

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

GIVE THANKS!



Thanks to Mrs. Ollis's
8th grade Bowman
class.



"AUTUMN"

The air becomes bitter, night is darker
The leaves become amber and crimson until they perish
Phantoms and occultists come alive
Potatoes are harvested
Apples are bobbed at galas.

Foddershock and scarecrows on display
Football games are played
This is the time of pumpkin spice and everything nice
Stories are told and houses are haunted
Pumpkin spice lattes and hot chocolate are essential.

The aroma of the air is crisp and clean
The sky becomes darker as the days become shorter
The wind blows the wild leaves, rustling them into a frenzy
Autumn brings us both happiness and sadness, for we say
goodbye to summer and hello to approaching winter.

By: Bailey Brinkley



FALL IS HERE

The colorful leaves of fall float to the ground,
orange, crimson, brown

Thanksgiving and halloween are approaching
The weather takes a turn bringing chills and frost
The fall festivals begin, apple bobbing, and ghost stories alike

Mums start to come alive
Scarecrows come out of hiding

Pumpkins carved, corn turns into foddershock
Frosty air begins to blow
Squirrels running, hiding, collecting for the winter

Families join together, feasting, telling stories
of old and making new ones..... Fall.

By: Reuben Rathbone

AUTUMN

Autumn, a fruitful and wondrous time of year,
if not a bit spooky.
The smell of pumpkin spice wafting in the air,
Spectors roaming in the night
but don't be scared they're not looking to cause a fright!

The air can be warm or brisk, but who doesn't
like a surprise!
A great time for family and friends, young and old.
Gathering together and observing Thanksgiving
whilst watching football on the TV.

The leaves will turn crimson, orange and brown
as they are falling to the ground,
But do not fear for they will be back next year.
But alas, all good things must come to an end,
As we say goodbye to Autumn.....
in hopes we will see it again.

By: Anthony Greene




"AUTUMN"

Just after summer she arrives sudden and brief as a gust of wind
only passing through momentarily and with her, beauty unbe-
knownst to other seasons the trees letting go of their weight
offering gorgeous visibility of scarlet, xanthous, and titan.


Children come out to revel and bask in her causatum bundled
up ever so slight so the brisk air will not bite love and
laughter all around, never a frown boundless goodies
and treats to share living happily without a care
giving us all the joy she can before she must depart.

So cherish her while she is here she will not tarry long
admire the divine days she provides with the foliage so
kaleidoscopic and the larder almost too good to eat the short
season of days with immeasurable bliss.

By: Peighton Robison



SATURDAY, 2:47 PM



THURSDAY, 7:44 AM



WEDNESDAY, 6:15 PM



MONDAY, 7:02 AM

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"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-0660
altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

Sunday School - 10:00am
Worship - 11:00am
Sunday Evening - 7:00pm
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00pm
1st & 3rd Sunday
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)
2nd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00pm

"A Christ-Centered,
Bible Believing Church"

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc3@bellsouth.net
828-765-7446

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Sunday School - 10:00am
Sunday Worship - 11:00am
Choir Wednesday - 7:00pm

The mission of Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is to be a beacon on a hill spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through: Worship, Fellowship, Education, and Nurturing Service

Horizon Church

500 East Fleming Drive
Morganton, NC
828-437-1212

**Pastors: Senior Pastor
Timothy Fortune &
Associate Pastor Mike Stroud**

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Wednesday 6:30PM

www.myhorizonchurch.org
Transforming Lives Through
The Power of Jesus Christ!

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-765-6919
www.plumtreechurch.com

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreechurch.com

Sunday School 9:45 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone (828) 765-2224

Sunday Mass 9:00 am
Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-4:00pm

Pine Branch Baptist Church

48 Church Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 765-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

Sunday School • 9:45-10:40am
Worship Service • 10:45am
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

A Bible-believing Fellowship
Loving God and Loving People

First Advent Christian Church

211 Lenoir Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-8206
www.fccmorganton.org

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**

pbradshawfccmorganton@gmail.com

Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Meal 5:30PM -
Meeting 6:30PM
Adult Bible Study/Prayer 6:30PM
Choir Practice 7:15PM
Sat. Band Practice 4:30PM

Preaching Christ Crucified, Risen
and Coming Again!

The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

TBCWNC.org

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Wednesday Service 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-3:00PM

Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

280 Chapel St.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-6590
www.berrychapelbaptist.com

Pastor - Steve Williams

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Care Meal/
Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening
Service 7:00 PM

Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-684-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer & Proclaim -
7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren

1717 Harrell Hill Road
Bakersville, NC
(828)-458-1947

Pastor: John Smith

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship - 11:00 am

We are a small, Christ-centered family of believers and would love to share God's Word and love with you and yours!

Banner Elk United Methodist Church

486 College Dr.
Banner Elk, NC
(828) 963-6640

Reverend Dan Brubaker

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Contemporary Service - 9:40 am
Traditional Worship Service - 11:00 am
AA Open Step Meeting - Mon. 7 pm
AA Closed Big Book Meeting - Wed. 7pm
UMW & UMM Meeting - 2nd Sat. 10:00 am
English Classes - Tues. & Thurs. 6 - 9 pm

Bakersville United Methodist Church

119 S. Mitchell Avenue
Bakersville, NC 28705
828-765-9015

**Pastors -
Dr. Louis H. Woodard, &
Rev. Gene Lanier**

Sunday School 11:00 AM
Morning Worship 10:00 AM

"Come grow with us"

Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am
Morning Worship 11:00am
Sunday evening 6:30pm
Wednesday:
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
Mid-week worship 7:00pm
"That Mitchell County
may know Christ"

Bear Creek Baptist Church

327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.com

Reverend Bruce Cannon

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:45 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM

"For God so loved the world, he
gave his only Son..."

West Burnsville Baptist Church SB

222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-682-3990

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service: 10:50 a.m.
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.

Church vision: To become passionate followers and servants of Jesus Christ while ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of our church and community.

Burkemont Baptist Church

4668 Burkemont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. David Mills, Sr. Pastor

8:30am - Early Worship
9:45am - Sunday School
11:00am - Worship
6:00pm - Evening Worship

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-9411
www.sprucepinefbc.com
www.spfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

Sunday School - 9:45 am
Sunday Worship - 8:30 and 11:00 am
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving
God, Submitting to God!

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

2907d US Hwy 70 E
Morganton, NC
828-475-2040

Pastor Barry MaHorney

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study-10:00am
Sabbath Worship - 11:30am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer &
Proclaim - 7:00pm
www.greatopesda.com

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Mica, NC 28755
(828)-675-8284
www.fcn.org
www.fcnradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00pm
"The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord:
And he delighteth in his way."
Psalm 37:23

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Billy Graham Evangelical Association

Hate

By Franklin Graham

I recently had the privilege to pray for our nation and its leaders at a gathering led by President Donald Trump.

I asked for God's help and wisdom for our president and Vice President Mike Pence, along with our congressmen as they attempt to help steer our troubled country through some very turbulent times.

