

## PASTOR'S CORNER



**1 John 3:18**

*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

### NOT JUST WORDS

“I love you.” Those words can roll off our tongues easily and set someone’s heart dancing. But what do we really mean when we say that? Many times, saying we love someone is a far cry from actually loving that person.

Drawing upon Jesus as the ultimate example, the Bible challenges us to love in deed and truth, not just in word. When we consider Jesus according to 1 John 3:16 His love moved Him to lay down His life for us. Jesus loved us enough to die on our behalf. He sacrificed Himself for us who were His enemies at the time. When we examine Jesus’ life further, we discover that His death on the cross was the culmination of a series of self-sacrificial steps to secure our salvation.

Philippians 2:5-8 outlines the extent of Christ’s self-sacrifice. God the Son, God of very God, was willing to relinquish the inherent splendor that He shared with God the Father and clothe Himself in human flesh to live on the earth for about three decades. Not only did He become human, but He came as a servant – humble, lowly, misunderstood,

and maligned. He condescended to serve those who badmouthed Him and betrayed Him. He healed the sick, delivered the demon-possessed, and taught the great principles of true life and eternal fellowship with the Father to many who would later cry “Crucify Him!” Then in a final act of unimaginable submission, He allowed Himself to be executed by crucifixion – the most painful and shameful torture and death known to human beings at the time. Why did He do that? Because He loved us. 1 John 3:16 challenges us to be just as sacrificial in our love.

Most of us will never need to physically die for someone we love. But we will be challenged every day to practice sacrificial love. When those we proclaim to love have a desire or preference that conflicts with our own, how will we respond? When we must surrender a privilege for the sake of someone else, how will we respond? When we are misunderstood or ill-treated, how will we respond? When we must contend with the idiosyncrasies of our family members, how will we

respond? When we must spend our resources to help someone else, how will we respond? These are the circumstances that test our claims of love. While we can glibly and loudly proclaim our love, living and showing it can be more difficult. But we can learn to show love as we deepen our appreciation of how intensely God loves us, and as we depend on the indwelling Spirit of God to empower us. So, let us commit to pursue the love God entreats us to embrace.

Let us purpose to defy the siren calls of our culture that encourage us to “love” ourselves by elevating our desires above all others and all else. Let us ask God to help us to “empty” ourselves and prioritize the needs of others over our own comfort. Let us ask Him to help us do so honestly and joyfully. Let us love like Jesus loved. Let us love not just in words, but in deed and in truth.

God bless you,  
Pastor James

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

**CORPORATE PRAYER  
TUE @ 7 PM**

**MAR 12**

Join us via Zoom video

Please contact Pastor James for log on information at rcantio@gmail.com

**YOUTH GROUP**

**FRI @ 6:45 PM**

**MAR 15**

In-person at church.

For teens ages 13 and over

Want to become more competent and comfortable sharing your faith?

**3 CIRCLES**

a Six-Session Training Event  
Sundays Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> – Apr 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6 pm

Sign up at the Information Center so we can ensure adequate materials are available

**KIDZONE & NURSERY**

**SUN @ 11 AM**

**MAR 17**

These ministries are available every Sunday during the morning service

Kidzone for ages 6-12 yrs. old.

**GROWTH GROUPS  
THU & FRI @ 7 PM**

**MAR 14 & MAR 15**

In-person at church.

**WORSHIP SERVICE  
SUN @ 11 AM**

**MAR 17**

In-person service and Livestreaming on Facebook, Youtube and our webpage.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Join us for Good Friday Service March 29 @ 7 pm and Resurrection (Easter) Sunday Celebration on March 31 @ 11 am.
- Growth Groups continue Thursday and Friday at 7 pm at church. Sign up at the Information Counter or online to attend one convenient to you.
- 3-Circles evangelism training continues Sundays @ 6pm until April 7.
- Explore Mountain Stream classes for those interested in becoming members or just finding out more about Mountain Stream begin Sunday March 3, at 10am. Please sign up at the Information Center to attend.
- Baby Bottle Fundraiser: grab a baby bottle from church and fill it with coins, cash or a check and return it by March 3 to support the work of the Pregnancy Resource Center of the Poconos.
- The Church’s Quarterly Business Meeting will be held Sunday April 17th following the Morning Service.
- If you’d like a one-year Bible reading plan for 2024 you may find Pastor Jimmie Van Sant’s at PJVS1.blogspot.com.
- Help Needed: If you’d be willing to bring refreshments on a Sunday, speak to Becky or Lori.
- Join us on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 3:15pm at the Garden at Stroud as we sing and share the gospel with the residents. Contact Tom for more information.

### WAYS TO GIVE

Traditionally during the Sunday morning service, with a check by mail or through our secured website.

Please remember to hit “SAVE” after you give if you did not set up an account so the church can have a record of who gave for tax purposes.

Thank you!