

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

February, 2026

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 11:00 am

WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG

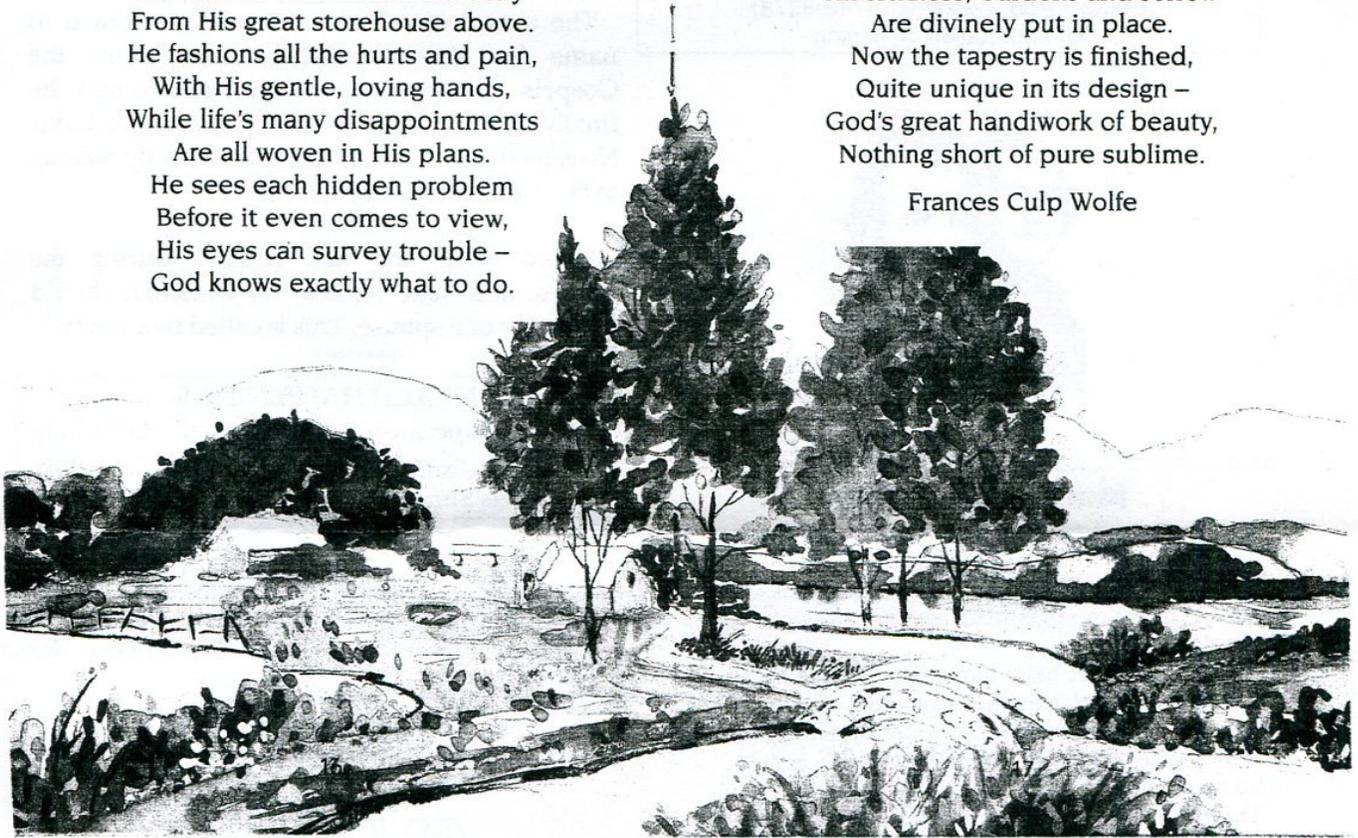
Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

A Tapestry of Love

God weaves with many colors
His fine tapestry of love;
He blends each thread correctly
From His great storehouse above.
He fashions all the hurts and pain,
With His gentle, loving hands,
While life's many disappointments
Are all woven in His plans.
He sees each hidden problem
Before it even comes to view,
His eyes can survey trouble –
God knows exactly what to do.

All the loosely fitting fringes
Are drawn tight with loving grace;
All sickness, burdens and sorrow
Are divinely put in place.
Now the tapestry is finished,
Quite unique in its design –
God's great handiwork of beauty,
Nothing short of pure sublime.

Frances Culp Wolfe



SPECIAL DATES

- Valentine's Day, February 14th
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 15th
- Presidents Day, February 16th
- Ash Wednesday, February 18th
- First Sunday in Lent, February 22nd

News From the Pews



Continue praying for:
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Loretta Byrd, John Bruno,
Alice & Alex Rivera

Our **Online Bible Study** meets
Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00.
Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273)
for information on joining



PRESIDENTS' DAY

More than words

Abraham Lincoln apparently didn't have the voice of a great orator. Some people said his voice was squeaky; nevertheless, Lincoln's messages were invariably insightful and meaningful.