America has flaunted its sexual immorality to the world. We've neglected many of the poor and suffering and are guilty of much injustice, pride and self-indulgence. We are broken spiritually, adrift morally and divided politically and racially—following whichever direction the bankrupt culture seems to drive us.

Sadly, the voices of hate have grown increasingly loud and insulting, and it was my prayer then, and now that God would silence these voices like he shut the mouths of the lions when Daniel was hurled into the den.

While those hateful voices have been raised on both sides of the political aisle, we must realize that ultimately, what is transpiring in our nation is an increasing hatred of God, His Word and His ways.

As we learn to love righteousness and hate sin, we must never, ever, turn to hating our fellow man.

In my lifetime, I have never seen such blatant and incessant animosity toward Christ and His followers. We should not be surprised, because the Scripture tells us that if they hated the Lord Jesus Christ, they surely would despise those who worship and serve Him.

I think of the recent ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of Bremerton, Wash., high school football coach Joe Kennedy. For eight years, Coach Kennedy took a knee and prayed silently after games. But in 2015, he was suspended by the school district when he refused to discontinue his prayers, and his contract was not renewed.

The federal appeals court said in their appalling ruling: "When Kennedy knelt and prayed on the 50-yard line immediately after games, while in view of students and parents, he spoke as a public employee ... and his speech, therefore was constitutionally unprotected."

Can you believe it? A coach, public or parochial, is not allowed to simply bow and silently pray because it might offend someone? Not only that, but in the eyes of the court this violates the First Amendment, which is supposed to guarantee and protect our religious freedom! As First Liberty Institute, which defended Coach Kennedy, said: "[This] is simply wrong. It is not American, and it is not the America contemplated by our Constitution."

So, let's be clear. While believers should never raise voices of hate against anyone, the real object of hate in our nation (that has been so blessed by God) is none other than God Himself. What has been historically called good and righteous is now called evil, and what was evil is now called good. The Bible says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20).

In what I can only describe as unbelievable, the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala., has labeled a number of Christian organizations—such as the Family Research Council led by my friend Tony Perkins, and D. James Kennedy Ministries—hate organizations simply because they hold to the teachings of the Bible on key social issues like same-sex marriage. Powerful contributors to the SPLC include Apple President Tim Cook and financial services giant J.P. Morgan. The leftist-progressive media frequently reference the SPLC in their reporting.

The only things I believe the Bible says we should hate are the very things God hates:

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

"Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good" (Romans 12:9).

"The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate" (Proverbs 8:13).

"The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence" (Psalm 11:5).

"O you who love the Lord, hate evil!" (Psalm 97:10).

However, as we learn to love righteousness and hate sin, we must never, ever, turn to hating our fellow man. "Whoever hates his brother is in the darkness ... and does not know where he is going" (1 John 2:11); "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15).

So, while the world ratchets up its contempt and cruelty, especially toward disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called not to return evil for evil, or insult for insult (1 Peter 3:9). Instead, we are to love our enemies and pray for those who launch attacks against us.

Jesus said, "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed" (John 3:19-20).

We need to pray for those who hate the Gospel, those who hate the Name of Jesus, those who hate His followers—that they will come out of their self-imposed darkness and into the light of God's forgiveness through faith and repentance in Christ, who gave Himself for our sins.

The love of Jesus is the supreme antidote against the hate of our culture. It is the love that saved us from our iniquities and will save whomever will call on His Name.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

Reverend Franklin Graham is President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association and of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization.



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Hospice Choices

*Brent Price, Outreach Programs Coordinator
Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge*

Over the past few years several new hospice providers have begun to serve our area. Many of these agencies are not rooted in our communities. Some of them are not clear regarding their identity and simply tell patients, "We are Hospice." You and your families have a right by law to choose your own hospice provider. Most importantly, you need to understand that all hospice providers are not the same. It can become confusing.

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge has served our community for twenty-five years. We continue to operate as a non-profit organization and believe that Non-profit Hospices are the back-bone of quality care. Contrary to the mindset of corporate, for-profit hospices we do not believe that hospice is big business. Patients and families always come first.

Throughout Mitchell, Avery and Yancey counties our nurses, certified nursing assistants, social workers and chaplains are assigned to each individual patient. Nursing services are provided round-the-clock. Volunteers are available to allow care-givers time to rest or run errands and to provide patients with companionship.

Our team is a tightly knit group of persons who have answered a call to serve in a field that requires considerable strength, grace and above all, faith. Our low staff turn-over rate reflects our belief that those who serve our community are uniquely called to perform the work God has placed in their hearts.

Through the care we have provided to several generations our promise has proven to be true and faithful. It is our desire to continue providing the highest quality of care to you and your loved ones for many years to come.

If you would like for us to care for your loved one, ask for us by name--- Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge. We are proud to serve each and every person who entrusts us with providing the highest quality of care possible.



**Hospice and Palliative
Care of the Blue Ridge, Inc.**
Formerly Hospice of Mitchell

Brett Loftis to Teach Advocacy Workshop

*By Susan Larson
Mitchell County*



Leaders in area nonprofit organizations are often called on to advocate on behalf of their organization, whether to the elected officials and the administrators who make the policies that affect their clients or to potential funders. Brett Loftis, CEO of The Crossnore School, and a highly suc-



cessful advocate on issues affecting children, will be the presenter for a WNC Nonprofit Pathways lunch-and-learn workshop "Effective Advocacy" on Tuesday, November 14, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00

p.m. at the ARC, upstairs of the TRAC Gallery at 269 Oak Avenue in Spruce Pine. The cost is \$20 for the first registrant from an organization and \$15 each for up to three more from the same organization. Lunch is included in the fee.

Participants will learn how to make an impact on the public policies that affect the people their nonprofits serve. Using examples from participants, Loftis will distinguish between legislative and administrative advocacy. Nonprofit leaders will leave the workshop with the knowledge to craft their own public policy, the confidence to use their own voice to implement it, and the assurance that they will not be jeopardizing their nonprofit status when they do.

Brett Loftis, J.D., is the CEO of The Crossnore School and previously was the ED of Charlotte's Council for Children's Rights. He has spent over two decades serving children in need. Early in his career he worked in a residential program for at-risk children, served as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem and worked as a youth minister. After graduating from law school, he became a child advocate attorney and nonprofit executive. He was Executive Director of Charlotte's Council for Children's Rights before joining The Crossnore School in 2013.



Brett Loftis, J.D.

His workshop on advocacy is intended for nonprofit organizations of any size and is structured both for individual attendees and for teams from the same nonprofit. For a link to register for the workshop, please send an email to sjanelarson@gmail.com or call Susan Larson at 828-765-2652.

Susan Larson coordinates programs of WNC Nonprofit Pathways in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties. She lives in Mitchell County with her husband, retired physician David Larson.

Do you have a joint replacement surgery scheduled? The Brian Center Spruce Pine invites you to reserve a room with us ahead of time. Call us a week before surgery to tour the building, meet our therapy staff and see where you will staying. Its our goal to provide a smooth transition from the hospital to our building and get you back home as quickly as possible. Contact Karen McDowell @ (828)765-7312 or Heather Steuer @ (828)284-8362 to make your appointment today.

