



CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

FEBRUARY 2025



A Message From Dewey

February is the month we most closely associate with love, because of Valentine's Day. While the holiday is largely secular

today, it does have religious origins. The Catholic Church recognizes Saint Valentine as a martyr and there is a Christian feast day celebrated annually on February 14.

While there is no mention of Valentine in the Bible, there is no shortage of mentions regarding love. Perhaps the most famous passage is from 1 Corinthians 13:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight

in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

It is a truly beautiful passage that is often used in weddings. However, the standard Paul sets in these words to the church in Corinth is a high one. It places the importance of love above all else – including faith and hope. In fact, it goes so far as to say that great feats – like profound charity and sacrifice – amount to nothing if they are not done with love.

And the love that is advocated promises nothing in return. It is patient and kind – even when the circumstances are frustrating or unfair. It does not exhibit envy or pride – even if one has little and others have so much. It always trusts – even if that trust turns out to be misplaced. It always hopes – even when there is no reason to hope or when those hopes are dashed. It always perseveres – in spite of any obstacle or doubt. And perhaps the most difficult of all - It keeps no record of wrongs.

It is not about red flowers or Hallmark cards or heart-shaped boxes of candy. It is about an entirely selfless love for others that represents a gift beyond measure.

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FEBRUARY Calendar

Sun, 2/2



11 am Communion Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

ACIM after worship service

Sun, 2/9

11:00 am Worship and Installation Service

Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

"Souper" Bowl Fellowship, after worship service

2:00 pm Butner Church Council Meeting

@ Community Methodist Church

Fri, 2/14



Sat, 2/15

CHURCH
clean-up
DAY



Sun, 2/16

11:00 am Worship Service
Dewey Cassell, Erma Hudgins

Sat, 2/22

Presbytery Gathering
@ 1st Presbyterian Church in Wilson
Cecil will serve as delegate

Sun, 2/23

11:00 am Worship Service:
Brian Stratton, Cecil Hudgins

FOR BETTER OR VERSE

A calendar of Bible verses, one for each day.
Compiled by Paul Lintern, Joyful Noiseletter

- 1 Titus 2:1
- 2 Philippians 2:2
- 3 Acts 2:3
- 4 John 2:4
- 5 I Peter 2:5
- 6 Matthew 2:6
- 7 Luke 2:7
- 8 I John 2:8
- 9 Hebrews 2:9
- 10 Ephesians 2:10
- 11 Romans 2:11
- 12 I Corinthians 2:12
- 13 I Thessa. 2:13
- 14 Titus 2:14
- 15 Luke 2:15
- 16 Galatians 2:16
- 17 John 2:17
- 18 James 2:18
- 19 Luke 2:19
- 20 I John 2:20
- 21 Acts 2:21
- 22 John 2:22
- 23 James 2:23
- 24 I John 2:24
- 25 I John 2:25
- 26 I Samuel 2:26
- 27 Mark 2:27
- 28 I John 2:28



A Message From Dewey,
continued from page 1

Think about a world in which everyone exhibited this kind of love. It wouldn't solve every problem, but there are countless problems it could. The sad reality, though, is that getting everyone to exhibit this kind of love is likely unattainable. Human beings are by our very nature selfish, which is completely contrary to the kind of love Paul espoused.

Then again, Paul wasn't promoting the idea to the entire human race. His opening words to the passage begin with "If I ..." Change doesn't happen all at once. It starts with one and then another and then another. Until it gains so much momentum that it cannot be denied. Until it overwhelms every obstacle in its path. A tidal wave of love, that starts with you and me.

Let's make it an extraordinary Valentine's Day.

~Dewey



Romping with the Pre-K

February is always a fun month for the preschool. We start the month studying the letter P and read lot's of "Don't let the Pigeon..." books by Mo Willems and our 3-day class will watch a short Pigeon movie and eat popcorn while in their pajamas. We will continue the month learning about dental hygiene, pirates, and under the sea. We will have a Valentine's card exchange and enjoy a small class party with lots of Valentine treats.

Tuesday, 2/4 will be a teacher workday and on Thursday, 2/6, we will have a board meeting at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. We hope to set tuition for next year at the board meeting and then we will allow our 2-day students to register for the 3-day class. Most of our spots are full and we have a waiting list, so once this is complete, I will have a better picture of whether there are any openings for August.

This month, we will also focus on 1 Corinthians 13:4 and learn that "Love is patient, love is kind".

Many Blessings, Susan Zink

“To love,
my brothers and sisters,
does not mean
we have to agree.
But maybe agreeing
to love
is the
greatest agreement,
and the only one
that ultimately matters,
because it makes a
future possible.”

~Bishop Michael Curry:
Love is the Way



Old Age... When "clinking glasses"
doesn't always involve a toast.

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Church News

Session Retreat

The session met on January 19 to make plans and goals for this exciting new year!