A teacher who once heard him speak later said Lincoln's presence wasn't notable but his earnestness, vigor and logic were impressive. Everyone was awed by Lincoln's speech, and the teacher rode home on his horse greatly exalted from hearing it.

The teacher recalled hearing not so much a speech as "a message in the form of a man."

People who took time to listen to Jesus could say the same thing. God's greatest message to us came in the form of his Son, Jesus. And as meaningful as Jesus' words were, it's his life, death and resurrection that left the biggest "impression" of all.

CHURCH CHUCKLES

One night, the church gathered for a special prayer meeting. The evening was a complete blessing, the worship music was sweet, and everyone was glad to have come. The pastor asked one of the ushers to close the meeting with one last prayer. Dave's prayer was so rich, so tender and moving, that the congregation got revved up all over again, and the meeting went on for another two hours. On the way home, the pastor said to his wife, "I have known Dave to be a godly man of prayer, a faithful man who studies the Word daily, and a man never to turn down an opportunity to serve the Lord, but today I learned something new about him."

"What's that, dear?"

"I learned never to ask him to say the closing prayer again!"

The owner of a bed-and-breakfast wanted to name his three available rooms after the Gospels. Not knowing which names to pick, he finally decided upon Matthew, Mark and Luke. Now, he thought to himself, *if I could only come up with a name for the bathroom.*

Asked what she had learned during the service, little Jane replied, "A Christian should have only one spouse, This is called monotony."

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Joel and Diane are getting married! Let's help stock their new home. Join us for a party shower this Sunday.

- "Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone — we find it with another."
—Thomas Merton



- "Strive to be first: first to nod, first to smile, first to compliment and first to forgive."

—Ancyrus

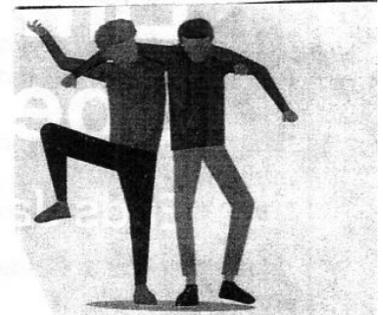
How to Build Better Relationships

By *Guideposts* founder Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Building strong relationships with others will make your life more positive and fulfilling. These seven steps will help you make and keep friends as well as maintain better relationships.

1. If you genuinely like people, enjoy being with them, talking with them, and being helpful to them, you will find that people generally will like you.
2. Become interested in another person's ideas and activities. Make a point to talk about their interests, rather than about yourself.
3. Practice the old saying: "To have friends, be friendly."
4. Remember names. A person's name is important to him. Knowing it will help you get along with him.
5. Be positive. If being with you makes people feel better and more alive, you will be sought after. People will want to be with you.
6. Do not rub people the wrong way. Avoid being sensitive or easily hurt. When you say the wrong thing, sincerely apologize and attempt to clear up misunderstandings.
7. Be generous with your time and actions. Perform unselfish and outgoing acts of friendship. Sincere generosity inevitably leads to better relationships. "Do unto others what you want them to do for you." (See Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31.)

PRAY: God, help me to see the good in my relationships. Help me to be generous with my love. Replace my hostility with forgiveness and understanding. Remind me to search my heart and be honest about my own faults. May my love for others shine through me like your love for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

How can you help relationships thrive in every season? Experts offer a few tips.

Check in. If you're thinking of someone, call or text to say hello.

Prioritize relationships. Set up regular get-togethers, such as a monthly dinner.

Show grace. When friends are slow to respond to calls or texts, grant them the benefit of the doubt.

Be sensitive. Reach out to someone you know is struggling, especially if you're in a good place.

Give-and-take. Reciprocity is important, but recognize each of you may give or take more in different seasons of life.

Be kind. Offer non-judgmental support.—CH



Intentional Moments

Habit coach Rachael Amarante shares several tips she says help add some intentionality to her daily routine.

*Start the day phone-free. Give yourself 10 minutes to reset, make your coffee or tea, and bring your goals into focus for the day.

*Make time for a midday walk, even if it's just around the block.

*Dedicate five minutes each evening for reflection to create clarity for the following day.



Commandment #11

During the 17th century, an archbishop traveling through Scotland met theologian Samuel Rutherford but kept his identity secret. Rutherford invited the man to stay with him. When Mrs. Rutherford gathered the servants on Saturday to prepare for worship the next day, the guest joined in and was asked a basic question: "How many commandments are there?"

When the guest replied "11," Mrs. Rutherford said, "What a shame it is for you, a man with gray hairs, in a Christian country, not to know how many commandments there are!"

The next morning, Rev. Rutherford went out in the woods to pray and heard his guest doing likewise. When he discovered the archbishop's identity, Rutherford invited him to preach that morning. The archbishop's topic? The 11th commandment, based on Jesus' words in John 13:34 — "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another" (ESV).

Laws or love?

Businessman John Barrier, unrecognizable in jeans and a T-shirt, cashed a check at his longtime bank. But the teller refused to validate his parking ticket, saying Barrier hadn't made an official transaction. A manager agreed, saying rules were rules.

