

SMYRNA SCROLL

PASTOR'S CORNER

Scripture is clear that trials are inevitable and it is also clear that we should see them as gifts of God's grace. The reality that trials are real is apparent enough but how in the world are we supposed to consider them "pure joy"? The answer is that every difficulty we endure is purposeful. The purpose behind suffering is our spiritual growth and vitality.

Over my years of ministry, I have observed that trials can either bring out the best or the worst in a person. Suffering can lead to bitterness and despondency and even wandering from the faith. On the other hand, suffering can result in joy and hope and enduring peace. These things being so, the obvious question we need to ask is what is the difference? How is it that some are spiritually strengthened in suffering and others are wrecked?

It seems to me that James gives a clear explanation when he tells us that the purpose of suffering is testing our faith which leads to steadfastness. When we are put under stress, our faith is tested and when our faith is tested it grows. This means that those who suffer well suffer in faith and that faith grows to the point that the sufferer is more rooted in the truth or, to use James' term, more "steadfast".

How do we suffer in faith? Let me give you one answer... look for grace. God's grace is everywhere in the believer's life, but we often miss it if we aren't intentional. There are obvious graces (if I didn't receive that treatment I would have died or if he didn't come along to help me when my car broke down, I would still be stranded) but there are many more graces that are not so obvious and it is when we are intentional to look for those that we can find our faith strengthened as we see the hand of God and His provision in all things.

People who suffer well are constantly looking for God's provision. They find His hand in a kind nurse, an unexpected word of encouragement, a moment of solitude in difficult moments, a great result from a hard circumstance. In these instances (and many more), we are brought to see that God is actively working and that we are being cared for in the midst of suffering. So many of us pray for our suffering to end (and that is very appropriate) but, if we are not careful, we can be so intent on moving through the challenge that we miss all of the ways that God is making Himself known IN the hardship.

Let me attempt to land this plane by saying that my hope for you today is that you would intentionally look for God's grace and presence in all things. When you actively search for reasons to be thankful and reassured, you will see that God is doing more than you realized and, in the process, you will come to understand why James says we can consider it "pure joy" to endure trials. He is faithful my dear friends!

Blessings,
Pastor Aaron
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SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
building community • equipping believers • serving Jesus

MAY 2026:

- * 3rd - Discover Smyrna classes begin
- * 10th - Mother's Day - Child/Parent Dedication Sunday
- * 14th - Pastor's Book Club at 11:30 AM at church
- * 17th - Graduation Sunday
- * 18th - Deacon's meeting @ 6:30 PM
- * 20th - AWANA Closing Ceremony
- * 27th - Night of Worship @ 6:30PM

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Dear Smyrna Family,

This morning I had the joy of driving up to Richmond with my daughter Laura. She was sharing some challenges brought into her life by some poor decisions on the part of others. We all know what that feels like just like we all know that sometimes we have been the source of pain in someone else's life too. I decided it would be a good time to remind her of the truth about boundaries. By that I mean recognizing where your responsibilities stop and the other person's begin. In other words, we can only go so far in helping another person with their problems.

All of us would agree that as Christians, we have a responsibility to assist others when and where it is appropriate to do so in the eyes of God. We should never forget the parable of the Good Samaritan told in Luke 15. That truth should be balanced with other biblical truths. For example, the Bible also says in Galatians 6:7-8 that we reap what we sow. It is imperative that we not get in the way of that reality too when it is apparent that a biblical lesson needs to be learned. Reaping and sowing is not punishment dear ones. It is how God teaches the reality of natural consequences which are meant to encourage or deter certain behaviors for our good.

The problem exists when people aren't allowed to reap what they sow because someone else steps in and reaps the consequences for them. This law of reaping and sowing is often interrupted by people with no boundaries. This enables a person to continue irresponsible and harmful behavior. Ultimately, this hurts everyone around them and becomes a burr in everyone else's saddle. It is good for another person to understand their realm of responsibility and thus boundaries. All people need to understand that they do have power to agree with truth about God's natural laws and to submit to authority. Friends, we do no one favors when we allow them to live and make poor choices with no real consequences. That is parenting 101!