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Lessons About Abortion From Abraham's Test Of Faith

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Genesis chapter 22 is one of the greatest chapters in the entire Bible. It records the supreme test of Abraham's faith. God called upon his servant to sacrifice what was dearest to his heart – his own beloved son Isaac. The circumstances seemed to shatter all of Abraham's hopes for the future.

Atheists and skeptics have commonly referred to this biblical account as proof that the God of Scripture is monstrous, cruel, and immoral. "What kind of God would require a father to slaughter his own son?" they accusingly ask.

It must be remembered that Abraham would have been familiar with human sacrifice. In his day, it was practiced by the godless people that lived around him, and so the command in itself wouldn't have been a real shock to him.

With respect to the Divine aspect of the command, God may choose to accommodate the moral and spiritual standards of a certain dispensation without endorsing them, but instead, use it to demonstrate his own will. God knew the end from the very start, and it was never his intention that Isaac should actually be sacrificed. What God really desired from Abraham was his implicit trust. Moreover, God used Abraham's test as a means of differentiating himself from the other gods of the world in relation to human sacrifice.

W.H. Griffith Thomas in his commentary on Genesis 22 rightly contends, "By this action God bore unmistakable testimony to the error of the heathen as to human sacrifices, and it is a striking fact that from this time forward the Jews never adopted the practice of human sacrifices until they had sunk to the level of the heathen around them."

The Bible records Israel's sad descent into the practice of child-sacrifice. In the name of Molech, the god of the Ammonites, an idol made of bronze that outstretched his heated red-hot arms, the Israelites placed their children to die an unspeakable death.

The book of I Kings says even King Solomon was drawn away from God and into the idol worship of other nations, which included child-sacrifice. According to 2 Kings, Israel's wicked King Manasseh offered his son as a sacrifice. The prophet Jeremiah noted that the evil of human sacrifice was one of the reasons the Lord punished the Israelites by sending them into Babylonian captivity.

Of course, one might be tempted to believe enlightened modern nations like our own are far above such atrocities, but that assessment would be terribly wrong. In America alone, approximately 60 million children have been offered to the idols of convenience, immorality, the supremacy of self, a person's so-called right to privacy, women's equality, etc. These little babies were ripped and dismembered by the abortionist's knife with only today's scientific expertise distinguishing them from the blades of the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Aztecs, the Incas, and the Druids of Europe.

We enfold ourselves as having moved forward, when in fact, we have regressed to the very conduct God condemned millennia ago and which also precipitated his judgment.

But I suggest there is still one other lesson to be seen in the testing of Abraham's faith. Like Abraham, God desires our unreserved trust when we find ourselves in seemingly impossible situations – confusing situations where everything looks incredibly bleak with no good outcome likely – situations that may require the loss of some prized possession, promise, or possibility. It is in such moments God is closest to us and able to perfectly provide.

The text in Genesis indicates Abraham's faith didn't falter even when in preparation to obey God's command his son asked him, "Father, I see the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide." Indeed God did provide by staying Abraham's hand from sacrificing Isaac and producing a ram caught in a thicket by the horns.

So the Bible says Abraham named the place where the sacrifice was to occur, Jehovah-Jireh, which means "The Lord will provide."

I think it's significant that some of the most common reasons given for a woman to have an abortion – some of the most common talking points in favor of the idolatrous practice of contemporary child-sacrifice – are that the woman can't afford to take care of the child, or she isn't in the position mentally, physically, and emotionally to provide for it.

A few years ago, I was talking with a troubled young woman who mentioned some of these factors in weighing whether she would have an abortion. Urging her not to follow through with the procedure, I said, "What God wants from you now is faith. Don't let your trust in him waver. You must know that He is more than able to supply every need for both you and your unborn child. God will never order what he can't pay for."

Fortunately, the young woman listened to that counsel and today she and her son are doing quite well.

There are numerous alternatives to abortion available and sometimes the ones suggested may not seem to fit. Nevertheless, there is always God who is more than ready to reward those that diligently seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

John E. Zoller has beautifully written, "All God's testings have a purpose/Someday you will see the light/All he asks is that you trust Him/Walk by faith and not by sight/Do not fear when doubts beset you/Just remember he is near/He will never, never



leave you/He will always, always hear."

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-0606



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Do You Hear What I Hear?

By Jody Griffin
Mitchell and Avery Counties

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12, KJV)

Strong winds and intense rains recently hammered the area as remnants of a hurricane made their way north. Then almost suddenly, the colors of Fall burst on the scene. And oh the beauty to behold! No wonder people travel from far away to come to the little corner of creation that we call home. Who can look around at such a glorious sight and not be filled with awe?

I often contemplate the construction of two, yes two Correctional Institutions in such close proximity to one another. And to think they would build them "smack dab" in the middle of this most beautiful setting! Then one day as I drove in it occurred to me that this is the ideal placement! After all, where else could a man who has found himself in prison, be able to have an up close, panoramic view of the Mighty Hand of God?

I hear it a lot. Statements like, "I believe the Lord wanted me here, Chaplain. God definitely has my attention!" And, "I didn't want to come to this camp... But look around Chap! God is showing off around here and telling me that I ain't alone here. The Lord is with me!"

Maybe I'm still new to the region, but many times I wonder if those who have been here all of their lives can still see the images of God's Hand at work revealing Love through creative artistry.



Bright colors and varied shapes of leaves flutter in the breeze and dance to some Divine choreography. So(ME) people grumble at the soon to be avalanche of leaves descending on their lawns. But for today, for the moment, eyes and hearts are drawn to the display.

Then, an Epiphany! Truth becomes crystal clear as the words of Holy Scripture leap from the pages of God's Word! That sound you hear isn't simply leaves rustling in the wind...what you hear is the applause of Creation at the Works of the Creator!

Last month we asked the question, "Do you see what I see?" This month I wonder,

"Do you hear what I hear?" There is a concert of praise all around us. It is found with the sound of clapping and the voices of joyful worship!

High Country Prison Ministry serves as the sponsor for the Community Funded Chaplain at Avery Mitchell Correctional. We rely on the generosity of individuals and churches to keep the melodies of God heard by those contained within these walls. Will you help us share the Glory found in the praises to the Lord?

Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community Funded Chaplain at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.



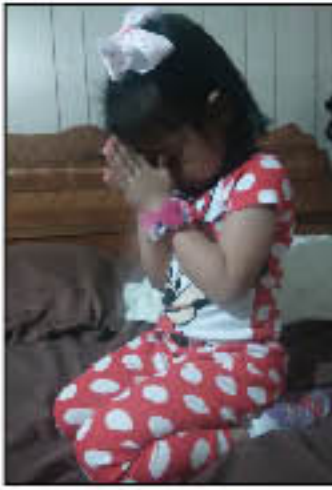
By Barbara Harrell

This month I would like to share with you a most touching communication I received from a family who have been visiting in the US for a year. We are so quick to judge even our citizens, but even more so of people who are different from us. I find that I am more and more focused on prayer for the unity of the body of Christ. I think that means all Christians who believe Jesus came from God, was crucified, and rose from the dead to bring salvation to a lost world.