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Housekeeping Services

For the last couple of years, we have had housekeepers come in and clean the church 4 times a year, which is all we felt our budget could handle and we have been filling in the gaps with clean-up days and doing a lot of it ourselves. Our clean up days have been working well. In looking at our 2025 budget, we have decided to cancel housekeeping services and do it all ourselves. Please consider making it a priority to attend clean up days to help keep our church clean. They are typically held on the 3rd Saturday of the month (unless there is a conflict) from 9:30am through approximately 11:00 am. We do not have clean up days in the months of June, August, or December.

Lights on the Cross

We still have not found an electrician willing to climb up scaffolding and change the light bulbs.

Fence Damage

There was a very old, decommissioned light pole in the church's backyard, that has recently fallen on the Pre-K's fence. Duke Energy came out to remove the pole, but we will have to fix the fence. If anyone is interested in helping, please let Cecil know.

WORSHIP

Music

We would like to explore some variety of music to liven up our worship such as invite musicians and singers to come on occasion as well as maybe

sprinkle in a contemporary tune here and there. If anyone has suggestions or would like to help with this endeavor, please talk to Erma!

NURTURE

Fellowships

Michelle is looking for ideas for "field trips", such as restaurants and places to visit as a church group. If you have any suggestions, please let her know.

Plan to join us for the "Souper" Bowl Fellowship on 2/9 after worship service. Bring your favorite soup to share!

ADVERTISING

In the upcoming months you may see ads about our church on social media as we try to reach out to those in our community who are unchurched or who are new to the area looking for a church. We should all always be willing to invite others to come as well. Being familiar is key.



From the Editor

Everything Has Its Time

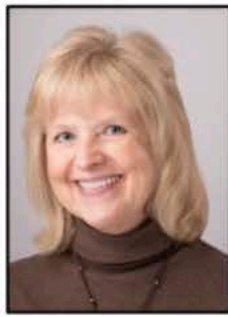
*For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter
under heaven:*

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is
planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather
stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from
embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

~Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

I'm not a lover of winter, even with the mild winters we normally have. You can imagine how I have NOT been loving the super cold weather lately. So, I have spent days at a time staying inside. Ground Hog Day is coming up and Punxsutawney Phil had BETTER NOT see his shadow! (*not that I believe in that superstition, mind you*). I just do not want 6 more weeks of winter!

But being stuck in the house during these dark winter months can be a season for planning, cleaning, and organizing. And if there is anything I love to do it's organizing and planning. That's why I love the annual session retreats where we discuss plans for the church in the new year. Plans for the



new year is like a new slate – and it creates a little excitement in me. You can see some of what I am excited about under Church News on page 4.

We are planning some special services this year as well as tweaking our music a little bit. We could throw in a contemporary Christian song here and there. Or have special music provided by a musician. Let me know if you have any suggestions.

Michelle is working on a fun-filled year of fellowships, both in the fellowship hall as well as outside of the church. I am looking forward to that! We are also planning to do a little advertising on social media with hopes of bringing more people to our church and growing our fellowship.

So, if I were to write a version of Ecclesiastes 3 for us, it may go something like this:

For everything there is a season:

*a time to plan and a time to execute the plan.
a time to explore vacations and a time to take
vacations.
a time to organize and clean and a time to enjoy
being organized and clean.
a time to rest and re-energize and time to use up all
that energy.
a time to stay inside and a time to get outside.
a time for fun and a time for responsibilities.
a time to care for self and a time to care for others.
a time to read and learn how to be a Christian and
a time to go out and be a Christian.*

Anyway, that's my 2 cents. I hope you are all as excited about the new year as I am. Stay warm and use this "inside time" for rest and for good so you will be ready for all the wonderful opportunities to enjoy when the warmer weather finally gets here.

~ Erma

10 REASONS WHY GOD MIGHT NOT BE BLESSING YOU

1. You haven't asked for the blessing. God knows our needs, but He wants a relationship with us. He wants us to ask for that need, in faith.

James 4:2b: *You do not have because you do not ask God.*

John 16:24: *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

2. You haven't asked in faith. Do you not believe that God will answer? Ask Him for help with your unbelief!

Matthew 21:22: *Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.*

Mark 11:24: *Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

3. You're asking for the wrong reasons. Are you asking for personal gain?

James 4:3: *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

4. You are being selfish. Are you all about self? Not seeking relationship with God or reaching out to bless others? God is not a glorified Santa Claus. Your focus should be on how to be a blessing to God. Your life should be about living for Him and not yourself. Try asking God for blessings that will help you bless others. Or just ask Him to bless others in your prayers.

Psalms 37:4: *Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

Luke 9:23: *Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*

5. Is there unconfessed sin in your life? This affects your relationship with God. Surrender your sin to Him! If He's not blessing you, maybe the relationship is strained through disobedience in your life or habitual sin.

James 4:7-10: *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

6. Are you being impacted by someone else's sin? God doesn't punish us for the sins of others, but we can sometimes share the consequences. Such as a joint checking account when the other is being irresponsible with money. God warns us of unhealthy associations.

