

CATAWBA FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CATAWBA VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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A LIFELONG PORTRAIT OF AGAPE LOVE

BY IRMA HAYDEN

What is love? No, I'm not referring to one of the chart topping hits of the 90's, as catchy as it may be. But "agape" love - defined by scripture is the highest form of love, a sacrificial love.

As sinful humans, we don't understand or live out agape love. We have our own ideas of what love is or should be. The world views love as nothing more than an uncontrolled feeling that comes and goes. Some have lessened God's love to accepting sin and believe that anything other than acceptance of sin is an absence of love. We forget that God's wrath is also a part of His love.

God is the source of love. He created love. We are able to love, because of His love. God is love.

We can only experience agape love through Christ. His selfless death at the cross is unending love. It outlasts generations. His love is eternal. Though we can never truly live out perfect love as Jesus has, we can become more Christlike when we show agape love - loving others more than self.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

In His abundant love, God gave us all mothers. I can't think of a better person who exemplifies agape love like a godly mother. Motherhood is one of God's highest callings - life begins in the womb and is followed by physical and emotional challenges taken on by our mothers.

Charles Spurgeon, when reflecting on the impact of his own mother's nurturing care, said it best:

“I am sure that, in my early youth, no teaching ever made such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother; neither can I conceive that, to any child, there can be one who will have such influence over the heart as the mother who has so tenderly cared for her offspring.”

Selfless love doesn't end at birth, but grows as a young child is so tenderly nurtured by their mother. A godly mother seeks to know the Lord first and guides you along in gentleness. She is generous in patience and mercy. A mother's love is always loving, always forgiving, and always sacrificing. What a portrait of agape love.

PROPERTY HAPPENINGS

MANY WAYS TO MINISTER OUTSIDE

We've had some spectacular opportunities to gather on the Rt. 311 property over the month of April. We had an amazing turnout for our Easter Sunday Celebration! We saw many returning faces who've experienced challenges in attending services due to COVID, in addition to several first time guests and their families. The youth group hosted a group of over 20 teenagers for a night on the lawn. A cold snap and windy conditions prevented them from having their bonfire as planned, but it was nothing a little hot chocolate and field games couldn't overcome! They heard an encouraging message from scripture as well, and the night was full of laughter, fellowship, and fun!



PROPERTY WORKDAY | MAY 22

We are so thankful to already be using the property for ministry so early on in the process of developing it. On May 22nd, from 8:30am to noon, we'll be hosting a workday at the property to take some next steps in making the property more accessible and better equipped for ministry use. We'll be clearing trees and brush in preparation for a new church sign on the property. If you're able to volunteer in this endeavor, please contact Calvin Myers to sign up!

SUMMER FAMILY NIGHTS

FAMILY ORIENTED SUMMER MINISTRY ON THE NEW PROPERTY



This summer we'll be shaking up our typical routine for midweek ministries. Beginning on June 2nd, our midweek services, will be taking place on our property on Rt. 311. We will have intergenerational worship services for our study of "Summer in the Psalms." Wednesday nights will be packed full of fun, fellowship, outreach, and deepening our relationship with God and others. Each evening will feature a time of corporate worship, themed food nights, and lively activities and games!

Over the course of the summer, there will be an ongoing competition between two teams: the McAfee Ridge Riders and the Tinker Trail Blazers. Each family will be assigned a team and will have many opportunities to earn points through group games, scripture memory challenges, and community service activities. Aside from eternal bragging rights, the team who wins the most points at the end of the summer will receive a special prize!

This will be a summer like no other we've had in the valley before! We'll have services rain or shine, so in the event of inclement weather, service events will be moved to the church facility. More information about Summer Family Nights is coming soon, so stay tuned!

BASEMENT LEVEL RENOVATIONS

GIVING OUR HIGH QUALITY MINISTRY A HIGH QUALITY SPACE

When you walk through the doors of our church campus on a typical Wednesday night, you're met with a flurry of activity! Elementary age children in their red and blue Awana vests shimmy past you in the narrow hallway, on their way to the opening festivities of Awana. You continue through the Worship Center and see up to thirty young children chattering excitedly, all smiles and giggles as they stand to say their pledges, to the flags and the Bible, respectively.

As you make your way down the stairs, you may be met with sounds of the youth group hanging out in the game room before the meeting commences, or already worshipping together in the youth room, being led in song by their peers as they joyfully praise the name of Jesus. This gathering hosts a conglomeration of teenagers from every background, walk of life, and schooling situation. But each Wednesday, no matter their status at school, their family situation at home, or the concerns on their minds for the rest of the week, they are a family. And the youth room is their home.



We often say that the “church is not the building, it’s the people,” which is intrinsically true. The place we gather doesn’t matter as much as the people we gather with, the quality of the worship, or growth in the knowledge of God that takes place when we gather. However, to have a space that is welcoming, inviting, familiar, and friendly is so important for the teens in our student ministries. The youth room is a place where they’re allowed to let their guard down, let their peers in, and let the light of scripture open their eyes to the truths they’re yearning for.