I wanted to leave this article in its original writing, just as it is. Listen with a loving heart.

I am a mother of a four year old girl who sings in different churches here in North Carolina and in some states here in US. If possible, I want her to be published in your newspaper to tell everyone thank you so much for their warm welcome. My family and I are first time to be in the US. We thanked and praise God for what He has done for us. My daughter came in US at the age of 3 y.o. She celebrated her birthday here in US last May 3. She left our country when she was 3, now she is returning at the age of 4. She never fear singing for the Lord. She sings these 6 songs all at the same time whenever we go to churches after churches. She sings: "Jesus loves me, Read your Bible, Jesus loves the little children, This little light of mine, I will make you fishers of men and I got a joy, joy, down in my heart". She loves quoting this verse "1 John 1:8" before singing. To God be All the Glory! I am writing to tell everyone how thankful we are and we are bless by your people here in America. We will always remember everyone in our prayers and hearts. My daughter's name is Roshe Joan Hunt Rodrigo Galvez, but everyone calls her RJ. She sings in churches, baptism, nursing home and whenever there's a chance, she will sing no matter what place or time, she loves telling people that she loves Jesus and Jesus is in her heart. At her young age, she bless many people including us, her parents. We praise God for her.



We will be leaving this Saturday and we don't know if we were able to visit US again. My parents (Jun and Joan Rodrigo) live here and they



are missionaries here in US. Proverbs 22:6 KJV Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. God Bless, Mrs. Deanne Galvez

This precious family is now in the Philippines. Commit to pray with me for this family as they share the Word of God!

Barbara Harrell, loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Part owner Blue Ridge Christian News.



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Sharing the Love

By Doug Harrell

The Bible is full of scriptures about love, sharing, and caring for each other. According to Jesus, the first great commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and might and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40 KJV



Where do we really start with love in our lives? Probably the first real experience we have is with a mother's love for us as a child. I know that there are situations where this is not true and that must be one of the greatest tragedies in life for a child to not experience this love from the beginning. I know in many orphanages around the world this takes place and it mars the child for life. It is kind of like a baby calf that does not get to suck the mama cow when it is first born and to get the colostrum milk that is so critical to health of the newborn calf. Most calves just will not make it without this and if they do they are usually stunted in growth their entire lives. I know of examples where people have adopted children that were orphaned at birth and the majority of the time there are critical problems to be faced with those children later on no matter how much love is poured into their lives at a later time.

When we are adults and start a family are we aware of how critical it is that this love be shown and the ways we should show it? Sometimes I look around and wonder if we really do understand the roll of parent as God planned it. None of us are perfect, but it is critical that we constantly work on the love. The first and most important love in our lives needs to be for the Lord Jesus Christ, our loving Savior, for without this life is nothing at all. The next great love for a married person should be the love for our spouse. I know, sometimes that is not easy either. I don't think that any married couple can truly live a life together without at least feeling miffed with the other at some point in the relationship. From a child's viewpoint, after the love of its parents for the child itself, the love of the parent for each other is of vital importance. Once the child is of the age of understanding, they need to see and experience the fact that mother and daddy love each other without fail. The fact that their love for each other is even stronger than the love for the child needs to be evident. I have found that it was critical for me to tell my wife daily how much I love her. This may sound a little crazy, but I think this does two things. The first is that it reaffirms to her that the love for her is there, and it reminds me that I should always be loving her. There are always challenges in life of all kinds and we need to remind ourselves of our vows to each other and the Lord daily.

The love for the children is another thing altogether. So many people try to teach that we are to be our children's best friend and not hurt their little feelings and ego's. This is not scriptural at all, we are to love, guide and admonish our children. God's word teaches us that there are results for our behavior and there are consequences for our behavior. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Romans 15:14 KJV. We are promised in Proverbs that if we will teach a child the way he should go, in his old age he will be true to that teaching. We are to be the example of love, compassion and strength to our children. We cannot tell them one thing and do another. Our talk talks but our walk talks louder than our talk talks as the song says. As parents of 5, grandparents of 21 and soon to be great grandparent to 7, I have seen many examples of good and some not so good, even in the worst of times, we must be true to the Word and not accept as correct, incorrect behavior, but we must always love the child and make sure that they know that. If we have raised them correctly, they will already know that we are not happy with the wrong behavior, and they will also know that our love is like unto that of God's love for us, undying! God Bless and Happy Thanksgiving.

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.



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"So Much to Thank Him For"

By Jacob Willis
Yancey County



Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. It is a time to name who and what we are thankful for. Being thankful is a Biblical idea. When we are thankful we access the fruits of the Spirit, mainly joy and peace. Thanking God is something that should begin our prayer and end our prayer each day. In this article I would like to use the acrostic THANKS, to name a few things Christians everywhere should be thankful for.

Truth of God's word. We can rest assured that God's word is true and living. It is God's standard and gives us practical guidelines to live our lives by. It tells the story of Jesus and God's grace. It gives hope to the hopeless and grace to all who read it. It is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. We should be thankful for God's guidance and strength.

Help from the Holy Spirit. There are things in life that are too hard for us. They are beyond our ability to cope with. The Holy Spirit is our comforter. He is a very present help in times of trouble. He illuminates our path and guides us in paths of righteousness.

Answers to prayer. When we pray to God, we are taking our cares to someone who can do something about it. God loves us and answers prayers according to His will and His purpose. That is because He knows what is best for us. I am thankful He answers prayers. I am thankful sometimes His answer is no. I am thankful His answer is always best for me.

Needs that keep us humble, are something to thank God for. Sometimes we view our own inadequacies as weakness. We view the sin that so easily besets us as fatal. We look around and see more of our needs: financial, physical, or mental as debilitating, but these are what God uses to keep us humble. These needs in our lives drives us to our knees and there we find strength. The needs in our lives draw us closer to God.

King who is coming back. Jesus is coming back. In a world of uncertainty and fear, one thing is sure, Jesus is coming. We will live with Him forever in a world that knows no fear or pain.

Salvation full and free. Salvation bought by the blood of Jesus to save us. We can't earn it. We don't deserve it, but He offers it freely to those who believe. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

We have so much to thank Him for, so much to praise Him for, for you see He has been so GOOD to me.

Jacob Willis is an ordained pastor and Bereavement Coordinator for Yancey County Hospice. You may contact him at jacobw@hospiceofyancey.org.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift
is from above, and cometh down from
the Father of lights, with whom is no
variableness, neither shadow of turning.
James 1:17*



God Bless You and Yours this Thanksgiving Season!

Burke United Christian Ministries

Holiday Plans

By David Burleson
Burke County

As the holidays approach, the needs in our community increase. Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) and our team of volunteers are in the process of making plans to meet those needs.

One need we are working to meet is providing a Thanksgiving meal. We need volunteers from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day to prep the meal, cook the meal, provide support in the dining room and clean up after the meal. Also, if anyone would like to donate a fully cooked or uncooked turkey, please deliver them to BUCM before November 21. As you can see, there is a job and task for everyone. If you are interested in volunteering or donating items for our annual Thanksgiving meal, please call Elizabeth Norris at (828) 433-8075, ext. 237. Thanksgiving is a perfect day to show how thankful you are for everything you have by serving others!

