LEWIS LAKE NEWS





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Christianity & Liberalism

About ten years ago, I was driving home from a long day of working in the southern suburbs. I found myself nodding off, so I pulled into the parking lot at Home Depot in Forest Lake, backed into a spot on the outer edge of the main parking lot, and while the Jetta's diesel quietly purred, quickly fell asleep – and hard. A few minutes later I woke up in one of those "I don't know where I am" moments, when two facts presented themselves: One, I'm in a running car, and two, there's a lot of cars in front of me, all sideways to me. Thinking I was careening off the freeway and about to plow into a stream of cars, I instinctively grabbed the wheel to brace for impact and stomped the brake with everything I had. This remains perhaps the most frightening one-tenth of a second of my life, which is about how long it took to conclude I was about to die and kill other people too, and then realize that I wasn't. It's good to know where you are, and once you have your eyes open long enough, you should be able to figure it out.

For the remainder of this year's newsletter articles, I want to help us find our bearings in the tumultuous sea of history. culture, and Christianity. The Bible pays the men of Issachar a great compliment when it says they "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chr. 12:32). As a church, we're always asking the question, "What should we do?" My thesis behind these articles is this: What we ought to do will become plain to us once we properly understand the present times. I want to understand the times, and I hope you'll take the journey with me.

The Church in an Age of Progress

We begin a century ago -1923. Two things are sure: Science can explain everything, and new is better. Comparatively, the education and understanding of previous generations seems embarrassingly ignorant and superstitious. Educated, intelligent people no longer believe in the supernatural. The religious beliefs of past generations are at best irrelevant in a modern world, at worst dangerously superstitious. Darwin's theory about the origins of life doesn't include (or need) God in any of its calculations. People are rethinking everything in this enlightened age of progress.

In Christianity, theologians who now have scientific tools available that no generation before possessed begin to

by Joe Reed

read the Bible in a new way through the lens of boundless faith in the infallibility of science and progress. Inspired by the revered German scholarship of the day, a new generation of ministers are proclaiming a liberal theology – one liberated from the ignorance and superstitions of the past. Of course those old timers believed in miracles – they weren't men of science like modern man. Of course they believed in the virgin birth – they didn't understand biology like we do.

Churches began to fall under the siren song of progress and scientific enlightenment. Pastors trained in the elite schools of the day approached the Bible not as a Word from God, but a book written by man and therefore subject to the same kind of scrutiny as any other manmade book. Deeply disturbed by all this, a professor at Princeton by the name of J. Gresham Machen felt obliged to pick up his pen and write, and

> what he wrote became a little book called Christianity & Liberalism. Machen's thesis was simple, and a discerning eye can see it in the title: Christianity and Liberalism are not the same thing. Machen wrote, "the many varieties of modern liberal religion are rooted in naturalism – that is, in the denial of any entrance of the creative power of God (as distinguished from the ordinary course of nature) in connection with the origin of Christianity" (p.2). Truly, it's hard to see how any religion that denies God's 'creative power' can rightly be called Christianity!

"liberalism destroys the Christian faith by using Christian terminology."

> Machen set out to warn Christians that whatever Liberalism was, it was not Christianity. He was troubled that Liberalism continued to call itself Christianity – indeed, a truer, more enlightened Christianity, more suitable to the modern mind. (Remember, in this era of optimism and progress, newer is always better.) Machen, seeing this as a life and death struggle for Christianity wrote, "The great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology" (p.1).

> I want to ponder three things Machen claims here: One, Christianity is a 'redemptive religion.' Two, Liberalism is a 'totally diverse type of religious belief.' Three, liberalism destroys the Christian faith by using Christian terminology.

A Few Thoughts On Photos

by Bob De Young

Recently, I had my picture in the paper. Did you see it? It is actually a somewhat famous photo. At least I think it's famous. It turns out to be a picture of the 1973-74 Ogilvie basketball team right after we had beaten Mora for the first time in 16 years at the "goat game". Did you notice me there, down in the corner? I was somewhat surprised at how many people actually had not noticed me there, lower left. I guess I looked a little different back then than I do now. And I wish that the picture had turned out a little differently than it had, but as you know, back then it was film cameras.

