

Valentinian Resistance

I find it interesting that Valentine's Day is becoming almost as popular a holiday as Christmas, at least from the perspective of those involved in selling or buying gifts during the holidays. Each year, some 36 million heart-shaped chocolate boxes are purchased and some 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged. Someone estimated that about 220,000 wedding proposals are made each year on Valentine's Day. We only need to check the local stores each year to see how many gifts are available for purchase, both for Christmas and for Valentine's Day. No sooner have the stores removed Christmas sale items from their shelves, but they must turn around quickly and stock the shelves for Valentine's Day. There seems to be an unconscious desire to spiritually attach the two holidays, to continue the lingering Christmas spirit into February. Of course, at Christmas (Advent extends to Jan 6th Epiphany), we celebrate the birth of the Christ child and God's incarnating love for humankind. But, Valentine's Day, in essence, is a very different type of celebration.

During Valentine's Day, we celebrate the enduring disobedient protest against the Roman Empire started by Bishop Valentine (226-269 CE) to save young soldiers from serving in the Roman army by marrying them off. Emperor Claudius II (210-270 CE) forbade young soldiers to marry and would not take them if they were married. If there is any similarity in Christmas and Valentine's Day, as far as their origins are concerned, it is in the 'peace initiative' that forms a part of each holiday. The message of peace during Christmas is clearly stated: "the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), the One of Peace (Micah 5:5), will guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:79)." But, what about the message of peace during Valentine's Day? All romance aside, the infamous "battle of the sexes" does not always start or end in peace. Yet, there is a certain aura around Valentine's Day that begs the message of peace through resistance. On February 14th, one can feel a certain disturbance in the force that is decidedly in favor of love over hate and peace over war.

One of the interesting new, yet very ancient, religious holidays emerging in the past decade is the holiday called Candlemas on February 2nd which celebrates Mary and Joseph presenting the child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:22-40) with an offering of "two turtle-doves or pigeons." (Such an offering was an allowable substitute for a lamb-sacrifice if one is in living in poverty since turtle doves were more numerous in the countryside during Passover (Jer. :7). Amazingly, King David compares himself to a turtle-dove: "Deliver the soul of your dove and do not forget the life of your poor (Ps. 74:19)." During Candlemas 2025, perhaps we too should make our connection with Christmas and Valentine's Day by lighting a candle to petition God for the hungry, homeless and poor (Week of Compassion offering) among us.

Grace & Peace

Pastor Randy

Twenty-first Question on Common Reading: "opportunities are many times disguised as problems." P. 195

Mark Deymaz (w/Harry Li) The Coming Revolution in Church Economics:
Why Tithes and Offerings Are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About it

- 1) Where are the opportunities hiding at WOCC?
- 2) Might they be unlocked by reframing or restating the problems that are hiding them?



The Choir was caught having some fun taking a 'selfie' on Sunday, Feb 2, 2025.

Since Tom & Kay Jewell were away and in New Zealand, we added a caption: 'Sans those who chased summer to a land down under.'

End of Year Giving Statements

We appreciate everyone who gave to Western Oaks Christian Church in 2024! Last week the end year giving statements were emailed and mailed to those who do not have an email account.

If you have questions or would like a paper copy mailed to your home address, please contact Cindy at office@woccdoc.org or 405-789-8812.

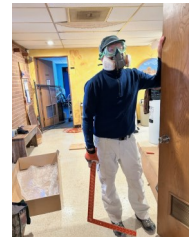
Replacing Ceiling Tiles is Taking Place

Thank you to those who supported the Disciples Women's Fellowship Art Auction, and to those who made special donations to the help fund the replacement of the many missing and damaged ceiling tiles. Due to your support a portion of the needed tiles have been purchased. Charlie Conner and Bob Melton have started the process of installing and replacing ceiling tiles. If you are interested and willing to help with this project, please talk to Charlie or Bob. Not only will the new clean tiles freshen our church, but where we were missing tiles in the ceiling they will help insulate the building to help control energy costs.