During the holidays one group that can get overlooked is our senior citizens. Annually, BUCM coordinates a Senior Santa program. Last Christmas, BUCM gave out over 200 Senior Santa bags. This is a ministry that supports those in our community who many times are living alone with few family members to support them. Our senior adults' smiles warm the hearts of staff and volunteers alike as they receive a bag filled with goodies. BUCM is collecting and preparing to give out Senior Santa bags again this year. Please consider donating some of the following items before November 10:

- Toiletry Items (lotion, shampoo, soap, etc.)
- Hats, Gloves, Socks
- Crosswords, Word Searches, Jigsaw Puzzles
- Postage Stamps
- Coffee, Tea Bags, Hot Chocolate
- Apple Sauce, Pudding, Sweet Treats
- Snacks, Crackers
- Note Cards, Stationary, Pens
- Tissues
- Other Items Seniors Might Enjoy

Everyone is invited to participate in the first annual BUCM Rivalry Run to Fight Hunger on Saturday, December 9 at 9 a.m. This inaugural event includes a 5K Run on the Freedom High School Cross Country Trail and a one mile fun run for children under the age of 14 on the track at Freedom Park. The 5K will be a chip-timed event and trophies will be awarded for best times for ages 15 to 80+. Adults and children will enjoy the safety and the healthy competition this race will provide and trophies will be award for best times with age breaks every 5 years.

Our hope is that this race will capture the rivalry between our four high schools and we can use this good-natured competition to help our community. Supporters of the high schools plus the "party crashers" (those with no affiliation to a Burke County High School) can earn points for the school of their choice by running, bringing non-perishable food, donating gently used clothes or making a monetary contribution. The school with the most points will receive a traveling trophy to display for one year. Registration before November 24 is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 14 and younger. Runners who register before November 24 will receive a specially designed long sleeve T-shirt. Registration after November 24 will be \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 14 and under. To register go to the Burke United Christian Ministries at www.bucm.net for more information. We are very fortunate to have a community that cares about others and is willing to demonstrate that care through service.

The Burke United Christian Ministries are partnering with the North Carolina Hunters for the Hungry and local hunters to provide fresh venison to be used to feed the hungry. Local hunters can take their deer to Phillips Meat Processing at 48 View Street in Marion, North Carolina for processing. There is no expense to the hunter or to BUCM. The hunter only needs to call ahead and bring the deer by Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. If you are a hunter or know a hunter, please consider helping the hungry during hunting season.

Here are a some more ways to support the clients of Burke United Christian Ministries as the holidays approach:



- 2 outfits for a child \$25
- Groceries for a family for a month \$100
- Baby items (diapers, formula, wipes) \$75
- Coats for a family of 4 \$100
- Underwear for a family of four \$50
- Socks and shoes for a family of 4 \$100
- Tent for the homeless \$20
- Toiletries for a month \$100
- Towels and washcloths for 10 people \$ 100
- Blankets for the homeless \$75
- Pay Electric Bill for a family for one month \$150
- Pay Water Bill for 2 families for one month \$100
- Provide food for the Soup Kitchen for a week \$500
- Supply 500 lbs. of food \$200
- Volunteer 5 hours of your time once a month FREE

Without the support of our supporters, volunteers and sustaining churches, the ministry of BUCM could not exist. This group of dedicated and committed servants consistently meet the needs of those in our community who need a hand up. They truly understand the words of the writer of Hebrews when he wrote: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews 13:16)

Please don't hesitate to share any idea or ask any question you might have concerning the ministry of BUCM. Feel free to email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com or call at (828) 433-8075. I would also encourage you to participate in one of our Brunch and Tours which are held the third Friday of each month at 10 a.m. Thank you for your prayers for our ministry and clients!



David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries

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Christmas Pageant

By Wanda Harding
Yancey County

Begin your Christmas season with your eyes on the reason for the season! "Jesus, King of Kings," the 17th Annual West Burnsville Baptist Church Christmas Pageant will be presented this year beginning Thursday, November 30 at 7 PM. Performances continue December 1 and 2 at 7 PM and Sunday, December 3 at 3 PM. The pageant includes favorite Christmas carols and the story of Jesus presented in drama and music. Don't miss this opportunity to be reminded of what happened when Jesus came to earth as a man! Reservations for groups of six or more may be made by calling the church office at 828-682-3990. Admission is free!



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Hope

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County



Thanks for joining me for another publication of "The Blue Ridge Christian News" and my article "The Inspiring Word".

Over the past couple of months our world has experienced tremendous grief and heartache. Natural disasters, violence and terrorism have inflicted a great deal of pain and suffering on our friends, family and neighbors. That is only part of what is on my heart this month. You see, as a bi-vocational pastor working a full-time job with the NC prison system I spend most every day in the presence of men and women on both sides of the prison bars. Then, there is my work as a pastor. I meet countless people every week through ministry and counseling. They all have concerns, questions, even fears and they all are looking for answers. We can say, I believe truthfully, we all find ourselves searching for HOPE!

Beginning this month, I want to begin a series of articles written to bring HOPE to the readers. Maybe you find yourself struggling with drug or alcohol addiction or abuse, maybe it's sexual immorality, anger, prejudice or loneliness. Each one of us from time to time find ourselves searching for HOPE. These examples are only a few and do not scratch the surface of our struggles.

This month I want to address one of if not America's biggest struggles; our lack of spiritual HOPE. We live in a day where we are told the only acceptable spiritual journey is one which coexists with all others. Regardless of where you place your faith its fine and correct if it doesn't offend anyone else. That may look good on paper and for a moment give a warm fuzzy feeling, but it doesn't provide any hope! For you and me to have spiritual hope we must have an absolute authority in our life. To say there is nothing absolute is an absolute! Where is hope found within an absolute that is nothing? We require an authority of HOPE! This hope exists, please read on.

Many people today know about Jesus, maybe they have been raised in church and followed in the footsteps of their parents, grandparents and other role models. Maybe they have memorized their Bible. Maybe they give to countless charities. Yet, they like the multitudes who have never heard of Jesus Christ lack spiritual hope because they have never entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Please understand, Christianity is not a membership, it's a relationship which leads to a fellowship. This relationship with Jesus Christ is the spiritual hope that is needed in America. We need less social media and more personal fellowship; first, with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, then with fellow born again believers in the body of Christ. Without a genuine relationship with Christ we find ourselves vulnerable to subtle yet powerful attacks from Satan. If you find yourself smirking right now, I would like to make a bold and sincere statement. You are immortal, you have a soul and you will move from this life to an eternal existence. There are only two options, eternal life (heaven) or eternal death (hell), where there will be no end to the suffering. We cannot make a decision to turn over a new leaf, we can't say I'm going to be a better person and have spiritual hope. We must submit to Jesus. Jesus said in John 3:16-17 "John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Why did Jesus come to save and not condemn? Yes, verse 16 emphasizes love but there is a much deeper truth here. We were already condemned because of sin! The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:18 "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The offence of one came in the fall of man in the garden of Eden and the righteousness of one comes through Jesus Christ! He is our spiritual HOPE. There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved! God does not coexist with other deities, God does not negotiate or compromise. He has given us HOPE if we will take it and submit our lives to Him as obedient children to a Father. Don't live in spiritual hopelessness, if God has broken your heart, wherever you are right now you can call upon Jesus and ask Him to save you! His HOPE is real and permanent and genuine. There is spiritual HOPE in Jesus Christ and only in HIM. For more information please contact me using the information given with this article.