For those of you who remember, taking a picture with a film camera was a very interesting experience. One of the main differences was that once you took the picture you did not know how it was going to turn out until days later. So, if the picture was blurry, it stayed blurry and if the picture cut off somebody's head, their head stayed cut off. So if I did not like it that I had ended up down in the left-hand corner of the basketball team photo, there was nothing I could do about it. That's where I was and that's where I would stay.

And if I did not like who I was sitting next to in the picture, that also had to stay the way it was. No changing it period.

"They want to change the world so it will be the way they want it to be rather than the way God created it to be."

Photography these days is quite different, isn't it. When we take the picture today, we immediately can see what it looks like and if we like it or don't. If we don't like it we can just delete it and take another one right at the moment. And then there is the whole realm of photograph editing software in our computers. Now, if you don't like the fact that you are sitting down in the left hand corner of the picture, you can literally put yourself in the center if you want to. And if you don't like the way your hair looks on the picture, you can change that too with a few clicks of the mouse. Being able to edit photographs so that they turn out just the way we want them to be is certainly a great blessing of technology.



The benefits of be able being able to improve a photograph is kind of cool in a way, but there are some losses. And one of those losses is the fact that the picture is no longer a snapshot of how things really were on that day. But rather how we want them to be. What would it be like to go back to the days of film cameras. You never knew how it was going to turn out until you got it back days or even weeks later.

What would it be like if, every picture that you were shown was a picture that you did not know whether it was real or not. What if all the pictures that were on display at a funeral service of the deceased were not real? What if

they were all simply copy and paste into some very cool pictures. We would not put much value in such a display would question.

In our world today we have a saying – "let's keep it real". We place great value on being genuine. When you are dealing with God you are dealing with reality. God has made the world and he is sustaining the world and he is redeeming the world. That is the sum of all that is truly going on in our world.

This is what John was getting at when he spoke in John 1:14-15

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and

~ continued on page 9

Annual Meeting Recap

We had our 2024 Annual Business meeting on January 21, 2024. I have to say it's truly enjoyable to see so many of our members attend the meeting, their concern for Gods church, and to discuss all aspects of the business of the church. I know business meetings aren't always the most favorite thing of everyone, and Larisa thinks I'm a little strange here too, but this is what I have done for a good part of my career. So to me it's fun, it's exciting and a great opportunity to look back at the past year and see what God has been doing and to look/think forward to what God has in store for us for the next up and coming year.

Now, we are not in the business of financial profits, we are in the business of bringing people to Jesus, worshipping Him, sharing His gospel and helping each other in our walks of faith. We have been blessed to be part of God's work here. Pause for a second and look around at all the changes and things that God has been doing. A growing church membership, people coming to faith, people improving their walk, many Bible studies, Sunday schools fully attended, various trips and activities,... the list goes on. All to glorify and follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our main challenges have really been to deal with growth. Which is a great challenge to have. To create space and opportunity, to enable people to use their gifts. to open the doors for more people, to build up and strengthen the existing congregation, and to share even more the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

This year at Annual Meeting (Jan 21) we had the joy of approving the membership request of five people. Diann Bos, Josh and Shawn Bos, Steve and Terri Gillquist. It's a real outward sign of their commitment to God and his church and a great blessing for us as current members to now have them as part of our church. It's always exciting and encouraging to hear their stories of how they came to faith and how God is at work in their lives. He is at work in each of us in a unique and special way.

We went through the process of electing several officers of the church. Jeff De Young was reelected as the vice chairman of the church Council, Jason Wahlstrom reelected as Treasurer. Duane Munsterteiger faithfully served two 3-yr terms as elder, the maximum allowed by





Steve & Terri Gillquist (left), Vice Chair Jeff De Young welcomes Josh & Shawn Bos (right).

our Constitution. Earl Bracewell was elected to take his place and returns to the elder board. Josh Martin and Brenda Trongard were reelected to the Diaconate.

