

Forged In Fire

When I was in high school, my Agriculture teacher introduced our class to the forge. Many farms had small forges to repair various implements and I still remember the metal glowing and how it could be shaped into useful tools. Forges were also common fixtures throughout our nation's early years as blacksmiths shod horses, made buggy rims, fashioned hay hooks, and created many products necessary in rural America.



By the time I became the Ag Teacher, the forge had disappeared but I continued to teach metalworking through other methods. I also took students on fieldtrips to see blacksmith demonstrations as well as more modern fabrication techniques. I still remember Mr. Moss starting with the plain piece of black metal he had bought at the scrapyards for a dime. After heating, splitting, pounding, shaping, and polishing, he ended up with a product that was worth more than one hundred times its original value. Until heating, however, the metal remained unworkable. Conversely, if the smith forgot it, it would become too hot and either disintegrate or surrender its desirable qualities to the flames.

The process for the metal had to be quite stressful. After being heated to nearly 2,000 degrees he then pounded it with a heavy hammer. He split the end with a chisel and after numerous heatings, and beatings, it emerged as a meat fork. With fire and a strong arm he turned useless scrap into a valuable and beautiful product. Imagine the metal worrying that the smith had forgotten it and wondering how any good could come from such pain. But all along the blacksmith had a plan and kept working until he achieved it.

As I watched this craftsman, I thought about God's work. He rescues us from sin's junkyard and shapes us to His liking. He has a desired outcome but it often requires the fires of adversity to force us to yield to His work. As we do, however, He fashions us into pieces not only of value and service, but even beauty.

Sometimes we think He's forgotten us and wonder what good our adversity could bring. A quick survey of Scripture, however, will remind us that God's most useful servants went through the hottest fires. Job, Joseph, and Moses are just a few. Paul wrote in Philippians that he considered it a privilege to suffer for Jesus and Jesus Himself suffered more than any and emerged not only the most useful, but also the most beautiful.



Mr. Moss also told us that he leaves the hammer dents and forging marks on his pieces for they demonstrate that each was a unique handmade creation. Again, I thought about how Jesus' scars beautified rather than defaced Him and how the same is true with us. Our wounds verify that no two of us are alike, for the Master has formed us with individual characteristics for special tasks. May we submit to God's will and allow Him to fashion us into people that glorify Him and bless others.

George Bowers – CBC Executive Board

Center Hill invites you to join us for the Lenten season for our special services starting Sunday, March 9 at 7 PM with Pastor Don Peters. There will be a pie social following this service at our Fellowship Hall. The other services will be held March 16, March 23 and 30th and April 6. The speakers for these services are yet to be determined along with what church will be hosting the service.



Candy Hearts Anyone???

Every holiday has its hotly debated candies. For Halloween, it's Candy Corn. For Easter, it's marshmallow Peeps. For Valentine's Day, it's not the assorted box of mystery chocolates. No, it's conversation hearts.

Some people love these pastel treats, and others have a deep-seated hatred for them. But despite their polarizing pull, the hearts return to candy shelves every year just the same.

There is one thing candy heart enthusiasts and haters can agree on, however: When it comes to conversation hearts, the backstory of this candy is much more interesting than any debate regarding their merits as a holiday candy icon.

The hard candies, sometimes called Sweethearts, love hearts, or candy hearts, are heart-shaped chunks of sugar that feature short messages, like "Be Mine" and "XOXO." The hearts are available in flavors like cinnamon, lemon, orange, lime, and chocolate — although if you ask a conversation heart-hater, they might say they're all flavored the same: like chalk.

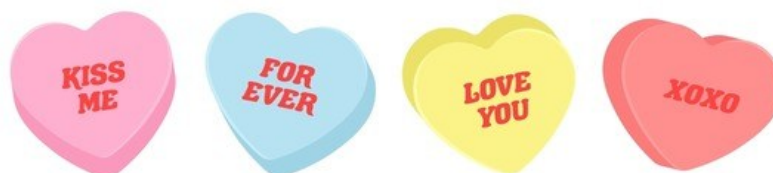
So where, exactly, did these divisive candies come from? Read on to learn the history of conversation hearts.