Our time has come and gone, until next time remember there is HOPE in Jesus Christ!

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.



Remember to gather together and
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Grace Community Church

Making Sense of Senselessness

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County



Words seem insufficient in response to the shooting in Las Vegas. Still we want to make sense of senselessness. We want to make the inhumane, humane. In the absence of explanation, I'll speak to response. How do we think? What do we do?

How do we think?
1. There is no excuse for senseless violence. Any kind. Anywhere. Since the shooter killed himself we will never fully know why he did what he did. Investigators will try to put the pieces of the puzzle together and find answers. Whatever they discover, we must hold fast to the reality that senseless violence of any kind is reprehensible.

2. Words kill like weapons. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus raised slander to the level of slaying. Words don't just hurt, they kill. When 70,000 fans boo a bad kicker in a football game, something in that kid dies. When politicians and journalists throw verbal daggers at one another, someone dies. Whoever said sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me was denying reality.

3. Enough is enough. We are becoming desensitized. Push notifications bombard phones. Cable news reports violence all day, every day. Video games turn killing into competition. Music celebrates murder. Even too much news of the Las Vegas tragedy can desensitize. Overexposure deadens the conscience.

What do we do?
1. If you see something, say something. Yes, this is Homeland Security's slogan, but it belonged to Christianity long before the government trademarked it. Don't tolerate any form of bigotry, hatred, or violence. Jesus called us salt and light. Salt and light do the same thing: they reveal. Salt is a cook's friend—when the right amount is put in a recipe, it reveals the flavor of the food. No one has ever said, "The salt in this casserole tastes good." Light is a photographer's best friend. People don't look at a portrait and say, "I love how the light is coming in from the front." Rather they talk about the subject of the photograph. As salt and light, we flavor the world without drawing attention to ourselves—rather we reveal Christ.

2. Choose your words carefully. James 1:19 says, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." His statement is both counterintuitive and countercultural. Our culture is quick to anger, quick to speak and slow to hear. Proverbs 18:21 adds, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Peter wrote, "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit." (1 Peter 3:10)

3. Filter what comes in. Examine your intake of violence. How much do you see or hear in a given day? Resolve to reduce it. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else guard your heart for everything you do flows from it." What goes in will come out. Kevin DeYoung writes, "Having a conscience is one mark of being a sentient human being. Scripture sometimes speaks of people 'who do not know their right hand from their left' (Jonah 4:11), or of 'children, who . . . have no knowledge of good or evil' (Deut. 1:39). Knowing right from wrong is what makes us functioning adults. To have a malfunctioning conscience is to be less than human."

Perhaps in DeYoung's statement lies the explanation for the shooter's capacity to cowardly and mercilessly kill 59 people: he was less than human. Something happened to his conscience. Scripture says our conscience can be seared (1 Timothy 4:2) or defiled. Titus 1:15 says, "To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled."

Only Jesus can clean us up and clear our consciences. John said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Only Jesus can turn senselessness into salvation and make the inhumane, humane.

Jerry Lewis is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church in Marion.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

THANKSGIVING BLESSINGS

Thanksgiving is a time of praise
As thankful hearts unfold.
The blessings God has given
Are more valuable than gold.
The family He has blessed us with
Is precious to our hearts.
This is the time to share with Love
The blessings He imparts.



Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, "home away from home". She is currently singing with the Gospel Group "Jonah's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Homecoming" will soon be heard by many.

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Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4



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Women's Prayer Breakfast

Monthly Meetings

By Joyce Boone
Mitchell County

Join the Praying Women of The Tri-County Communities Prayer Breakfast held the second Friday of each month, 8 AM, at DT's Restaurant, downtown Spruce Pine, NC. Bring your sister-friends and together receive spiritual refreshment, warm Christian fellowship, group prayers of Faith for personal restoration and life's daily challenges, plus a unique and delicious breakfast menu from which to order. God's Holy Divine WORD in Hebrews 4 tells us to BOLDLY approach the THRONE of GRACE of OUR FATHER GOD, so that we may receive MERCY and find GRACE in our time of need. PLEASE join us at our next Prayer Breakfast on Friday, November 10, 8-10 AM, at DT's Restaurant, where God will bless as we stand on HIS WORD and celebrate the Supernatural Promises of JESUS through sweet fellowship, songs of Praise, and Prayers of Faith. For more information, please contact Barbara at 828-467-3644, or barbara@brcnews.com. Join us and be blessed with loving Christian encouragement.



Some of those attending October's Prayer Breakfast, held at DT's Restaurant, Downtown Spruce Pine, NC. L to R: Julia Hardie, Brenda Ward, Nora Jarrett, Barbara Harrell, Doris Thompson, Tammy Hendrick, and Joyce Boone

Crossword Solution

A	D	D	S		R	O	W	E	D		A	R	A	M
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Sudoku Solution

7	5	3	2	9	1	8	6	4
4	8	2	6	5	3	9	1	7
6	9	1	8	7	4	5	2	3
8	2	9	1	6	7	3	4	5
1	7	4	3	2	5	6	8	9
5	3	6	4	8	9	1	7	2
3	6	5	7	4	8	2	9	1
9	4	8	5	1	2	7	3	6
2	1	7	9	3	6	4	5	8

Smart Start

Receives Funding to Expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Across NC

By Ruthie Styles



\$10 million provided to deliver books right into the hands of North Carolina's youngest children
Spruce Pine, NC -- Smart Start and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library are working together to bring books to North Carolina's youngest children through funding provided by the North Carolina General Assembly.



During the 2017 legislative session, North Carolina state lawmakers included \$3.5 in the first year of the budget and \$7 million in the second year for the Smart Start network to offer free books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to children across the state. Imagination Library is a program created to foster a love of reading among children aged birth to five through the gift of a specially selected book delivered right to their home each month.

"I'm thrilled that my Imagination Library is going to be offered to so many children in North Carolina" stated Dolly Parton, the founder of Imagination Library. "Working together we can help children dream more, learn more, care more, and be more."

"Our state leaders clearly understand how important an early love of reading is for each child's success in school and later in life," stated Cindy Watkins, the President of the North Carolina Partnership for Children that oversees the Smart Start network, "Smart Start works in every community to ensure young children have a strong foundation for starting kindergarten -- now we can offer this important literacy program to that critical work."

Senator Ralph Hise and Representative Josh Dobson joined Smart Start and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library representatives to kick off the statewide effort that will begin in 98 of North Carolina's 100 counties. Because the program is offered by zip code, the initial launch will cover 85 percent of NC zip codes expanding to cover every county by the second year.

