



**April 15, 2026**

# MESSENGER

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**Sundays at 1 PM**

**942 Altadena Dr.**

**Altadena, CA 91001**

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## Contact Information:

Due to the fires, our mail has been forwarded. Please send mail to PO Box 91055, Pasadena, CA 91109. You may still call the church phone at 626-797-8970;

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## To The Moon And Back

While I was watching the interviews of the four astronauts who had just returned from their trip around the moon, the phrase kept going through my mind: **“To the moon and back.”** I realized that saying has been with me since before either the Apollo or Artemis NASA projects, so I searched earlier memories. It took me a while to think of the image of Ralph Kramden on the 50s TV sitcom *The Honeymooners*. I pictured him clenching his fist with anger, as he leaned into his wife and snarled, “You’re goin’ to the moon, Alice!” Then he backed off as she pushed her face into his and said “Well, har-de-har-har!”<sup>1</sup> I don’t recommend it, but that’s how the Kramden’s seemed to settled things.

As I browsed on my computer, I discovered that an expanded version of Ralph Kramden’s line had been the theme of a children’s book by English author Sam McBratney, originally published in 1994:<sup>2</sup> **“I love you to the moon and back.”** It’s popular today for people to exchange goodbyes with “Luv you!” / “Luv you more!” But this author imagined a conversation where a mother gives her toddler a goodnight kiss and says, “I love you!” To which the child, inspired by a fantastic space-travel image-world, responds with, “I love you **to the moon!**” Mom goes one step further: **“I love you to the moon AND BACK.”**

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The four rejoicing Astronauts gave emotional, hey!-wow! reports of what they experienced over the previous ten days.<sup>3</sup> They sounded more like kids on Christmas morning than well-trained scientists, which was great. Commander Reid Wiseman summarized: “It’s a special thing to be a human, and it’s a special thing to be on planet earth.” Pilot Victor Glover, a confessing Christian believer, underlined his thankfulness to God for “what we did, though I haven’t even started to process what it means.” Canadian Mission Specialist Jeremy Hansen outlined his experience with three simple words: Gratitude, Joy and Love. Mission Specialist Christina Koch reported that her most profound impression came when she saw “tiny earth with black all around it” and saw it as a “lifeboat for humanity, hanging undisturbed in the universe.”

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But the astronauts made their public appearance only after going through many hours of controlled adjustment, including a series of scientific tests and medical procedures designed to help them deal with the reality of GRAVITY! In introducing their interview, Texas Congressman Michael Cloud made the clever remark, “No one feels the gravity of the moment like you do!” He was right; their bodies and minds were still “coming down” from their trip to the moon. Previous space flights had shown what profound effects the change --- from earth’s gravity, to zero gravity beyond the atmosphere, back to earth’s gravity --- can have on a person. That’s why the four of them had to be in tip-top shape and in their prime years. This recent trip has apparently uncovered some new issues that will have to be addressed in future missions.

So, let’s go back to *The Honeymooners*. Years earlier, Ralph and Alice Kramden had fallen in love. They’d taken each other to the moon. But after a little while, they had to come back to earth’s realities. They were weighed down by the day-to-day gravity of life --- the monotony, the drudgery, the frustration. They began blaming the change on each other. Fortunately, as the TV series revealed, Alice and Ralph had strong enough moon-memories to rekindle their love in key moments and keep their marriage going.

Do you love your partner? Before you answer, think it through. Have you taken each other to the moon? Had that great falling-in-love experience? If so, that’s a good start. But you can’t stay on the in-love moon; no human couples have found out how to do that. It’s inevitable that you will experience the gravity of your humanity. So will she. That person you’re committed to, sometimes she’ll drive you crazy! You’ll want to send her to the moon --- without you! *OK- now strap yourself in for the gravity of long-term married life.*

They ought to put this in the wedding vows:

“Do you promise to love her *to the moon?*”

“Do you promise to love her *to the moon and back?*”

*Pastor George Van Alstine*

<sup>1</sup> For nostalgic clips from *The Honeymooners*, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98qw86DsdZ0>. Note that this collection of videos ends on a positive note.

<sup>2</sup> *Guess How Much I Love You*, has sold 50 million copies and has been translated into 57 languages. In 1997, possibly inspired by McBratney’s book, Australian pop duo Sacred Garden wrote and performed a song entitled “To the Moon and Back.” A 2015 children’s book by Amelia Hepworth has the same title as McBratney’s and carries a similar message.

<sup>3</sup> View the astronaut interviews at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhJs5372-ZE>.