has a lovely scent)

**Welcome:** Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community. My name is \_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time today. This week we celebrate Valentine's Day, named after one of the early Christian martyrs, St. Valentine. So naturally, our theme is **love**.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence today joyfully and reverently, and let us depart with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

**Opening Hymn: Doxology**

**Statement of Faith:** Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**For the Beauty of the Earth**

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**Amazing Grace**

**First Reading:** Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

<sup>3</sup> Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are God's people, and the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter the Lord's gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

<sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Jesus Loves Me**

**Second reading:** 1 John 4: 7-12

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love

one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

### **Suggested Hymns:**

#### **Softy and Tenderly**

#### **Leaning on the Everlasting Arms**

### **Interactive Homily:**

- Here's an appropriate question for Valentine's Day: What does it mean to be loved? When someone calls you their beloved, what do they mean?
  - you are chosen, focused upon, made a fuss over
- Who here has ever written a love letter? What kind of things would you put in a love letter?
  - attributes of the person that you love; compliments; heartfelt feelings about wanting to be with the person
- Have you ever heard "love is a verb"? What do you think that means?
  - Not just a feeling, but action
- What kinds of actions are loving?
  - giving gifts (such as?); giving time; listening; looking for and acting for the other's benefit
- Gifts like candy, flowers, and other stuff are great ... but what eventually happens to those gifts?
  - get eaten, fade away
- In contrast, what happens with the gift of God's love?
  - It is eternal! Never fades, never gets smaller, never ends; steadfast
- How does God communicate his love to us? How have you seen the love of God in your life? (generate ideas)
  - God's love *transforms* us, just the way a dried flower bulb blooms into what it is meant to be, a beautiful fragrant flower. I'll pass around this potted flower so you can enjoy its smell. [*pass around potted hyacinth*]

Let us pray together in thanks for God's eternal love and for the blessing of love from our friends and family.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

**Lord's Prayer:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**This is My Father's World**

**It is Well with My Soul**

**Standing on the Promises**

**Third Reading:** Valentine's Day Quotes

"To love someone deeply gives you strength. Being loved by someone deeply gives you courage." – Lao Tse, ancient Chinese philosopher

"A life with love will have some thorns, but a life without love will have no roses."

"Love comfortheth like sunshine after rain." –William Shakespeare

"When I have learned to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now." – writer and theologian C.S. Lewis

A heart that loves is always young. – Greek Proverb

"To keep your marriage brimming,  
With love in the loving cup,  
Whenever you're wrong, admit it;  
Whenever you're right, shut up." –comic poet Ogden Nash

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing**

**Shall We Gather at the River**

#### **Fourth Reading:** Short stories about love<sup>1</sup>

A woman recently told this story: “Today, I got a phone call from my daughter’s kindergarten teacher. She asked me why I wasn’t providing lunch for my daughter over the past few days. Confused, I hung up the phone and asked my daughter what she was doing with her lunches. My daughter said, ‘My friend Katie’s mom is in the hospital and hasn’t been able to make any meals for the last week, so I gave a few of my lunches to her.’”

A man told this story: “When I was younger, one day my dad handed me a bottle of Windex and a roll of paper towels as we got in the car. He turned to me and said, ‘I just talked to your mom while she was on her lunch break. She mentioned her windshield got covered in bugs on the drive to work. Since we’re going to drive right by her work anyway, I figured we’d clean them off for her. It’s the little things, kiddo, that keep love going.’ That impressed me!”

A young lady told this story: “Yesterday was my little sister’s fourteenth birthday. She has Down Syndrome and doesn’t have many friends. My boyfriend picked me up for dinner with flowers, but said they weren’t for me. Instead, he came inside and handed the flowers to my sister for her birthday. She was so excited! My boyfriend then took both of us out to dinner to celebrate.”

#### **Suggested Hymns:**

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds**

**I Need Thee Every Hour**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology, Reprise**

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<sup>1</sup> selections from <http://www.marcandangel.com/2013/02/13/60-short-love-stories-to-cheer-you-up/>

## Extra Material:

### Lamentations 3: 22-26

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;

his mercies never come to an end;

<sup>23</sup> they are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup> “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,

“therefore I will hope in him.”

<sup>25</sup> The Lord is good to those who wait for him,

to the soul who seeks him.

<sup>26</sup> It is good that one should wait quietly

for the salvation of the Lord.

### 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; love is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never ends.