

## VALENTINE'S DAY

I am writing this on February 13<sup>th</sup>, tomorrow is Valentine's Day. It is a day for those who love each other to exchange gifts to show their love. Many people choose that as a wedding day or a day to become engaged. It is a Hallmark Movie Day. I knew my husband about 70- years, I cannot remember our first meeting or even when it was. I know we were classmates when we were 15 years old and had known each other for 70 years when he passed. We hung out with the same friends and gradually became more than friends after graduation. He taught me to drive after graduation, we were both 18. We gradually began to hang out on a just the two of us basis. We dated off and on and broke up twice before he called me in 1956 when I was in Nurses Training and asked me out once again. By this time, we had both dated others and knew more about ourselves and what we wanted. We were married in 1957 and when someone asked me in 2019 how we had been married for so long, I replied, "One day at a time." We grew up together and then grew old together. When I think of the many Valentine's Days, we had together I recall the cards at least 120 given and received, the dozens and dozens of flowers given, and the candy given in return. But most of all, I recall the arguments forgiven, the sometimes disappointments forgotten, but through it all the love shared, and the family formed. God has blessed our lives. He gave us two healthy, beautiful, forgiving children. He gave us years together to get it right. I look back and see all the times when God was there, when he saved us, when he said, "Lean on me, I've got this." The last years were difficult but God was still there, he was in the friends who called, the friends who took my husband out or stayed with him to give me a break, he was there when the UMM took him out for lunch especially for his birthday, he was there in the prayers offered up by our church and family, he was there in the friends who helped when he passed out in church on 4 occasions, he was there in the friend who stayed with him for 3 days while I went to Emmaus and he was there in the friend who arranged everything, he was there in the friend who took him to the Dream Cruise every year, he was there in the listening ears of those who inquired about how I was, he was there in the friends who made sure he was okay at coffee hour while I prayed for the needs of others, he was there in the friends who walked by and never failed to stop and give him a hug, he was there in the friends who went to get my car and then helped with the walker. He was there in each act of kindness. He was there in our children when they helped in whatever way they could to make it easier. God does not leave us alone; he is there in each one of us when we help others and we become the hands and feet of Christ.

1 John 4:10-12 This is love, not that we love God but that he loves us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Lord, we thank you for those times when we saw your love and kindness in others. Be with those who are suffering in this pandemic, those who are trying to make the food stretch, those who are jobless or whose salaries are cut back, those who are homebound, and those who are homeless and hungry. Be with those who are sick and those who grieve. There is so much need in the world, help us to do all we can and then to do more to help those who are suffering. Be with our church, may we be back together when it is safe. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, be with him and his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless them and all they do. Amen

Grace Epperson