A big part of Annual Meeting is the giving and receiving of various reports. It's interesting to see and hear how God has worked in various ministries throughout the past year, and get a little sense of His vision going forward. To see God's church body at work. Many people working together to accomplish His goals. There are a lot of different activities, moving pieces, and people that somehow God makes work together for good and His glory. Each person is such a valuable part of His overall plan and it takes a lot of people. So Thank You very much!!! It's an awesome thing to be part of.

The final major element of Annual Meeting was the presentation of the church's budget. This process begins in a committee appointed by Council, is reviewed and approved by the Church Council, and finally presented to the Congregation for its review and approval. On the financial end we have been really blessed to be able to do everything we need to do and be in a good position financially. As the membership, ministry, outreach, activities to share God word, and budgets continue to expand and grow here at Lewis Lake the giving and volunteering has stayed right there in step with the need. There are a lot of struggling churches out there these days and a lot of worldly pressures. But God is at work here and has freed us from this concern so we can focus on doing his work the best we can. Things are thriving here

~ Annual Meeting Recap continued from page 3

at Lewis Lake thanks to God and it's awesome to see Him at work. Thank you for all your gifts of time and money to allow this to be possible.

The largest changes to this year's budget included:

- Adjusting a number of expenses for inflation.
- Budgeting for future pastoral staff, which still a work in process but if God continues to grow his church the need will be there in the not too distant future.
- Increased commitments to missions, at home and abroad. Which is a real blessing. We were struggling in this area a few years back but now we are getting some good momentum.

In closing, I would like to say, it is a real blessing to be part of Gods church and to serve alongside each and

everyone in the church. Thank you for all your efforts and a great last year and I look forward to serving our Lord and Savior with you again this upcoming year. God Bless

Brian H



Brian Hudoba serves as our Council Chairman.

5th & 6th Grade Youth Group

5th & 6th Grade Youth Group will now be meeting on every other Wednesday evening at 6:30pm.

The dates that they will meet are:

February 14th & 21st March 6th & 20th

Please contact David Strelow 320-282-3896 with questions.



Bean Bag Tourney

Sunday February 18th at Noon

This event is for Youth in 5th Grade to Adult. It will be a double elimination tourney. Two person teams will be drawn randomly.

Participants should bring a dish to share for a potluck after the second service. After the potluck we will start the tournament.

Dave Strelow 320-282-3896 is the contact for this event.

Register in the app or use the QR code here.



"When Satan buffets and temptation washes over you like a tidal wave, you must cling to God's truths. They are your shelter in every raging storm. But you must have them on hand, ready to use. Do not wait until it is sinking to patch the boat."

William Gurnall, 1655

"...with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

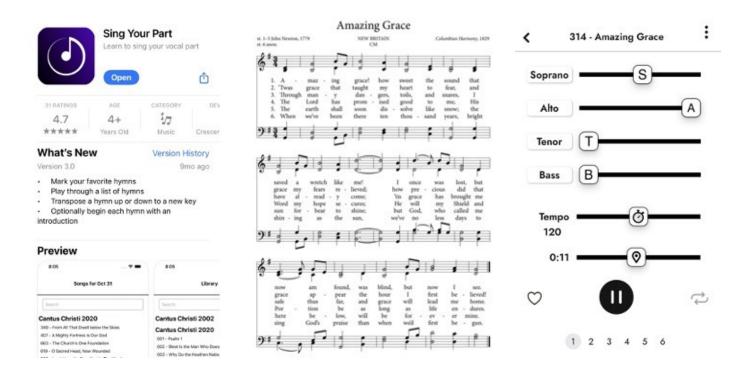
This past year I've been studying hymns new and old. From our Covenant Hymnal and others. I've also been reading the four-part Great Hymns of Our Faith series (Robert and Bobbie Wolgemuth, Joni Eareckson Tada, and John MacArthur). I highly recommend them. Also, Pastor Joe has asked me to curate the music slot in the weekly Pulse email, so with God's help I do my best..

In the year to come I'd like to provide opportunities for us to hone our congregational singing skills.. If you'd care to make the worthy investment of \$5 to purchase an app called "Sing Your Part" shown below. I would encourage you to try it. I'll help guide us into some, hopefully fruitful, attempts at learning and singing parts harmoniously.