To find out more about Smart Start and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library partnership, and to check availability and register a child, visit <http://www.smartstart.org/dolly-partons-imagination-library/>

For more information, please visit <http://www.smartstart.org/about-smart-start/>

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program for children from birth to age five. The mission of the program is to foster a love of reading in preschool children and ensure that every child born has books, regardless of their family's income.

Smart Start is a network of 75 nonprofit local partnerships that serve all 100 North Carolina counties. This network is led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) that ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability, and coordinates the statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families.

Ruthie Styles is Community Development Manager for Blue Ridge Partnership for Children serving Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties.





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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

By Farmer Doug

Clint does not need an introduction or conclusion to this one. Laughter all the way from start to finish.

Funny Farm

Dear friends,

Regular readers of this column understand that I am a rather poor excuse for a farmer. For the politically correct, I might be called "agriculturally challenged". Whatever your term of endearment for my agrarian prowess, you must admit there are few dull moments when I am "one with the land"!

Those of you who have never been a farmer - like me - need to understand that hay grows twice in a season... there's the spring cut and the fall harvest...who the heck knew? It's for sure I didn't. Regardless, the chores needed doing and Farmer Clint was primed for action.



On My Own

One bright autumn Sunday afternoon Doug and Barbara made a run over the Iron Mountain to Johnson City; I believe they were searching for a tractor part or two. I sat idly for a wee bit, thinking I would watch an NFL game, but soon became restless. (There was a time in my life when I could vegetate in front of the boob tube and gaze mindlessly at grown men running up and down a field of grass trying to knock each other's brains out. But life at Harrell Hill Farms cured me of that malady.) Morphing into "Farmer Clint" cured me of that desire, even the ability to just "hang-out". A man needs to be busy, busy, busy!

Earlier that day Doug mentioned that he was falling behind on getting the hay up and expressed concern that rain was heading our way. He already mowed and teddered the lower field, next to Cousin Betsy Herrell's house, but it needed raking. Normally I would not even consider setting out on such a venture alone; but I'd been on this farm nearly six months and believed myself to be an accomplished farm-hand now. Well call it an unexplainable mental breakdown; refer to it as a sudden lapse in adult judgment; or simply call it a surge of confidence in Farmer Clint's heart, but I thought "Hey, I can rake that hay and surprise Doug!"

"One With The Land"

I drove to the barn and mounted that little Kioti tractor like I owned the sucker! Not only that but I attached the hay rake and even tested the hicky-doo that makes it spin around and around...heck, I remembered to raise the jack so it didn't make sparks when I drove down the road, AND I remembered not to "ride the clutch" - a charge lodged at me by Farmer Doug which I deny to this day. I was pretty stoked, actually, to be ALONE and working the hay... life was good with Farmer Clint in the saddle and that hay rake following in my wake.

I was definitely in "the hay zone", it seemed I could do no wrong. I stood back and stared in wonder at the perfectly manicured rows of fluffy hay I'd crafted. I just knew Doug would jump for joy! (Don't laugh, I'm being serious here). I was doing so well I began to talk to myself, "Hey, Farmer Clint, you da man dude! Ain't nobody, including Keith Masters, who could make a better looking hay row than you!" Needless to say, I was having an out-of-body, pride-filled party with myself!



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OOPS!

As I tracted toward Cousin Betsy's farmhouse I heard a sudden clang, bang, and rattle from behind the tractor - not good! (I learned from previous mishaps that when it sounds like parts are fixin' to fall off it's best to STOP!) So I quickly killed the thingamajig that makes the rake rake...I think it's called the "PTO" (whatever the heck that means)...engaged the brakes and leapt from my tractor perch.

Well, you've never seen a more tangled, garbled mess in your life. Somehow I had raked what looked like miles of barbed wire, along with the freshly teddered hay. (Later I would discover - after a bit of chiding from Farmer Doug - that I had obliterated Cousin Betsy's fence line @).

Anyway, I figured I'd better clear the doggone barbed wire before Farmer Doug came home. It took about 2 hours to clear that fouled rake but I managed to finish the job just as Doug came over the hill. He told me it looked great @...a rare treat for me to successfully complete a chore without having to be saved from myself! (Of course, I failed to mention the mangled barbed wire episode. I mean, why incriminate yourself when no one will ever know?)

Another "Teaching Moment" @

A day or two later, after another wonderful Barbara-cooked farm supper, Doug remarked, "So Clint, looks like you battled with Betsy's fence row, huh?" My first

reaction, as always, was to think of some way I could blame it on Tony; anything to weasel my way out of trouble. But, once again, I knew that "The truth will set you free"; so I looked into Doug's eyes and innocently replied, "What in the world are you talking about?"

I knew he had me in the crosshairs when he flashed that wide Doug smile, a fatherly timbre in his farmer voice, "Well, there was quite a bit of barbed wire in the hay near Betsy's place and, since you raked it, I figure you must have tangled with the fence." RATS...BUMMER...HOLY SMOKES...I'm busted! "Yeah, well I did have a slight encounter with some barbed wire from somewhere, but wasn't sure where it came from. Do you think I should tell Betsy?" Again in his 'I'm the boss of you' voice, Doug replied, "No, that's okay. Betsy already knows."

If I've learned nothing else about farming, one thing is sure: Farm people notice EVERYTHING. They know when you disturb a leaf; they notice when dust settles; each plant/critter/structure/piece of equipment is vital to their being, so don't go trying to fool 'em. WHEN YA MESS UP, CLAIM IT - OWN IT - FIX IT!

Hardware Disease?????

Farmer Doug explained, "I can't feed hay laced with barbed wire to the cattle, they will get 'hardware disease'". (Duh, even I comprehend that eating barbed wire could be harmful!) But HARDWARE DISEASE? Come now, Farmer Doug, you are messing with me - ain't no such thing as "hardware disease". I mean why must he fabricate a story about some mysterious sickness? Rather than argue, I simply nodded agreement about the scare of hardware disease and went about my business. (Secretly, I wondered if Cousin Betsy was going to beat me up for "raking" down her barbed wire @)...hardware disease indeed!!!

Belly Ache? Eat A Magnet!

A quick internet search confirmed my worst fear...Farmer Doug was right; there is 'hardware disease'.

According to experts, hardware disease is the term used when complications occur after an animal consumes objects such as nails, wire, or even tin cans. This condition is particularly associated with bovine due to the fact that cows have been known to make a lunch of steel or tin objects. Renowned veterinarian C.E. Spaulding states, "Why bovines like the taste of steel and tin, I'll never know; but I've seen a cow happily munching down 16-penny spikes as her owner patched a barn wall."

When caught early, a vet can feed a bolus-shaped magnet to the cow. This magnet will collect any metallic pieces and hold it in the reticulum preventing the debris from traveling throughout the cow's system. Cattle owners can also feed these magnets to their stock to prevent hardware disease from occurring. The average cost of these magnets is inexpensive compared to the cost of veterinary care or the cost of the cow.