As far as being good Christians, please know that we should be sympathetic to the reality of sin, ignorance, poor upbringing, and the plethora of challenges that people face in life. Simultaneously, you need to know that there is a limit to what God expects of you. There truly is a line that you must draw around yourself and your family that says, "I stop here and you can't enter this place." If not, you will forever be worrying about everyone else's stupid decisions, trying to get them out of the latest mess, and ruining the peace and joy of your own life and maybe that of your families.

Boundaries do not mean that you are selfish. It is more likely that you are wise. Those who are kept out of your boundaries are sure to accuse you of selfishness, of being judgmental, and of being non-caring. Those things could be true, but if you have proper, biblical boundaries, they do not have to be true. The number 1 hallmark of Christian character is loving God and loving others. How does this square with boundaries? To love God and others is to love them according to God's standards and principles, not the worlds. It is to know that discipline and correction are demonstrations of God's love too. It is also how you uphold biblical truths like reaping and sowing or even a passage like Joshua 24:15 which says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." If another person or family chooses not to, that is on them not you and all the consequences that follow.

Yes indeed folks, love people but know when enough is enough. To maintain your own sanity and to protect yourself and your family, sometimes you have to draw boundaries that are intended to teach people they are responsible for themselves, and their crises are not your problems.

Devotedly,

Pastor Robert

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In his book *Revival and Revivalism*, Iain Murray traces the history of American Evangelicalism from 1750-1858. As he brings his readers along this journey, Murray illuminates interesting insights that helped shape the early American culture. His extensive research shows the strong Christian convictions that many faithful pastors, professors and college presidents lived by. These men believed that true revival could only come from God. "Revivals are not brought about by the fulfillment of 'conditions' any more than the conversion of a single individual is secured by any series of human actions. The 'special seasons of mercy' are determined in heaven." In contrast to manipulative tactics and overly emotional gimmicks, these men trusted the Spirit of God to be the agent of change.

I was encouraged by reading about the strong convictions these Christian men held to. "What they had in common was the conviction that God is always faithful to his Word, that Christ is risen and that the Holy Spirit has been given to ensure the advancement of his kingdom. But it may come as a surprise to find that these men were equally opposed to what was merely emotional, contrived or manipulated. They believed that strict adherence to Scripture is the only guard against what may be wrongly claimed as the work of God's Spirit." These are the same things that we hold to at Smyrna. These are truths that are regularly emphasized as part of the core of our foundational beliefs.

It gives me hope to know that we are in the same company as faithful saints from the early days of our country. It reminded me that my foundational beliefs must be strong if I want my other beliefs to be strong too. I ask you, as I also ask myself, a few questions to influence our thinking about how our beliefs motivate our daily living. How has the fact that Jesus, our substitutionary sacrifice, who has been raised from the dead given you hope lately? Have you recently considered the benefits we have from the Holy Spirit who resides in the lives of believers? Does the Bible, our standard of truth, influence you daily as you think, speak and live? Not too long ago in Sunday School we learned that we have been given a rich supply of spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). My encouragement for all of us is to continue pursuing Jesus daily and look for how He is working in our individual lives, His Church, and His kingdom.

Sincerely,

Daniel Watson

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Join Us for our Special Dedication Ceremony!

Child/Parent
Dedication
Ceremony

Sunday, May 10

during our 11:00 AM service

A Moment of Blessing, Love & Commitment

PLEASE LET AUDREY KNOW BY MAY 3RD IF YOUR FAMILY WOULD LIKE TO BE A PART OF THIS CEREMONY

CLASS OF
2026

There will be a special ceremony recognizing our graduating seniors on **Sunday, May 17th**

If you have a high school or college student graduating this year, please contact the church office by **Monday, May 11th**.

admin@smyrna1897.org or (804) 469-9363

YOUTH

CEDAR RANCH RETREAT

YOUTH CAMP

WORSHIP – STUDY – GROW



Facilities/Amenities:

