

Friends of the Wey Valley Circuit

You are probably reading this on 14th of February, a date that, this year, has the dual distinction of being both Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday. I ran across a cartoon on Facebook this week that included a little poem:

*Valentines are Red
Wednesday's Ashes are Grey
You can't spell Valentine
Without Lent on this day.*

Yes, a bit silly, but I think it's actually quite interesting that these two days coincide this year. There are a few words for "love" in ancient Greek. One is "eros", where we get the word "erotic". It frequently gets translated as "lust", but in Greek, it does have the connotation of romantic, passionate love. The love one might feel for a spouse, or partner or Valentine. The Greek word "agape" is the word used most often in the Bible. It's the word that expresses God's love for humanity and the love that humanity should have for God. It's often defined as an unconditional, sacrificial love, the kind of love that is willing to do anything for another, including sacrificing themselves, without expecting anything in return.

While Valentine's Day is definitely equated more with romantic love than agape love, I think we can definitely make a link between the two today. Ash Wednesday is day that reminds us of our mortality, yes, but it also reminds us that mortal life is bookended by God's eternal love for us. Before we were born, God knew and loved us. After we die, God will continue to love us in Heaven. Our very existence is due to God's love.

I'm not sure how many Methodist Churches in the UK mark Ash Wednesday, but maybe it's time we started. It was one of my favourite services in the United Methodist Church back home.

While my church won't have a service this year, if we were, I think I would do something a little different. When tracing the cross on everyone's forehead with ashes, I think I might surround the cross with an ash heart.....reminding us not just of Christ's sacrifice, but of the love that drove him to do so.

-Adam

Resources/Good News

Together in Rome

In October 2023 a group of young adults from The Methodist Church in Great Britain travelled to Rome. They joined thousands of young people from across Europe at the invitation of Pope Francis. It would be one of the largest ecumenical gatherings ever organised.

Watch the video here: [Together in Rome](#)