Again, thank you!

Charlie Conner, Chair of Property

Fern Melton, Chair of Stewardship



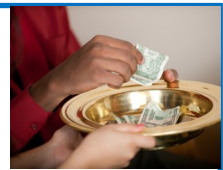
RING FOUND

Last week, our mailman noticed a shining object in the grass and it was a gold ring. If you have lost a ring, come to the church office and describe it to Cindy. We would be happy to return the ring to it's owner.

Pass the Offering Plate Please

We are ready to begin passing the plate again during our worship time.

Beginning February 16th we have youth and adults to help in each worship time.



We had a great crowd for the annual Chili Cookoff on Sunday, Jan 26th in Schwind Hall. We enjoyed superior food, bingo contests with lots of winners and rewards, and excellent fellowship for the evening!

A big thank you goes out to Carol Akin, Charlene Majetic, and Sandra Spillman who served as our chili judges in a non-disclosed location! Our winners for the Chili Cook Off were: 1) Gay Teter, 2) Kelli Fearing and 3) Stewart Thorn.

Thank you to everyone who helped with this event!



Children's Valentines Party

Coming February 9th 12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.



Young Children through grade school are invited.

We will eat, do some crafts, and play games.

Western Oaks Christian Church

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Connect@ EMPOWER & Equip

March 1, 2025
9:15 am - 2:00 pm

Crown Heights Christian Church
4020 N. Western Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Fantastic workshops on vital ministry topics for elders, deacons, board members, teachers, children's and youth leaders.

Registration Closes February 24th

\$25 per person:

Adults 19+, includes lunch

\$10 per person:

Youth (10-18), includes lunch

\$10 per person:

Host church volunteer, includes lunch

DATE CHANGE

WOCC

Youth and Children's

Valentine's Dinner

and

Dessert Auction

Sunday, February 23rd

5:00 pm



Please see Julie or Tobi if you would like to donate a dessert or decorate a table
All funds raised go to send our kids to camp and mission trip

**Finding Joy
In Hard
Times**

**Chi Rho & CYF
Midwinter Retreat**

February 15-17

at Camp Christian

\$100 per person

Keynotes by Madi Showalter
(Crown Heights Christian Church)

Registration Is Open

Sponsored by the Regional Youth Council

Church Staff
office@woccdoc.org



Interim Minister: Pastor Randy Hill
Associate Minister: Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett
Music Director: Andrew Orr
Pianist: Rosa McCroskey
Praise Band Leader: Ben Frantz
Praise Band: Natalie Griffin and Zach Jones
Nursery Attendant: Skylar Frank
Admin Assistant: Cindy Cannon
Sound Technician: Tobi Bessinger

Sunday, Feb 9 Fruit of the Spirit - Mini Celebration
 Worship Committee Meeting 12:15 pm
 Children’s Valentine Party 12:30 - 2:00 pm

February 15-17 Mid Winter Retreat - CYF & Chi Rho

February 16 - 23 Week of Compassion Offering

Attendance	9:00 am	11:00 am	TOTAL
1/12/25	27	50	77
1/19/2025	26	33	59

Giving	General	Blessing Fund
1/12/25	\$4,780	\$30
1/19/2025	\$13,915	\$30

Upcoming Sermon

Fifth Sunday After Epiphany (Feb 9, 2025)
 Sermon Title: A Lesson in Persistence Scripture: Luke 5:1-11
 Theme: Launching into uncharted waters with courage and faith

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany (Feb 16, 2025)
 Sermon Title: The Sermon on the Plain Scripture: Luke 6:17-26
 Theme: Comparing the geographies of Matthew and Luke (Mount & Plain) and how they set the tone for the Be-Attitudes.

“Loving God, Serving our Neighbors”



8100 NW 23rd Street
 Oklahoma City OK 73127

«Name»
 «Address»
 «City»