In the 1860s, another Chase brother, Daniel, developed a machine that stamped words directly on the candies with red vegetable dye. Back then, the candies came in all different shapes, like baseballs, horseshoes, and watches, and they featured much longer sayings. (Hearts weren't added to the lineup until 1901.)

By the early 1900s, the candies had scaled down in size and began to feature one-liners, like the ones seen today. The original mottos of "Be Mine" and "Kiss Me" still remain popular, but some of the other phrases on conversation hearts have not withstood the test of time, like "Fax Me" or "Dig Me." NECCO even produced special *Twilight* hearts, with phrases like "Bite Me," and Spanish-language Sweethearts, with phrases like "Te Amo."

NECCO's Sweethearts became the most popular non-chocolate candy sold for Valentine's Day with over eight billion hearts sold in the six weeks leading up to the holiday, according to Smithsonian Magazine. To make that many candy hearts, production took NECCO 11 months to complete. Unfortunately, NECCO declared bankruptcy and shut its doors in 2018. Spangler Candy acquired the rights to the candy in 2019.

Because of this, Necco Wafers and Sweethearts were not produced for two years, but both were brought back in 2020 due to popular demand. Today, Sweethearts are officially back on the shelves and have re-staked their claim as the most popular non-chocolate candy for Valentine's Day.





Warm up with Soup & Salad !

Sunday, March 2

12:30-2:30 PM, there will be a Soup & Salad Bar at the Fellowship Hall. Delicious soups, all kinds of salads and sweet desserts will be offered.

The cost will be \$10 for Adults, \$5 for kids 4-12, and Free for kids 3 and under.

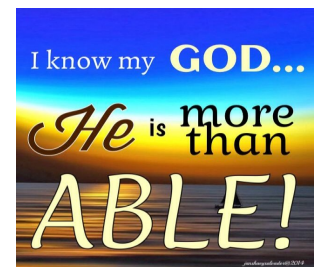
Let the World See

The Holidays always lead to a new year. Often, a new year is a time when we think with optimism about the future and what the next year will hold.

Personally, I am glad to leave behind 2024 with the election and all the political fighting, advertisements, and propaganda that went with it. I also lost a dear friend to cancer in 2024. Many of us look back on the last few years and are glad we don't have to relive the difficulty of a church separation.

I am optimistic about the future. Not just my future, but the future of Covenant Brethren Church. We have seen steady and rapid growth over the last four years, and I am thankful for that. Our annual meetings and worship conferences have been a tremendous blessing and spiritual uplift to me. We have established regions, many Churches outside of the USA, polity, a working relationship with Samaritan's Purse, and a Ministry Training program. Much of what has happened in the last four years was directly a result of God's direction and intervention.

I am optimistic about what 2025 will bring for the CBC. Not because of what the Executive Board or any of the Regional Boards have planned. I am optimistic to see what God has planned for our future. Jim Nolt - CBC Executive Board



EASY TEXAS SAUSAGE BALLS

A Super Bowl Favorite Appetizer

- 1 lb. sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 lb. bulk hot sausage
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 cups Bisquick baking mix

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Combine all ingredients and roll into balls.

Bake at 350°F for 20 to 30 minutes or until done.

Note: May be frozen on a cookie sheet and stored for use as needed.



MEN'S & WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

These ministries are open to everyone and are wonderful for building relationships and getting involved in other church activities. Come and join us!!

Women's Fellowship (2nd Tuesday of each month)
Men's Fellowship (4th Tuesday of each month)



There will be a FREE
Community Movie
Night on Fri., February
21 at 7 PM.

Refreshments will be provided.



*"For as high as the heavens
are above the earth, so
great is his steadfast love
toward those who fear him..."*

Psalm 103:11

All-U-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfasts

Includes pancakes, sausage, eggs, toast,
home fries, & beverage

Saturday, February 15

Saturday, March 15

7-11 AM



Adults: \$ 8, Kids 10 & Under \$5,

***Come out and enjoy a tasty breakfast and
some great fellowship!***



*New members
welcomed!*

Center Hill welcomes new
choir members all year
round. The choir meets on
Wednesday evenings at
6:30 PM. If you enjoy sing-
ing, we have a place for
you.

THE Lamplighter

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