

From the Pastor's Desk

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

It may surprise you to learn that when Paul penned these words he wasn't, in fact, writing about marriage, or romantic love. He was not writing specifically to brides, or to grooms, or to Valentine's Day sweethearts, but to a church. A difficult, confused, proud, status-obsessed, self-centered, man-centered, church. (Located in Corinth, Greece, about halfway between Athens and Sparta.) What he wrote to the people of that congregation, almost two thousand years ago, has resonated throughout the centuries. It reminds us of what is central to the Christian life, and what is not, what is important and what is unimportant, what matters and what doesn't. As background, the church at Corinth had a lot of problems. Theological divisions. Blatant sin. Class divisions. Pride. Arguments over speaking in tongues. You think the modern church has worship wars? They invented worship wars. The root of all these various problems was really quite simple. It was a failure of love. A failure of love shows itself in a myriad of ways. And you can't always start with the root cause; sometimes you have to begin by addressing the effects, the fruit. But eventually it always leads back to that fundamental problem, a lack of love for God and for one another. A focus on serving self. An unwillingness to sacrifice, and to serve, and to submit, for the good of others. And so, after twelve chapters of patiently and laboriously addressing all of the more obvious issues in the Corinthians church, Paul finally writes chapter 13. This is really the core of 1 Corinthians. Because love is not just one Christian virtue among many; it is the essence of what it means to follow Christ. If you have that, you have everything. If you don't, you have nothing. It's really that simple.

Paul's purpose in using such an extreme example is to state as forcefully as possible, as emphatically as possible, that nothing we do no matter how successful, no matter how impressive, no matter how much we sacrifice, no matter how much we accomplish — none of it means anything without love.

Let's be very clear on this point, because we've heard these verses so many times that we tend to just read them, silently agree with their noble sentiments, and move on. But let's really hear what he is saying, and let it shock us, as it should. Paul is not saying that our works will lose some of their value if not done in love. He is not just saying that acting in love is the best way to live out our faith as we serve the Lord.

No, he is saying that without love, nothing we do for Christ means anything. It may benefit others. But as far as I am concerned, the one doing the serving, doing the giving, doing the sacrificing, it has no value whatsoever. I might as well have stayed home and watched television. Because it was all just wasted effort. I get no credit for that; God is not impressed. From God's point of view, without love, I am nothing, I have done nothing, and I gain nothing. Nothing. Let me repeat that: nothing.

Now, I'll be honest with you. I don't like those verses very much. To me, they're not something beautiful and inspiring, they're an indictment. Because I've actually made some sacrifices in my life. I've suffered loss. I've labored for the cause of Christ. And although I'm fully aware that my own sacrifices and my own labors pale in comparison to those of many saints, around the world and throughout history, still, they were something. Or at least I thought they were. But as I read these verses, I'm forced to recognize that anything which was done for reasons other than love wasn't, in fact, "something". In God's sight, it was nothing. That's sobering. It's sobering to think that some of what I was giving my life to, could have been for nothing.

Perhaps you're in the same boat. Perhaps as you look back on your life, you can identify times when you've given, or served, or labored, or sacrificed, or suffered for Christ. Hopefully, you can. And you're wondering now; was it really out of love, love for God and love for his people, that I did those things? Or was it for other reasons?

Perhaps you're engaged in a ministry even now, and you're thinking about these verses and wondering, am I doing this out of love? Am I teaching, or caring for children in the nursery, or leading a Bible study, or tithing, or giving up vacation time to go on a mission trip, out of love? Am I witnessing to my neighbor out of love? Because if not, it doesn't mean anything, no matter how it may look. You can be working ever so hard, and sacrificing ever so much, and seeing great results, and perhaps even suffering for Christ, but without love, none of it means anything. Kind of like a punch to the gut, isn't it?

But here's the thing, all is not loss. Our God is a forgiving God, full of mercy and grace. We can change! We can resolve ourselves to do EVERYTHING out of love. To do for our brothers and sisters in Christ, in this congregation and in this community all we can out of love. What better time than now? On the Journey Together, (out of love)

Pastor Gary

Schedule of Events**February**

- 2/2 **First Saturday Gospel Sing-5:00pm**
VA Singers & The Morris Family
- 2/3 **Lord's Supper**
- 2/4 **Deacon's Bible Study-7:30pm**
- 2/9 **Youth Bowling-2-5pm-Leave church parking lot at 1:30pm**
- 2/17 **Car Show Meeting-After Worship-Youth Room**
- 2/18 **CARE Visits-Meet Outreach Museum 10:15am-Leave @ 10:30am**
- 2/18 **Deacon's Bible Study**
- 2/20 **AWANA-PJ Night-6:30pm**
- 2/23 **Youth Movie Day-Times to be announced-Matinee**
- 2/23 **Children's/ Family Movie Night-6-8:00pm**
- 2/25 **WOM Meeting-7:00pm**

Save the date!
Bethel Baptist
Spring Craft Show
Saturday March 16th
9:00am-3:00pm
Contact Carol Samuels
**For more information or to register
as a vendor!**

INTERESTED IN HELPING US PRESENTING
A "LIVING" LORD'S SUPPER?

SEE ALLYSON TO VOLUNTEER
TODAY!



