

Greater Connections

February 2013



“Our God Is Awesome”

Greater Centennial Marriage Ministry
312 So. 8th Avenue, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10550
gcmarraggieministry@gmail.com



Love Notes

Beyond Valentine's Day

By Kim & Tom Umstead

The Bible teaches married couples to honor each other every day and at all times. So when the pomp and circumstance of Valentine's Day hit Thursday, we're sure it was easy for some married couples to dismiss the "holiday" as little more than a marketing ploy to get couples to spend hundreds of dollars in the name of "love."

Indeed, Valentine's Day is big business – Americans spent \$17.6 billion last year in the days surrounding the celebration, according to the National Retail Federation. With restaurants offering expensive Valentine's Day menus and retail stores marking up prices on everything from jewelry to red roses, it's not hard to imagine that many of you ignored the holiday altogether.

Yet there's nothing wrong with taking advantage of any opportunity to praise and cherish our love ones. While we shouldn't let the calendar dictate how and when we

should show love and affection to our spouses, any national effort that shines a spotlight on love and romance – no matter how commercialized it might be – is a positive, especially during these times of high divorce rates.

The problem with Valentine's Day is not the \$100 box of chocolate candies, it's the fact that society has only set aside one day for us to spend time with our spouses and shower them with gifts to show them how much we care.

We need to treat everyday as Valentine's Day. Try to do something special and unique for your spouse as often as you can -- cook his or her favorite dish, watch your favorite movie by candlelight, write a poem, or spell out "I love you" on the refrigerator with magnet letters. A little effort goes a long way.

Make the Valentine's holiday more than just a day in February. Be your spouse's Valentine throughout the year!

Every issue we'll spotlight lyrics from a classic R&B love song that captures the essence of marriage.

I Pledge My Love to You
As sung by Peaches & Herb

Always together, together forever
Always together forever

I will love you till the day I die
I know this now and my love won't
run dry
You came along, my life has begun
Two hearts are now beating as
though they were one

Like the stars that make the night
so bright
You shine on me with a love that's
so right
A love that is lasting, a love that's so
pure
Each time I feel it, it makes me
more sure

I know with all my heart we'll never
part
For this is the day when our love
comes alive
And I mean what I say
as I stand here saying

(chorus)
I pledge my love to you
I pledge my love is true
I pledge my life to you
I do, my dear, I do, my dear

Like a river finds the deep blue sea
Love took your hand and led you to
me

(Cont. On page 2)



Rev. VanLew: Resolve To Bring Energy To Marriages in New Year

Married couples should resolve to energize their marriages in the New Year to keep their relationships strong, Rev. Kenneth VanLew told an enthusiastic gathering of couples during the Marriage Ministry's Jan. 19 enrichment meeting.

VanLew, pastor of the Greater Hood Memorial Church in Harlem, inspired those in attendance to put as much or more energy into building and enriching their relationships in 2013 as they do their jobs, hobbies, or children. He outlined 10 key points* – including making time to have fun and relax together, praying together and valuing each other – that couples should include as part of their New Year's resolution list that can truly benefit the health of the relationship.

"We must remember that just as God loves us unconditionally, we must love one another unconditionally, even when they leave their clothes on the floor, don't help around the house or are too tired to make love," VanLew said. "But it will take energy to keep your promise to love for `better or worse.'"

(*To request a full copy of the 10 points please send an email to gcmarrageministry@gmail.com)

Please join the Marriage Ministry in making a donation to the Food Bank For New York City to benefit victims of Hurricane Sandy.

We've already raised nearly \$400 to help those still suffering through the aftermath of the storm. Please go to the Greater Centennial website to connect to the ministry's personal website. Our God is Awesome!

Upcoming GCOMM Events

March 16

Monthly Marriage Enrichment Meeting

How do you keep the music playing in our marriages throughout the years will be the topic of our March monthly meeting featuring our guest speakers Rev. Julius and Sis. Cheryl Walls .

I Pledge My Love To You
(Cont. From Pg. 1)

This is the us that I'll never forget
Both sparkling with love, both
happy we met.

I know with all my heart we'll
never part
For this is the day when our love
comes alive,
And I mean every word
and I want you to know that.

(chorus)

I'm so proud to have you by my
side,
You'll be my strength and I'll be
your guide;
You are the one, you're a dream
that is real
Heaven has sent you, it's love that
I feel.

I know with all my heart we'll
never part
For this is the day that our love
comes alive
And I mean what I say
If somebody should ask me

(chorus)

I do. I pledge my love to you.

"Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned." Song of Solomon 8:7 (NIV)