



# St. Christopher's Beacon

## Valentine's Day: Hallowed or Hallmark?

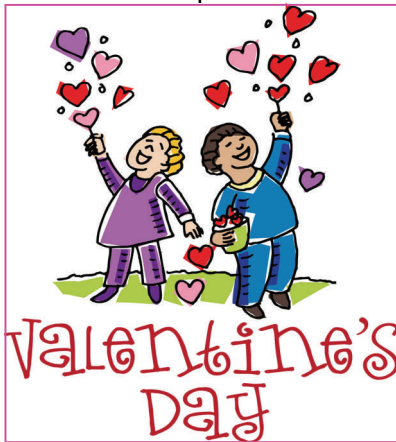
On February 14th, we give flowers, candy and cards. But what does this have to do with being Christian? We celebrate Valentine's Day, because until 1969, it was one of the many Saint's Days observed by the Catholic Church. It was dedicated to the patron saint of romantic causes, St. Valentine.

Although it was removed from the Church's calendar in 1969, the religious meaning coupled with Valentine's Day's roots in Roman paganism have allowed it to continue as a holiday for everyone.

Early Christians saw Valentine's Day as a way to honor St. Valentine, of whom there were actually three. The Catholic Church recognizes three saints by that name, all who were martyred on February 14.

The St. Valentine the day is named for was, most likely, a priest in the 3rd century who performed secret marriages when the Roman Emperor Claudius II thought single soldiers were more likely to enlist in the army. That St. Valentine was imprisoned and executed on February 14, 270. It is believed he was responsible for giving the jailer's blind daughter back her eyesight, and before his execution, he sent her a note saying, "From your Valentine." The phrase is still widely used on valentines today.

It wasn't until 1537 that St. Valentine's day was declared an official holiday. England's King Henry VIII, known for his ways of disposing of wives, declared February 14th a holiday. It was another century and a half before religious devotional cards became non-religious cards to reflect the change in the holiday. In 496 A.D., February 14, was declared in the name of St. Valentine by Pope Gelasius. It remained a Church holiday until 1969, when Pope Paul VI took it from the calendar.



On February 14, the ancient Romans celebrated the Feast of Lupercalia in honor of Juno, the queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. Juno was also the goddess of women and marriage so honoring her was thought to be a fertility rite.

At the feast held the next day, the women would write love letters and stick them in a large urn. The men would pick a letter from the urn and for the next year, pursue the woman who wrote the chosen letter. This custom lasted until the 1700s when people decided their beloveds should be chosen by sight, not luck.

And now we give valentines to our friends and loved ones. We do it to let them know we love them. And in doing so are reminded that Jesus loves us.

## St. Christopher's Children Ministries

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### Great Questions to ask your kids:

Valentine's Day is a special opportunity to let those around you know how much you appreciate your relationship.

- ☺ Who are you going to give valentines to? What are you giving them? Will you buy or make something?
- ☺ Do you plan on giving a valentine to someone because you have to? Like a classmate you don't know or like very much? Why is it important to give them a valentine?
- ☺ Jesus loves us. We sing about this and talk about it. What did he give us to show that he loves us? Why is this important to us as Christians?
- ☺ St. Valentine was a man who gave his life rather than give up Christ. Is there anything you would give up for Christ? Consider giving up something for 40 days during Lent.

St. Christopher Episcopal Church **Verse of the Month**  
Children Ministries

Director: Jill Center  
1656 Blalock Road  
Houston, TX 77080  
Office Hours: 9–2 Tues. & Thurs.

Phone: 713-465-6015  
Fax: 713-465-2086  
E-mail: jill@stchristhouston.org



**JOE SCRUGGS**  
in concert

**APRIL 24TH**  
**LATHAM HALL**  
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

WATCH FOR  
DETAILS SOON.




This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. – [1 John 4:9-11](#)

Easter is when we celebrate the rising of Jesus after his death on the cross. As we look ahead toward Easter, we see that Lent begins Ash Wednesday. It falls on February 17th this year. Lent is the Christian season that leads up to Easter. It is a time to think about when we were separate from God, before he sent us Jesus. It is a time to remember how special it is to have Jesus love us. Jesus died upon the cross to save us from our sins. Without his sacrifice, we would not be able to be close to God. Jesus stood up and took the punishment for what humankind had done wrong.

During Lent, many people give up something they like or that comforts them to try and understand the sacrifice that Jesus made. Some may give up soda or chocolate. Some may give up a favorite television show or going to the movies. When they do this, they make room for God in their lives. They get extra time to be close to God by praying, reading the Bible, or just sitting quietly.

Consider giving up something as a family. Spend the time together and maybe if you give up something that has a cost, you could donate the money you save to help someone less fortunate. And remember, after the sacrifice comes Easter! The celebration of Jesus and his victory over death.

# FEBRUARY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 EYC Noon Sonshine Kids 3-5 PM	8	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 Valentine's Day EYC Party	15 President's Day	16 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:30 Latham Hall	17 Ash Wednesday Services: 7 AM, Noon, 7 PM	18	19	20 Family Night 6-9 PM
21 EYC Noon	22	23	24 Lenten Soup Supper	25	26	27
28 EYC Noon					Intermediate and Jr. High Retreat	
Retreat cont.						