**Trinity tidings**

**February 2022**

*“Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit that is so precious to God”* 1 Peter 3:4 TLB

…or as Eugene Peterson translates in The Message, *“Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.*”

 Two words jump out at me in these separate translations; charm and cultivate. Images of adornment and effort come to mind. Which then begs the question “Do we work at loving one another?” Too often love is thought to be a physical reality (charms we collect); loving a child, a parent, a spouse. We love our friends and sometimes our neighbors which is shortsightedness. God created us to love all things, humans, animals and this entire earth. Buddhist monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh writes, “A lot of our fear, hatred, anger, and feelings of separation and alienation come from the idea that we are separate from the planet…[even though] we want the air to be clean enough for us to breathe. We want the water to be clear enough so that we have something to drink.” We can take lessons from this world upon which we traverse, ever so temporary. God breathes His love in to everything that surrounds us, from the grass to the birds to the grandest mountain top view we’ve ever witnessed. The air, the sky, the water, and everything in between make us who we are. We are part of this planet. We would be nowhere without the earth. In fact, our very bodies are made from this earth, even as this massive phenomenon continues to surround us with its love, regardless of our actions.

Let’s face it we cannot get away from God’s love so, we ought to embrace it for every little thing it does for us and to us. We are surrounded by His grace and mercy promising us a beautiful life here to eternity. Let John 3:16-17 ground our every move. [Kimberly Knowle-Zeller](https://www.livinglutheran.org/author/kimberly-knowle-zeller/), in the February issue of the Living Lutheran magazine, shares her Love Letter to God encouraging each of us to “take intentional time to thank God for the gift of our lives, health, family and friends…by saying a special prayer and asking God to help us nurture our faith, reach out to neighbors, and grow in love and compassion,” so that we might be more like Christ. Simple as it sounds this advice is truly foundational to sharing God’s love with one another. It begins at home and reinforced by community which is found first and foremost in our worship. Where else but in the house of God are we better suited to hear and be heard, and to be filled by His Holy Spirit overflowing with so much love that when we head out on Monday, we have enough to share with those we know, strangers along the way and all of God’s creatures including the beautiful land upon which we leave our footprint.

 I challenge us all to connect to God’s kind of love. In addition to worshiping Sundays, listen to a Christian radio station that can fill us with God’s Word, Christian music, testimonies, and Good News stories. In a recent sermon I suggested K-love radio 92.1, but there is also a local Manheim station WJTL 90.3, among several others. What are your favorites? Of all the resolutions we make, perhaps let one of them be to purposely take the time to thank God and then love like God loves us. This planet will be a better place because of you…whatever you do and say…one person, one living creature or thing, at a time, in the time we have left here on this earth.

*“And you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts”*

2 Corinthians 3:3 Pastor Cheri