Barrier then performed a major transaction, withdrawing \$1 million and taking it elsewhere. He got his parking ticket validated after all.

What a great illustration of the perils of legalism, when man-made laws become more important than people. Jesus repeatedly healed and "worked" on the Sabbath, much to the dismay of religious leaders. He was concerned about people's hearts, not their appearance.

What matters more to you: laws or love? appearance or substance? A heart examination may be in order!

Lenten living

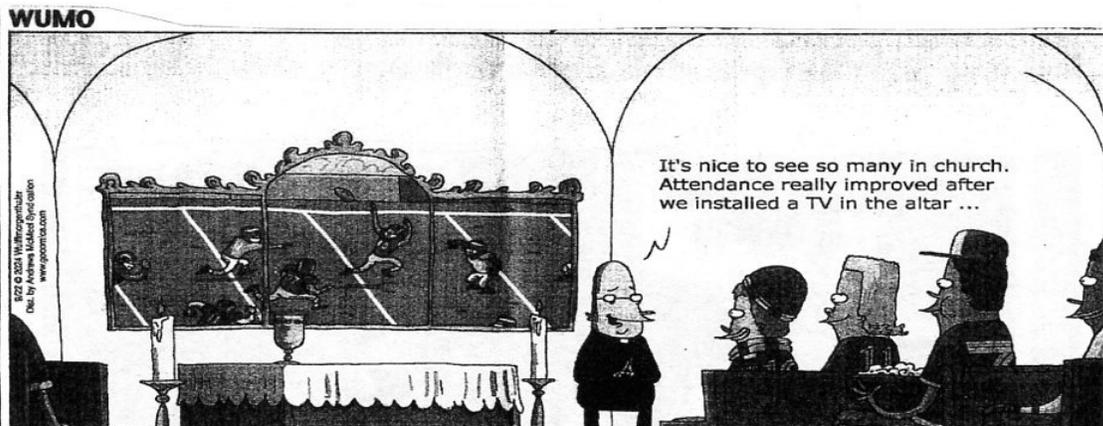
Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18 this year. Christians have observed this season of the church year since the fourth century. It's traditionally a time of reflection, penitence and spiritual renewal before Easter.

During Lent, some Christians give up something that hinders their relationship with God. Others do something extra for their spiritual growth or make a special sacrifice. The key is to make Lent a memorable season of sincere spiritual growth — a time that can set the tone for the rest of the year.

The success of love

The success of love is in the loving; it is not in the result of loving.

—Mother Teresa





God's Love for Us

February brings Valentine's Day and traditions associated with love and romance. The Bible uses different terms for love. *Eros*, the term for passionate romantic love, is not actually found in the Bible. But it is inferred in both the OT (Song of Solomon 1:2-4) and NT (1 Corinthians 7:8-9). *Storge*, the term for love for our family members, for example the love a mother or father has for their child or children, or for a sibling (John 11:1-5). *Philia*, the term for brotherly or friendship love (John 11:1-3, 35-36). But *Agape*, the term the Bible uses to describe the highest or perfect form of love (1 Corinthians 13), is the form of love with which God has loved humanity and gifted to humanity in the person of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord! John 3:16 epitomizes God's redeeming agape love and God's redeeming grace through Christ Jesus! Moreover, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that God is love (1 John 4:8 and 1 John 4:16).

God's redeeming love and redeeming grace are needed today in the Church and especially in the world now more than ever! The Bible makes it abundantly clear that perfect love (God's *Agape* love) casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). We must not let hatred and fear cause us to stop loving one another as Christ has loved us and has commanded that we love one another. Christ has also commanded that we love even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)!

It is my prayer that we will be intentional about choosing love especially in situations and circumstances where it is so easy to hate our brother or sister and so hard to love those who hate us! By doing so we will affirm and obey God's word. I also pray that we will affirm the words of the Judd's well-known song, "Love Can Build A Bridge," that tells us,

Love can build a bridge
Between your heart and mine
Love can build a bridge

The song asks the quintessential question twice, "Don't you think it's time? Don't you think it's time?"

If you agree that love can build a bridge and that it is time, please join me in praying for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with more love to combat the wickedness and hatred of the

world! With that being said, please enjoy the poem *"The Will (Love) of God Will Never Take Us Where the Grace of God Cannot Keep Us."* Happy Valentine's Day!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden

Pastor

Church of the Master Reformed Church

The will of God will never take you,
Where the grace of God cannot keep you.
Where the arms of God cannot support you,
Where the riches of God cannot supply your needs,
Where the power of God cannot endow you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the spirit of God cannot work through you,
Where the wisdom of God cannot teach you,
Where the army of God cannot protect you,
Where the hands of God cannot mold you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the love of God cannot enfold you,
Where the mercies of God cannot sustain you,
Where the peace of God cannot calm your fears,
Where the authority of God cannot overrule for you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
Where the Word of God cannot feed you,
Where the miracles of God cannot be done for you,
Where the omnipresence of God cannot find you.

author unknown