It is with great joy that I write to you and serve together with you.

Your Brother in Christ,

Clark Hauger



Ziegelbaur's Monthly Prayer Update

Dear Lewis Lake Covenant Family

The start of 2024 has football fans in Michigan more optimistic than usual. University of Michigan won the Rose Bowl and the Detroit Lions did better than they have in decades! Meanwhile, our other Lions, the Cameroon soccer team is working their way toward the coveted Africa Cup of Nations! Whether or not you're a sports fan, ya gotta appreciate striving for excellence in one's field. Last night we attended a touring Broadway production of Come from Away featuring Rain Forest Int'l School (RFIS) graduate Hannah as a cast member. It gave us joy to see her living her dream in an excellent show. Last week at the Midwinter Conference of Covenant pastors and missionaries, the theme was "Leaning Into Immeasurably More" (Eph. 3:20). Even as we strive for excellence in relationships, ministries, and careers, we count on our God who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine to glorify his name through us. Here are some ways you can give thanks and pray with us this month.

Praises for January

- Praise God for a great time with the folks at Lafayette, IN Covenant Church. We were also thankful to visit former mission colleagues on the way there, and in Lafayette!
- 2. Praise God for the opportunity to see RFIS grad, Hannah in a touring Broadway musical. It was also a joy to facilitate her reunion with former RFIS classmates who attended the musical with us, including our son Ben and 2 others who are living in our town.
- 3. Praise God with us for the Covenant Midwinter conference of pastors and missionaries. We heard great speakers, sang together in worship, and reconnected with colleagues in ministry. We are also thankful for safe driving from IN to IL in freezing rain!
- 4. We are thankful for the 21 days of Prayer and Fasting (<u>check out this devotional</u> we used if you're interested) We continue to listen to the Lord as he draws us closer to him and to each other.



Prayer Requests for February

- Pray for safe travels to KS and clear communication as we share stories of ministry activities in Cameroon at <u>Clay Center Covenant</u> <u>Church Sunday 4 Feb.</u>
 - <u>Alert Covenant Church</u> in Leonardville, KS Sunday 11 Feb.
 - Salina Covenant Church Sunday 18 Feb.
- Pray us continued safe travels home as we stop to visit friends and RFIS grads who are currently in University in St. Louis, MO
- Continue to pray for staff and students at Rain
 Forest International School as they dive into the
 2nd semester of the school year. The 10th
 graders are preparing for some external exams
 related to the British curriculum taught there. And
 pray for the seniors as they consider options for
 life after high school.
- Pray for me, Janet, as I mentor current high school students (one in the US, one in Cameroon) and maintain relationships with RFIS grads.

Thank you for supporting our ministry through prayer.

In His Service.

Janet & Ron Ziegelbaur



Women's Ministry held their annual meeting in January. Becki Baumann will begin 2024 as the new Director of Women's Ministry here at Lewis Lake. Debee Stassen has held this position for the last several years. We are thankful to Debee for this years of service and look forward to seeing Becki fulfill this position.

All other offices will remain the same.

- Amanda Peterson will remain the financial secretary
- Dianna Sholtz the vice financial secretary as well as the fellowship coordinator
- · Jo Towle treasurer
- · Anna Magaard secretary
- · Sandy De Young vice secretary



The Ogilvie Food Shelf Needs Our Help

The food shelf is having difficulty obtaining certain food items from the food bank and is asking for donations of the following items:

Peanut butter, canned fruit, tuna, and white rice.

There is a tote under the office window to place donations.

Keeping You Connected



It's not always easy to keep up with everything that's happening at Lewis Lake. Your life is busy, and so is ours. To that end, we've created the Lewis Lake phone app. Watch sermons, check the church calendar, sign up for events and activities, it's the place to go to see what's happening and plug into the madness. So go wherever you get your apps, and look for Lewis Lake. We've also created the Lewis Lake Pulse, a weekly email sent out on Monday mornings with the week's



announcements, along with a few things Pastor Joe recommends for feeding your soul throughout the week. To subscribe to The Pulse, shoot an email to office@LewisLake.org with the subject line "Subscribe to Pulse" and we'll get you fixed up! Or you can scan the QR code here.



