



THE **Spirit** OF
STRAWBERRY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

February has the distinction of having Valentine's Day, so it usually becomes a month we reflect on love! If you are so inclined, there are few options as useful as the book of 1 John. John's gospel spoke often of Jesus' love, but his first letter has a passage in chapter three, verse sixteen that reads "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers". In this verse, an amazing truth about love is illustrated that is so often missed. For many people the idea of loving someone or something is directly related to the 'feeling' it evokes in us. That is if something is pleasant to us – or exciting or joyful, if they make us feel good – we 'love' them. It is almost entirely rooted in our positive experiences. But the love of God is far more than that.

The love of God is revealed in Christ's life and death and suffering for us. That is, when God said that He is Love, he demonstrated it! In our lives, we need this reminder that our actions and attitudes reveal our character. If we claim to have a loving character– and we should, then our actions and attitudes will show it. But our actions also reveal when we are not loving – but selfish. And at its root, too often the love of the world and how it benefits us – is often quite selfish. That requires a major reset of how we look at what we love. Instead of using the term for what makes us feel good, respected, happy, joyful, etc. the question should be asked how we affect others! When you love someone, are you able to suffer for their good? Christ suffered for your good.

This does not mean that to love someone you go looking for suffering and expecting them to appreciate your amazing martyrdom. Many husbands and wives have tried this and found it not only doesn't edify, it simply leaves you exhausted and miserable. Instead, try praying for and seeking their good, and consider that worth the effort. Service for the other's good becomes, in the end, a willing choice, not a begrudging effort. We can choose to seek to bless those around us – according to their needs – not our wants! In this we see Godly love. Christ came to save us while we were still lost in our sin. He did not wait till we made him 'feel' wanted. He chose to save a people in rebellion – because He loves. For our own part, often our actions become most loving when the ones we 'love' are the least deserving. It is not unusual, even in the world, to see this in parents giving everything for the good of their children, but we need to look beyond even that to start loving like Christ.

So, reject worldly self-gratifying love that seeks to find our own satisfaction at other expense of others. Instead choose to love others as Christ has loved us. Don't wait till they earn it or deserve it. Don't insist on your gratification, satisfaction, or being appreciated. Instead seek how we can show a love that builds and calls others to consider love worth striving for because we know what it means to be loved by the perfect savior!

David

Church News

Trinity – on February 14 we will have our Winter Dinner.

If anyone is interested in a free Wurlitzer console piano, please contact the church office at 540-586-8010.



Pecks - Pastor Brandon and Rebecca welcomed their second child, Scarlett Paige Palmer, on January 1.

We had Baptist Men's Week, beginning with our annual Men's Breakfast on Saturday, January 24. Different men at our church spoke across our different services, from our Youth Director, a Liberty student called to ministry, and a young man who is a Deacon in training at our church. It's wonderful seeing the church raise up and disciple more leaders.

Our church will be having a Valentine's Sweetheart Dinner on Saturday, February 21, at 5:30pm. The men will be cooking and serving the ladies. If interested in this event, please contact Pastor Brandon at (804)-221-2119.

Thaxton – Our youth had a wonderful time at SBCV's Youth Evangelism Conference in Virginia Beach. It is amazing and powerful to witness 1500 teens and their leaders worship together.



The youth continue their Watch Parties on February 1 from 5-7pm. There will be a time of discussion and snacks afterward.

On February 22, 5-7pm we will be hosting a teen Nerf War. All teens are welcome. Bring your own standard Nerf gun.

Regular Youth Group and Kids' Club will resume February 4 from 6:15 – 7:30 pm. Community Dinner is available from 5:30 – 6:30 pm.

Our senior saints have Young At Heart potluck luncheon on the 2nd Thursday of every month. All are welcome.

Reminder

ACPs have been mailed. Please complete and submit them by March 31st. You can fill them out by hand and return mail them, by hand and bring them to our office or submit them online.

Strawberry Baptist Association
P.O. Box 91
Bedford, VA 24523

February

- 6-7 Youth Leaders' Retreat, Williamsburg VA
- 10 SBCV Winter Bible Conference, Hampton VA
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 19 BGAV Church & Clergy Tax Webinar