But years of welcoming students and elemental wear and tear have taken their toll on this place of sanctuary for our students. The safe haven has become worn, the atmosphere, less inviting as it has begun to show physical signs of decay. Some years ago, there was significant water damage done to the basement rooms in the back walls that press into the bedrock behind our foundation, and to the linoleum flooring of nearly the entire basement.

We praise God that our water problem has been resolved through the instillation of an interior drain system and basement sump pump. Furthermore, many cosmetic updates have been completed this year including new lights, fresh coats of paint to the entire basement, and brightening each classroom with hand-painted murals throughout the downstairs portion of the building. But the most significant update of all has yet to be completed: replacing the outdated and water-damaged flooring.



The project would include all new modern-looking vinyl flooring and vinyl baseboards for the entire downstairs (excluding the maintenance room). The cost for this project comes in right under \$10,000, which includes all materials and professional installation.



We praise God for the fact that \$4,000 has already been given towards this special project! Our desire is to see the basement area of our facility become a more inviting and enjoyable space for the young people we minister to on a weekly basis. This project is special to our student ministries because it will give volunteers and students a high-quality space that reflects the high-quality ministry being accomplished there.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with us to enhance our student classrooms as we together make an impact for the next generation? Please ear-mark special gifts as "Student Basement Flooring".

SUMMER SNAPSHOT

YOUTH EMPHASIS SUNDAY | MAY 16 AT 10:30AM

The children and youth are the next generation of the church. Every year, we take time to recognize our young people during our morning worship service. On May 16th, they'll be leading the entire morning service through worship, missions staff updates, special music presentation, as one of our young men will be bringing the morning message. We'll also take time to recognize the students who are graduating high school to celebrate their tremendous accomplishments.

CLOSING CEREMONIES | MAY 19 AT 6:30PM

We've had an incredible year in our Awana and Student Ministries. Despite the many challenges COVID brought to our ministry routine, this year saw new teens join the youth group, a steady number of children participate in Awana, and our faithful volunteers showing up and pouring out on the kids and teens each week. Our closing ceremony will take place May 19th in the fellowship hall to praise the Lord for another great year!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | JULY 11-14 AT 6:30PM

VBS is taking a journey to Mystery Island, where we uncover the truth about our Creator God! There's a sea of confusion about who God is and what he's like, so we'll track down the one true God and learn how amazing he is through the pages of Scripture. VBS will begin on Sunday evening and go through Wednesday night. Contact Pastor Stephen if you're interested in volunteering!

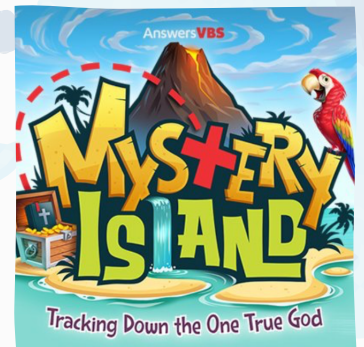
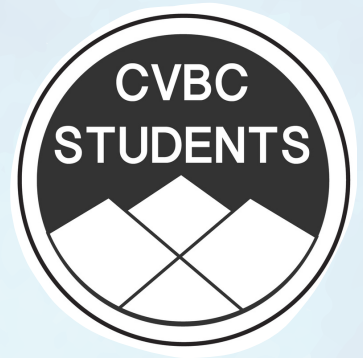
JUNIOR & TEEN SUMMER CAMPS

Student Prayer Advance | July 22-24

This is an incredible opportunity for our 7th-12th graders, and one of the most spiritually challenging events we have all year. This is not for the faint of heart! This year's advance will be held at Ferrum College with guest speaker Bryan Samms. This is one of the most spiritually impactful events we offer students all year. Registration is now open, please contact Pastor Stephen for more information.

Junior Camp | July 26-30

For all 8-12 year olds, this week-long overnight camp is fun, fun, fun! At Camp Eagle, your camper will experience action, laughter, a chance to make new friends, and most importantly, a lifelong spiritual impact. Pastor Stephen will be the guest speaker that week, so your camper will have the comfort of a familiar face nearby. The cost is \$350 and scholarships are available. With a scholarship, students pay a \$50 registration fee. Registration is now open, so contact Pastor Stephen for details!



UPCOMING EVENTS 2021

MAY

- 9 | Mother's Day
- 16 | Youth Emphasis Sunday
- 22 | Catalyst

JUNE

- 2 | Summer Family Nights begin
- 20 | Father's Day
- 21-26 | Teen Camp @ the Wilds

JULY

- 11-14 | Vacation Bible School
- 22-24 | Student Prayer Advance
- 26-30 | Junior Camp @ Camp Eagle

AUGUST

- 14 | Student Ministry Training Day

SEPTEMBER

- 5 | Homecoming Sunday
- 15-19 | Missions Conference
- 25 | Catalyst

OCTOBER

- 8-9 | Youth Camp-out
- 24 | Pastor Appreciation Sunday
- 27 | Trunk-or-Treat