Christianity is a Redemptive Religion

First, I hope you don't get hung up on the use of the term, "religion." It's common to say Christianity isn't a religion but a relationship, and that's true, so far as it goes. But if we think of a religion as a set of beliefs and practices that define our relationship with God, Christianity is certainly a religion, and has always been considered such, even in the New Testament era (Acts 25:19, James 1:17). Christianity is rooted in historical events (Machen's phrase is "an historical phenomenon" p.16) and defined by a set of beliefs articulated by the apostles in Scripture, and employs the practices of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and gathered worship, as commanded by Christ and the Apostles.

When Machen insisted that Christianity is a 'redemptive religion,' he means at the heart of Christianity lies the belief that man must be set free from his sin. When answering the question, "Why did Jesus come?" Christianity and Liberalism gave two different answers. For Christianity, Jesus came to redeem man from his sin. For Liberalism, Jesus came to be an example of how to be a good person.

Machen explained the difference this way:

"[Jesus] is our Savior, not because He has inspired us to live the same kind of life that He lived, but because He took upon Himself the dreadful guilt of our sins and bore it instead of us on the cross" (99).

Liberalism and its implicit faith in humanity and progress couldn't understand why mankind needed redemption. Machen was incredulous, in part because the Bible was so clear on this point: "It is not the Bible doctrine of the atonement which is difficult to understand—what are really incomprehensible are the elaborate modern efforts to get rid of the Bible doctrine in the interests of human pride" (99).

Thus Machen concluded that not only is Liberalism a different religion than Christianity, it's a different *kind* of religion altogether, because Christianity is at heart a redemptive religion, and Liberalism is not.

Liberalism is a Totally Diverse Type of Religious Belief

I hope you see by now that when Machen says Liberalism is "totally diverse type of religious belief," he doesn't use the word 'diverse' to mean "a different shade of the same color." He means the core beliefs of Liberalism are at odds with what would be called 'the fundamentals' of historic Christianity. Machen's book is divided into chapters on Doctrine, God/Man, the Bible, Christ, Salvation, and the Church, and he illustrates how Liberalism disagrees with historic Christianity on *all* these core truths. We have already seen briefly how Liberalism takes a different view of Man (doesn't need his sins forgiven) and Christ (an inspiration to better living), and Salvation (being shown a better way to live). In Liberalism, God is not the creator – at least not in the way Genesis describes, Christ is not the Savior – at least, not in the way Christ describes himself.

This leads to a profound divergence of beliefs concerning the nature and purpose of the church. In Liberalism, the church exists to make the world a better place by easing the economic and social miseries of one's fellow man. In Christianity, the church doesn't ignore the problems of society, but it's primary aim is to address mankind's deeper problem:

the sin in his own heart and his estrangement from God. A more prosperous and comfortable society cannot address this problem, only redemption in Christ. Only after a person is released from the guilt and power sin can he truly begin to address his secondary problems of poverty, injustice, etc. Thus Christianity and Liberalism view the world's problems and its solutions in entirely different and divergent ways. They are not the same.

"Truly, it's hard to see how any religion that denies God's 'creative power' can rightly be called Christianity!"

Liberalism Destroys the Christian Faith by Using the Same Terminology

Liberalism gained a footing in the academy because it was new and seemed enlightened.

Academics are always pushing the frontiers and love new things (Acts 17:21). But the average Christians in the pews have never been academics, and besides, Christians don't go to church to hear the latest theories of biblical criticism, they go to worship God and have their souls fed.

How was this great gulf between the academy and the laity bridged? Machen lays the blame at the feet of the ministers of his day: "Few desires on the part of religious teachers been more harmfully exaggerated than the desire to 'avoid giving offense.' Only too often that desire has come perilously near dishonesty; the religious teacher, in his heart of hearts, is well aware of the radicalism of his views, but is unwilling to relinquish his place in the hallowed atmosphere of the Church by speaking his whole mind" (14). In other words, Liberals didn't want to upset their people, and they certainly didn't want

~ Christianity & Liberalism continued from page 8

to lose their jobs, so they learned how to set forth their view in language their hearers would not find objectionable. They used the same words, but in different ways.

