

December 8, 2024

# Melbourne Church of Christ

*"A family of believers seeking to grow spiritually while sharing Jesus and serving others."*

## The Transformational Love of God

by Steve Porter

Our attempts at spiritual change through merit or willpower is easy to miss. Put simply, "We love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). The key to understanding this is to realize God's first love is not a one-and-done past event. We are meant to draw our life daily from his ongoing loving presence within us by the Holy Spirit, who cries out, "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6). Just as a fish was made to breathe water and the roots of a plant meant to draw life from the soil, people were meant to be "rooted and grounded" in God's agape love (Eph 3:17). As God says in Jeremiah, "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit" (Jer 17:7-8).

This paints a picture of those who place their confidence in the God of love, and that connection becomes a source of life that produces growth. Yet, when we distrust God and try to find life apart from his loving presence, disorder and distress are produced. When we try to soothe our distress apart from God, we make our problems worse. Again, Jeremiah writes, "This is what Yahweh says: 'What injustice did your fathers find in me, that they went far from me, and walked after emptiness and became empty?'" (Jer 2:5).

Jesus says that a healthy relationship with God is like nourishment from food. In resisting his temptation to turn stones into bread to satisfy his physical hunger, Jesus says, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). The mouth of God gives life-giving meaning that feeds the deepest hungers and desires of the human heart. Jesus describes his relationship with the Father as food: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (Jn 4:34). When Jesus lived his life in harmony with the loving presence of his Father, there was spiritual sustenance (cf. Jn 8:28-29) that nourished his soul like food nourishes the body....

The Encouragement Group meets on Thursday's at 9 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Come serve with us as we reach into our community!

Sunday Classes 9:15 a.m.  
Sunday Worship 10:10 a.m.  
Wed. Services 6:00 p.m.

Visitors, please take a card from the back of the pew, fill it out, and put it in the offering tray. We are glad you're here and want you to know that you're welcome in the family of Christ that meets here!

Listen to sermons at [Melbournechurchofchrist.com](http://Melbournechurchofchrist.com)

### Elders

Danny Brightwell 291-3439  
Alan Love 243-4608

David Brightwell 307-5714  
Shelby Qualls 291-7424

### Deacons

Joe Cooper 291-4653  
Dalton Grigg 421-6240

Rusty Treat 373-1884

### Minister

Ryan Lloyd 217-1109  
Melbourne CoC  
Box 267  
Melbourne, AR



- Ladies Christmas party on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Bring a dirty Santa gift and a finger food.
- The Nursing Home Christmas shopping list is on the table in the foyer. If you would like to select a name and purchase Christmas gifts there is a sign-up sheet. If you are not able to shop and would like to give money to provide gifts, see Betty or Ramona.
- Jeralene Love memorial contributions: Sally Adkisson, Bonnie Wyatt, Shelby & Ramona Qualls, Joyce Clark
- Diane Wyatt fell and broke her leg. She had surgery with metal implants. It looks like there is no damage to her recent hip replacement surgery. Please keep Diane, Doyle, and their family lifted in prayer.
- Debbie Crow passed away. Please keep Chuck, William, Lindsey, and Alicia in prayer.

**Opening Prayer**.....Shelby Qualls  
**Communion Reading**.....Joe Cooper  
**Closing Prayer**.....David Brightwell



**DECEMBER**

<b>ALAN LOVE</b>	<b>DAVIS LOVE</b>
<b>DAYLEE BRIGHTWELL</b>	<b>DANNY RUNION</b>

**JANUARY**

<b>JOE COOPER</b>	<b>SHAWN WORTHAM</b>
<b>CHIPPER LAMB</b>	<b>BRENT QUALLS</b>

....Jesus describes himself as the “bread of life” (Jn 6:35) and “living water.” Anyone who eats and drinks of him will never hunger or thirst again (Jn 4; cf. Jn 7:38). Just as nutrients in bread and water are required to grow and develop in healthy ways, there are nutrients in God’s loving presence that are essential for healthy growth and development. Indeed, “Apart from [abiding in] me,” Jesus says, “you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). When people are accepted, known, cared for, forgiven, listened to, noticed, understood, and so on, they tend to flourish socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. When people are neglected, demeaned, misunderstood, ignored, resented, pushed aside, and so on, they often struggle with anxiety, fear, distrust, self-hatred, depression, anger, and hiding. Human relationships are all too often tragically broken, yet we were meant to have flourishing relationships with God as well as with others. The love of God is the fuel that transforms us into people who routinely come to observe all that Jesus commanded, but this mere fact does not transform. True transformation occurs when we, like a vehicle that runs off of fuel, actually receive God’s love in the truth of who we are and learn to “keep [ourselves] in the love of God” (Jude 21). It seems obvious to state, nevertheless I am compelled to remind you: this is a risky process that takes time. So give yourself grace, God already has.

**Prayer List**

**Military:** Derek & Allison Love **Officers:** Steve & Sherry Davidson, Jamie Irvin, Tyler Webb, Caeden Wolfe, Blake Johnson

**Nursing Home:** Al Gillihan, Debbie Hoskinds, Imodean Webb, Sue Campbell, Barbara Watson, Bill Wiseman, Shirley Hill, Imogene James, Bill Roland

Boyde Martin	Wilma Cooper	Phyllis Gilbreath	Dorothy Teague
Ruby Patillo	Joe Guiltner	Cornelia Summers	Christie Haney
Joanna Smith	Wayne Crosby	Brooke Partin	Toby Weatherford
Sanyia Austin	Charlotte Cooper	John Young	Regenia Gillihan
Regina Master	Shawna Teegarden	John Ward	Joe Anne Hendrix
Gage Barns	Vance & Kaicey Little		

**December Birthdays**

Danny Brightwell 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Danny Runion 6 <sup>th</sup>	Callen Cooper 6 <sup>th</sup>
Roger Humphrey 10 <sup>th</sup>	Earlene Martz 11 <sup>th</sup>	Brad Teague 11 <sup>th</sup>
Kylea Morgan 14 <sup>th</sup>	Minnie Dutton 14 <sup>th</sup>	Shelby Qualls 14 <sup>th</sup>
Paulette Jubela 14 <sup>th</sup>	Kaden Williams 16 <sup>th</sup>	Tamra Brightwell 20 <sup>th</sup>
Shirley Guiltner 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Wanda Dill 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Rose Irvin 24 <sup>th</sup>
Darla Weaver 24 <sup>th</sup>	Deedra Watts 28 <sup>th</sup>	Abby Everett 28 <sup>th</sup>
Lavonia Roland 28 <sup>th</sup>	Brandy Kelly 29 <sup>th</sup>	

**December Anniversaries**

Bill & Lavonia Roland 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 Rhett & Kiley Carter 16<sup>th</sup>

**Dates to Remember**

Ladies Night Out 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month @ 6 p.m. bring a finger food.  
 Ladies Bible Study 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 6 p.m.  
 Men meet 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month for breakfast @ 8 a.m.  
 \*Family game night will resume at a later time.  
 Potluck every 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after services, please bring a dish.

**2 Corinthians 3:14-18, “The people’s minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant, Moses’ writings, is being read, the same veil covers their minds and hearts so they cannot understand the truth. This veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. All who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us (transforms us) more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” (NLT)**