

Fellow saints and sinners:

During February may you know the love of God which surpasses valentine love.

February this year brings the Super Bowl, Valentine's day, Ash Wednesday and Lent. Each of them touch our lives, and we react to each one in our own way.

Yes, there was a time in my life time when the **Super Bowl** meant nothing, and now it is a very hyped event. It is fun to see the commercials. It is a uniquely American event, featuring American football, our penchant for competition and affirming our local loyalties. It seems like a big event at the time, but in a few weeks, months or years it will not have been very important unless we were directly affected. It should teach us that human events, while fun and entertaining are only fleeting.

Valentine's day goes back to the time of the Romans and in the darkness of winter it tells of love beyond the harsh realities around us. That at one level is a human message, and we see that in the glorification of romantic love at Valentines; but it is also reminds us that human love can be more lasting than fleeting human entertainment, and it can remind us of a higher love as well.

Ash Wednesday this year occurs on February 22nd, so it is 40 days (exclusive of Sundays which celebrate Christ's resurrection) before Easter. Ash Wednesday starts the season of Lent with a

reminder of our sin and our mortality. We confess our sin in our Ash Wednesday service, and acknowledge that all is not well between us and God. We need to say that and be reminded of that repeatedly. We also have imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday and we are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return. That is not a happy message but it is true one. It tells us to take the time that we have to see if things can be better between God and ourselves. We need Ash Wednesday news.

Lent is the season before Easter. This year we are very pleased that pastors from First Lutheran and Zion will work together at our Lenten services as we study and proclaim God's news from Luther's Catechism. First and Zion both will continue to have Lenten services in their own sanctuaries, but their pastors will be at their own and at the other congregation's services. We will be using our [Evangelical Lutheran Worship](#) book in our services because it also has Luther's Small Catechism on pages 1160-1166. I invite you to look them over and hear the wonderful gospel that comes through Luther's Catechism.

As with each month temporary human life encounters the wondrous news of God's near-by, self sacrificing and eternal love. May that news inspire you in your daily life.

In Christ our Lord,

Pastor Harvey