- 68 Acre Ranch in Culpeper, VA
- Bunk Beds
- Three meals a day/Snacks
- Camp T-shirt
- Worship Center

Activities:

- Worship/ Bible Study/TAWG
- Nature Explore
- Swimming Pool/Pond
- Team Games
- Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, GAGA Pit

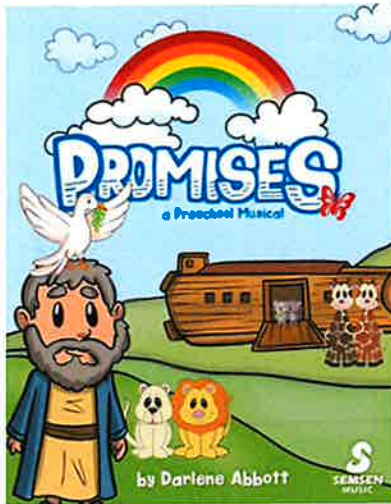
AUGUST 10-13

SAVE THE DATE

- ✓ Cost is \$275 per camper
- ✓ Registration opens May 1st, 2026
- ✓ Limited spots



Mark your calendars for these upcoming special events



Wee Singers
Preschool Choir Musical
Sunday, May 10th at 11:00 AM



The Night of Worship is a special opportunity to come together and worship with song, scripture and testimony as we end the spring sessions of Wednesday activities and look forward to summer. Choir rehearsals for all age groups will be paused until the fall beginning in June. The worship choir will continue to lead in song each Sunday throughout the summer, and we will begin our summer hymn series in the worship services. Those hymns will be announced in the June newsletter and be available on the Smyrna Sunday Playlist on Spotify.

It is a privilege to lead in worship each week! Do your best to prepare for worship during the week through Bible study and listening to and singing hymns, psalms and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19). This month's new song we will be learning is, "Come Let us Return to the Lord" by Matt Boswell and **Matt Papa (who will be with us in concert October 22!)**. Look it up on your favorite streaming service and be ready to sing with us!

Singing His Praises,
Melodie & Brad

Hello Families,

May always seems to arrive with a fresh burst of life. The days grow longer, the pace feels brighter, and there is a sense of anticipation as we begin looking toward summer. In Children's Ministry, this month feels full of gratitude, celebration, and excitement for what is ahead.

One of the true highlights of April was our Volunteer Spring Carnival Appreciation Day—and what a fantastic time it was! We enjoyed a great crowd, delicious food, plenty of laughter, and so much fun together. Most of all, it was a joy to celebrate the incredible people who serve our children so faithfully and to simply enjoy fellowship with one another. Moments like these remind us how deeply grateful we are for each volunteer and for the strong, caring community God has built within this ministry!

To every volunteer who gives their time, energy, kindness, and heart to this ministry: Thank You! Your consistency and care help create an environment where children feel loved, safe, and eager to return each week. Your impact is lasting, and we are deeply grateful for each of you!

May also gives us the opportunity to celebrate the wonderful mothers and mother figures in our church family. Thank you for the countless ways you nurture, guide, encourage, sacrifice, and love. Much of what you do may happen quietly behind the scenes, but its value cannot be measured. Your influence in the lives of children is a gift to both your families and our ministry!

As we celebrate this month, we are also looking ahead with growing excitement for **Vacation Bible School**. VBS is one of the most joy-filled and impactful weeks of the year—a special opportunity to share the gospel with children in creative, memorable, and meaningful ways. We are praying that hearts will be reached, friendships will be formed, and seeds of faith will be planted.

If you have seen the VBS Wishlist, thank you for considering how you might help. Every donated item helps us create an engaging and welcoming experience where children can have fun, build friendships, and hear the truth of Jesus in a way they will remember.

Thank you for continuing to trust us with your children. It is a privilege to serve your families and watch God at work in the next generation.

With gratitude and joy,

Erica Chaplin

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**WANT TO HELP
WITH VBS?**

But can't volunteer
for the week?

We need supplies for
decorating and crafts



Scan the code for our
Amazon 'wish list'
We also need coffee cans
and tall Pringles cans.