Proverbs 22:24-25: *Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.*

7. God's timing is different than yours. There is a season for everything, including a season for blessings. God may want you to wait and grow in dependence on Him before He blesses you. God knows when it's the right time for us to receive certain blessings and when it is not.

Continued from page 6:

Ecclesiastes 3:1: *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

God's ways are perfect and His word is flawless.

Psalm 18:30: *As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless.*

8. He wants you to be persistent. Don't Give up! Ask again, and again, and again. He wants you to persist in prayer and have that relationship with Him.

Luke 18:1: *Always pray and not give up.*

9. What you're asking for isn't truly good for you.

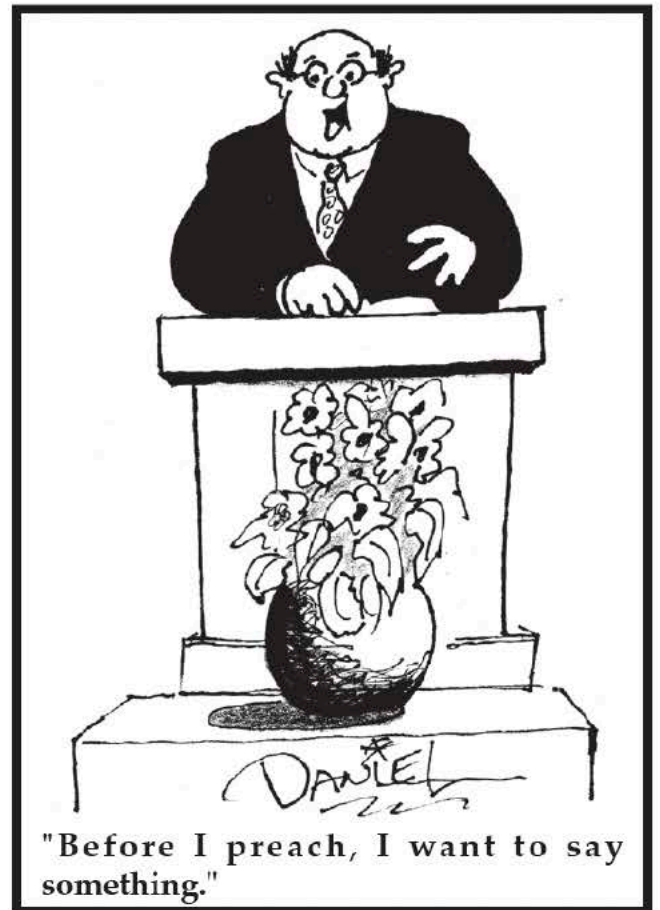
James 1:17: *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

God is our shield. He protects us from something He knows is not the best for us. He has something better in mind.

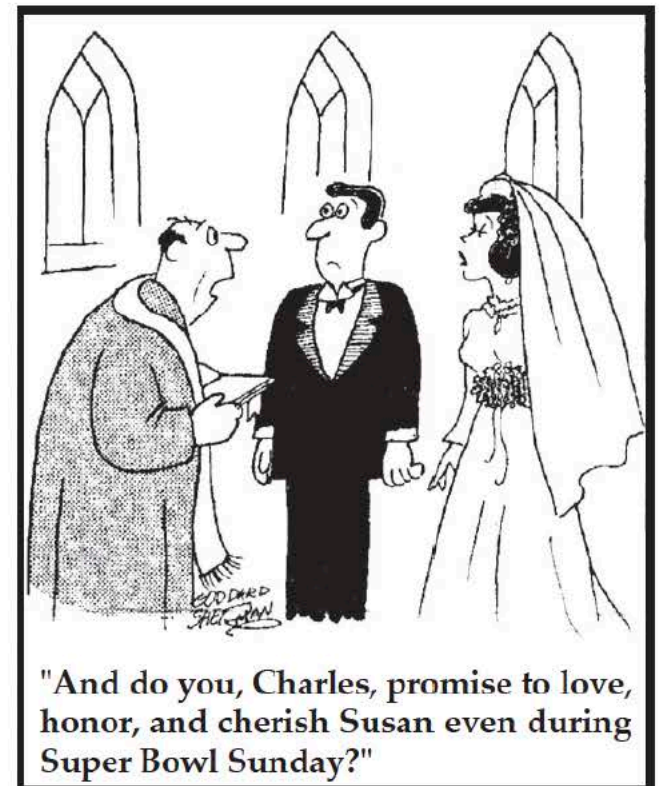
Psalm 84:11: *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.*

10. He IS blessing you and you just haven't noticed. What do you consider a blessing? Something financially rewarding? Something that makes you happy? The fact that you have life, breath, and someone in your life who loves you are all blessings that He's given that you may have been taking for granted.

~Adapted from Cindi McMenamín's
10 Reasons Why God Might Not be Blessing



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