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VOL. 97, NO. 4

PRICE 50¢

A sweetheart offer: Church planning 'Drop & Date' Feb. 14

LATHROP — The church is calling it “Drop and Date Night”. And it’s all happening the evening of Valentine’s Day.

This is actually a baby-sitting project. And the idea behind it is to give couples an opportunity to spend quality time together on this day of hearts and strengthen their relationship without worrying about their young children and baby-sitting costs.

“We will provide free child care for parents who want to go on a date but can’t really afford to get a baby-sitter,” explained Arabella Whitlock, outreach pastor of The Rock, a new church established in Lathrop last year in September.

“To a lot of people, money is really tight and baby-sitting ends up being a burden. So the whole goal of Drop and Date Night is to promote husbands and wives spending time together so that couples will strengthen their life together,” Whitlock said.

“We’re trying to encourage couples to get out and spend some time together. Even if they don’t go out to dinner. They could go on a picnic at their own house, rent a movie and have ice cream. Just something where they can go and have a few hours together. We just feel that with many couples having to work two jobs and running around with kids, they don’t have that time to get away. So what better way for them to get out and spend quality time together than on Valentine’s Day,” Whitlock said.

This outreach project is just one of the ways that they hope will help couples strengthen their relationships, she said.

“Everytime I turn around, there’s a marriage falling apart. So we’re just helping to cause a solid foundation for these couples,” Whitlock said.

Church members have already made arrangements with their own spouses or with the special someone in their lives to have their own romantic nights out either on Tuesday or Friday next week so they can help with the baby-sitting on Valentine’s Day, Whitlock explained.

“We will have three different shifts of baby-sitters coming in,” she said.

Baby-sitting services will be provided in the cafeteria of Joseph Widmer, Jr. Elementary School where parents can drop off their kids as early as 5:30 p.m. The children need to be picked up at 9 p.m.

“We’ll have certified baby-sitters as well as adults,” Whitlock said. “We have movies planned and popcorn for kids, coloring activities.”

She added, “It will be a safe and protected environment. We believe that children are very important and we don’t take their safety lightly.”

Parents who wish to take advantage of the baby-sitting service don’t have to call to make a reservation, Whitlock said.

“But if they want to call and reserve a spot, that’s fine,” she said.

This is not the first time The Rock has sponsored a family-oriented event. In October, the church hosted a Halloween extravaganza which was also held at the school cafeteria. It was a huge success with more than a hundred children and parents attending, Whitlock said.

The church, which is pastored by the Rev. Kyle Hedwall, holds its Sunday services also at the school cafeteria. Worship service begins at 9:59 a.m.

For more information about the church or about Drop and Date Night on Valentine’s Day, call the church at 518-8166.

By ROSE ALBANO RISSO

Staff reporter of the

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