This strategy continues. A couple years ago around Easter I drove by a church sign reading, "Christ Still Rises." At a glance, this seems to affirm and celebrate the fundamental Christian belief in Christ's resurrection. But it does sound just a little off, doesn't it? Being who I am, I emailed the church and politely and innocently asked what the sign meant. But I wasn't really that innocent. In liberal theology, there are no miracles and thus there is no resurrection as we think of it. But you can't really deny resurrection when the Bible speaks about it so clearly. So Liberal theology redefines resurrection this way: Christ "rises" every time someone acts like Christ – that is, does something good. So "Christ still rises" does not at all mean what Paul meant when he wrote that Christ "was raised on the third day," and "was raised for our justification (1 Cor 15:4, Rom 4:25). Rather, it means, "Christ still inspires people by his

example to do good things." Those two are not at all the same thing – even though they use essentially the same words. My

inquiry went unanswered, and the sign was changed within two days to something much more innocuous. I take it as a small win for team Machen, even if it's a whack-a-mole kind of victory.

A century ago, Machen contended Liberalism would destroy Christianity wherever it took root He insisted because they were not even the same religion, they could not coexist peacefully together. History has proven him correct. But that's for another time.



Joe Reed is the Senior Pastor at Lewis Lake.

jr

~ A Few Thoughts On Photos continued from page 2

truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side. he has made him known.

There are many who want to edit the pictures and change the story line in our world today. But beware of their altered versions of reality and don't fall for their edited photographs. God created the world the way it is for his purposes. Some will say, I don't like the way God

has created the world. I don't like having to be the way God created me. And they go off to begin editing the picture. They want to change the world so it will be the way they want it to be rather than the way God created it to be. Jesus is full of grace and truth. And he shows us the father. Receive the lord jesus and let him show you what's real and what is true!

Pastor Bob



Pastor Bob De Young has served Lewis Lake since 1982. He is now semi-retired and is enjoying the Honorary title of Pastor Emeritus.

Registration is open! Early Bird Deadline: April 2nd

Summer Camp Dates:



Frontier Kids: Trailblazers:
July 3-5 June 16-20

June 23-27 July 14-18 Junior High: June 9-14 July 7-12 **Senior High:** July 28-August 2

Camper investment papers have been handed out. If your child did not receive one you can talk with our summer camp organizer, Stacy Thoeny 320-980-5759.

MINISTRY TEAMS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Plug In And Serve Your Church Family



Join the Nursery Volunteer Team

The nursery is staffed during Sunday Worship for children ages infant to 3 years old.

Contact Hannah Hoyles 320-469-1333 if you would like to volunteer.



Would you like to help out in the kitchen?

If you would like to help with coffee, make fellowship treats, or even help with cleanup, talk to Dianna Sholtz 763-439-8491 to get plugged in to help.



Tech Team Members

It takes a team effort to make
Sundays happen. Are you interested
in joining the tech team? Talk to
Jesse - we would love to add you to
the team. It is easier than you think.
Training will be provided.





Ushers & Greeters

If you would like to be a part of this important ministry contact Jackie Farley 320-290-4497.

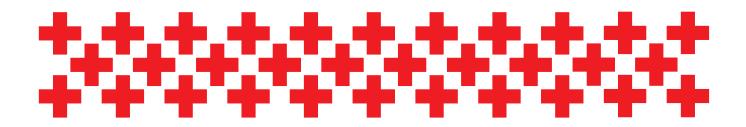


Notary Services Available

Notary Services are available at zero cost to Members and Non-Member friends of Lewis Lake Covenant Church. You can catch Tami on Sunday mornings or make an appointment to stop by the office during the week.

American Red Cross

Give blood. Help save lives.



Lewis Lake Community Blood Drive

Lewis Lake Covenant Church

Sanctuary 1030 Grand St - Ogilvie

Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Lewis Lake to schedule an appointment.



Share your heart! Come give in Feb. for a \$20 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. See rcblood.org/heart