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
|  | | | | | 1 Analeigh Bobo Audrey Erdmann Cheryl Scott | 2 |
| 3 Anorah Peayhouse Ronald Snellings | 4 Billy Lewis | 5 Erica Chaplin Alan Kissner Stuart Reynolds, II | 6 Colton Adams Matthew Russell Nikki Russell | 7 Burke George Micah Perkinson | 8 Abby Hoffman Derek McCoig Tim Morini, Sr Linda Slayden | 9 David Gammon |
| 10 Child/Parent Dedication Sunday @ 11 AM  | 11 Ivy Lewis | 12 Boomer Dahowski John Glass Blake Montgomery | 13 | 14 Pastor's Book Club @ 11:30 AM at Smyrna Bryant Brewer Isaac Brewer Diane Droddy Brailyn Hoylman | 15 | 16 Allen Jones |
| 17 Graduation Sunday @ 11 AM  | 18 Deacons Meeting @ 6:30 PM Jane Byrd | 19 | 20 AWANA Closing Ceremony @ 6:30 PM Dennis Felter | 21 Jewell Barnhouse Aaron Bobo Diana Neville | 22 Melissa Taylor | 23 Roger Arnett Brian Caudle |
| 24 Aaron Long | 25  Lee Phillingane Amanda Polk Marian Rowland | 26 Emma Clay | 27 Night of Worship @ 6:30 PM Ashley Jones Berrimond Scott | 28 Peggy Turner | 29 Lane Dahowski Deni Harris Lynleigh Montgomery Lynn Rhodes | 30 |
| 31 Angie Chappell Nicole Collins Clara Green Marisol Joyner Karen Ladd Hutson Shifflett | SUNDAY SCHEDULE 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service | | | WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE** 5:30-6:15 - Dinner 6:00 - 6:30 - Kidz Choir 6:30 - 7:30 - Mid-Week Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 - AWANA, Youth, & Worship Ministry Practice 8:15 - 9:00 - Worship Ministry Practice **Last night of the above Wednesday activities is May 20th** | | |





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 www.smyrna1897.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Smyrna Baptist Church exists for the purpose of building up a community of fully equipped believers who give glory to God with every aspect of their lives.

May 2026 - Children's volunteer schedule

| DATE | 9:30 - 10:45 | | 10:45 - 12:15 | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| | CHECK-IN DESK | NURSERY | CHECK-IN DESK | NURSERY | 1 & 2'S | 3'S | CHILDREN'S CHURCH |
| 3 rd | Angie Adkins | Jessica Etheredge | Alison Adams | Becca & John Mize | Brooke & Nathan Daniels | Christy George | Sarah Mae Wamsley |
| 10 th | Jason Collins | Gina Perkinson | Amanda Joyner | Johanna Rowland | | Sarah Brewer | |
| 17 th | Kim Davis | Melissa Taylor | Kim Davis | Leah Pierce | Lindsay & Hucky Miller | Kristin & John Clay | Ashley & Ricky Elder |
| 24 th | Scotty Leshar | Holly McCaffity | Audrey Erdmann | Mary Tucker | Cheryl Joyner | Jennifer Miller | Lori & William Chappell |
| 31 st | Pam Kissner | Krista Jones | Erica Chaplin | Laura Hoyle | 5th Sunday Family Worship - No children's classes today - only nursery available | | |

SS Class Dinner Schedule



- ◇ 6th - Families in Fellowship
- ◇ 13th - Refocus on Christ
- ◇ 20th - Growing Families*

*This is the last of the SS class dinners until September.

We will be hosting 'Dinner on the Grounds' for the summer (weather permitting) on June 24, July 29, & August 19.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MAY 2026
AT A GLANCE

- 10 SUNDAY** CHILD/PARENT DEDICATION SUNDAY
- 17 SUNDAY** GRADUATION SUNDAY
- 20 WEDNESDAY** AWANA CLOSING CEREMONY
- 27 WEDNESDAY** NIGHT OF WORSHIP @ 6:30 PM

If you have any question, please feel free to contact the office at (804) 469-9363