Bethel
THE CHURCH ON THE CORNER

www.bethelbaptistva.org

**1193 White Oak Road (Route 218)
Fredericksburg, VA 22405**

**Phone: 540-371-3650
www.bethelbaptistva.org**



Nursery

Feb 3, 2019
TBD

Feb 10, 2019
Jennifer Hamm

Feb 17, 2019
Crystal and Hannah Loving

Feb 24, 2019
Becky & Johnny Wright



Children's Church

Feb 3, 2019
Mike Carter

Feb 10, 2019
Missy and Bruce Sullivan

Feb 17, 2019
Jennifer Hamm

Feb 24, 2019
Crystal and Hannah Loving



Counting Committee

Feb 3, 2019
Sandy Jett, Nancy Galyen
& Tina Lynn

Feb 10, 2019
Crystal Loving, Carol Jarrett
& Harry Bradshaw

Feb 17, 2019
Carla Cooper, Pennie
Walker & Bobby Samuels

Feb 24, 2019
Joanie DeShazo, Tammy
DeJean & Mike Short

From the Staff-February 2019

FROM CHILDREN'S CORNER

Hello Bethel families!!



Thanks for an awesome January! We had a great time roller skating on the 20th. Looking forward to February, we will be having a family movie night on Saturday the 23rd, 6-8pm. The movie is TBD at a later time. In Awana, we'll have pajama night on the 20th. Thanks for sharing your children with us!!
Shannon Carter
Director of Children's Ministries

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



Hello Bethel!

I am so excited to share with you all of the new, and exciting projects that are in the works with our music ministry! One of my goals for 2019 was to garner the interest of the young people of our church. Thus, towards the end of January, we held an interest meeting for a youth choir/praise band. This group will be a non-judgmental, safe space where students can explore their interest in music while at the same time, using their talents to praise the Lord, ultimately culminating in special music opportunities on Sunday mornings and many other opportunities. I'd like to encourage any students in the church, middle school through college age, who have an interest in music, whether it be instrumental, vocal, or even sound board operation, please get in contact with me!

It may be freezing cold outside, but we're already looking forward to the Easter Season! We've got two big events in the works for Holy Week including our Palm Sunday Easter Cantata, and this year, we're bringing back The Living Last Supper for the evening Maundy Thursday service. If you'd like to be a part of either of these events, please get in contact with me A.S.A.P. We've still got room in our LLS cast and crew as well as plenty of space in the choir loft for the cantata. Cantata rehearsals are scheduled to begin Wednesday, February 6th at 8:30 pm, so don't wait to join us!

Again, I'd like to remind my brothers and sisters in Christ, that no prior experience or particular skill is needed to join the music ministry. Only a desire and passion to praise and worship our Lord, Jesus Christ, in song.

Let's continue to "Make A Joyful Noise!"
Allyson Dodson
Director of Music

What's Happening

FEBRUARY 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Communion	4 Deacon's Bible Study	5	6	7	8	9 Youth Bowling- 2-5pm
10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16
17 Care Show Meeting- Youth Room	18 President's Day CARE Visits Deacon's Bible Study	19	20 AWANA PJ Night	21	22	23 Youth Movie Day- Matinee Children's Movie Night- 6-8pm
24	25 WOM Meeting	26	27	28		



Feb 3, 2018
Gusty McIntyre
540-273-9449

Feb 10, 2019
Steve Smith
540-429-6289

Feb 17, 2019
Bruce Sullivan
540-907-8696

Feb 24, 2018
Alex Barlas
540-847-1070



Feb 3, 2019
Brandon Short | Mike Short
Alex Barlas | Chris Lynn

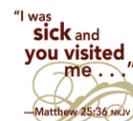
Feb 10, 2019
Chuck Ross | William Hicks
Wardlow Trainor | Steve Smith

Feb 17, 2019
Rudy Griffith | "CJ" Jones
Keegan McIntyre | Jerry Reed

Feb 24, 2019
Bruce Sullivan | Buzz Green
Brian Pellegrino | John Lightner



Monthly Shut-in Visitation
February 18th
at 10:30 am
Please meet at church at 10:15 am.



Chonda Pierce in Woodbridge
March 2nd at 6:00 pm

If you would like to go let Beth Jones know TODAY!
The tickets for the event will be closer to \$25.00.
(THERE IS NO REFUND)



PLANNING MEETING
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 17th
AFTER WORSHIP
YOUTH ROOM

This meeting is open to anyone that wants to help with the Car Show



Discover the Joy of Missions!
Get involved in our monthly missions projects...

This Month's Meeting-
February 27th-7:00pm



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We are still in the middle of Kitchen Renovations, consequently.... We are unable to provide you with a menu for the month of February. However, rest assured that we will continue to have meals on Wednesday Nights and they will be meals that you and your family can enjoy together! See you Wednesday!

Adults \$4.00/ Children \$3.00/Children under 3-*FREE* (\$20 Family Limit)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday
 9:15 AM Deacon Prayer Ministry
 9:30 AM Coffee Fellowship
 10:00 AM Sunday School
 11:00 AM Worship Service

Wednesday
 5:45 PM Dinner-Outreach Center
 6:30 PM Children Activities
 6:45 PM Youth Group-
 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting
 7:00 PM Bible Study-Upstairs Classroom
 7:45 PM Choir Rehearsal-Sanctuary