You heard me right, friends...if'n your cows eat nails just feed 'em a handful of magnets! Now that's crazy, but that's what "those in the know" say to do. (I wonder...if two cows eat magnets and their 'north poles' or 'south poles' come into close proximity, will it push one of the cows over @?)

Well, fall became winter and tending hay turned to chopping wood and my barbed-wire hay exploits seemed forgotten. Once more the rugged mountain folks at Harrell Hill Farms had mercy on Farmer Clint and Cousin Betsy never mentioned that I had destroyed her fence. Until...

What The?

Spring 2011 drew me back to the hay fields and I was excited to renew my love affair with nature. As I meandered up Harrell Hill Road I could almost taste the aroma of freshly mowed grasses; expectant of another wonderful experience with the hay rake.

As I rounded the corner, nearing the barn, I noticed what looked like Crime Scene tape extending the full length of Cousin Betsy's pasture. Why in the world would there be a ribbon outlining the border of the field?

Tie A Yellow Ribbon

Doug and I exchanged farmer hugs - the kind where ya slap each other on the back without really hugging - and shared thanks for the beautiful day God provided for working the hay. As I turned toward the tractor Doug remarked, "You see the yellow flags along the back side of the pasture?" ...What a ridiculous question, DUH!..."Yes, Doug, I see that...what happened over there?" I asked. "Well, Clint," he began, "last fall 'someone' removed Betsy's fence with a hay rake and she just wanted to make sure 'someone' saw it this year!"

As I approached the far side of the field I learned that this was not Crime Scene tape at all, it was HUNDREDS of little yellow flags positioned alongside the barbed-wire fence. Sweet Cousin Betsy had carefully marked the boundary, created a sort of 'runway' for Farmer Clint.

"Tie a yellow ribbon 'round the old oak tree..." To this day we've never discussed how I managed to chew up her fence row. But Cousin Betsy did her best to make sure I avoided it this go around!

Humbled in the hills,

Farmer Clint



This Time of Year

By Rev Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." Psalm 136:1

I love this time of the year for so many reasons. First, hearts turn more toward God and being thankful this time of the year more so than any other time. A day, Thanksgiving Day, was set aside for the sole purpose of helping American citizens to be thankful. It has been celebrated as a federal holiday every year since 1864, when, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens," to be celebrated on the last Thursday in November.

Being thankful does so many powerful things for us. It focuses our attention away from the problems at hand to the many wonderful things that have happened in our lives. It cheers the heart. It sweetens our disposition. It helps us sleep so much better at night. It aids our digestive process by reducing worry and stress. It helps us to recall the loving God who is there to hear our prayer and to help us in time of need.

A second reason I love this time of the year is that families work harder to get together and spend time with each other. What a blessing to look around the Thanksgiving Day table and see loved ones; many of whom we do not get to see often because of geographical restrictions, long work days and so forth.

A third, and very selfish reason, is that I love to eat. I love all of the Thanksgiving fare. I love turkey, ham, pies and cakes, fresh made bread and everything else that ends up on the Thanksgiving table.

A final reason I love this time of the year: Christmas is not far away. And, then, we celebrate and show thanksgiving for the greatest gift of all... the Lord Jesus who became flesh and paid the price for our sins.

It thrills my heart to hear the things people are thankful for. Personally, Wendy and I have been blessed so many ways. We live in this beautiful part of the state, we serve the Lord in a wonderful Church, our health is good, AND the Lord, in June, blessed us with our first grandbaby. What a wonderful God we serve! All of us have so much to be thankful for! For God's grace, answered prayer, family and friends, health and strength, food on our tables and a roof over our head and the list needs to go on and on and on.

From my heart to yours I pray this time of the year is very special for you. May you know God's presence and peace in wonderful ways. May your family be well and may you be able to spend time together.

Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.



A Meditation

Do You Know Jesus?

By Timothy Eller
McDowell County

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?



In John 14:9 Phillip asked the most important question he could ever ask. He asked him to show him the father. One of the biggest struggles people have with Jesus is not about what he did or what he said. The issue then and now is do you know who he is. So many people have opinions and ideologies. The angel said call him Emmanuel meaning God with us.

I will ask you the most important question anybody could ever ask.

Do you know who Jesus is?



Tim Eller graduated from Carolina Graduate School of Divinity and has been involved in prison and jail ministry for the past fifteen years. Currently he is operating in the capacity of a servant of Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness: It's Not An Option

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County



Have you been hurt by someone so deeply that you don't think you have the capacity to forgive them? No doubt evil people do evil things to good people and they aren't worth forgiving. But is that the issue?

In the Jewish culture their system of bankruptcy was to sell themselves to their creditor and work off the debt. God had an interesting rule he wanted his people to follow regarding this practice. No matter what the debt was, as the end of every seven years, the creditors were to release the debtors. This would give even those with huge debts an opportunity to start over.

During Jeremiah's time, King Zedekiah initially honored this, but look what then happened:

Jer. 34:10 *So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. 11 But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again. 12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ... 15 "Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to your own people. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. 16 But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again."*

Because they broke the covenant and this was the response:

17 *"Therefore this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So, I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the LORD--'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth."*

This tells me God is serious about our obligation to forgive. He released us from the penalty of every sin in our lives. Therefore, we are to forgive others.

Jesus confirmed this command in one of his parables. In Matthew 18 he tells of a man who was released by the king from a debt of millions of dollars but when he ran across another who owed him a few dollars he demanded payment on the spot or threatened debtors prison. When the king got wind of this his whole attitude changed. *"Because I forgave you a large amount you should have forgiven a small amount"*. Then he had the man cast into prison until the debt was paid in full.

But how could the man pay such a large debt while earning prison wages? He couldn't. There was only one-way out of prison: he had to die.

If we apply this story to our lives we see that no matter what has been done to us by others, it's incomparable to the

debt we owe our heavenly Father. Every sin we have ever committed was forgiven because of what Jesus did for us on the cross (that's the multi-million-dollar debt). Therefore, it is imperative that we forgive others their relatively puny debt. It's amazing how their offense to us shrinks in size when we look at our offense to God.

How do we do it from a practical standpoint? How do we get out of the prison of bitterness and judgment, depression and criticism? There's only one-way out: we have to die. We have to die to ourselves and our disappointments, disillusionments and discouragement. We have to say, "Lord, I've been forgiven so much. Help me to die to what others have said about me or done to me."

When you say that by faith, don't be surprised if tomorrow you want to "take back" your offer of forgiveness. Just remember it's a bleeding off process. It will take time. But to take back the forgiveness puts you in the same position the Jews were in in King Zedekiah's time and we know how God feels about that. To "keep on forgiving" keeps us out of our prison and honors our Father at the same time.

Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



Burnsville Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Thanksgiving Day

By Pastor Couser
Yancey County

It's hard to believe that the holiday season is just around the corner. So, I begin with a pop quiz. "When is Thanksgiving Day?" I wonder how many could give the correct answer. Do I mean the "exact" date? Not really, because the date varies from year to year. Some of you might say, "I know it is a Thursday in November." Yes, but which Thursday?

Even if you guessed the exact date which this year happens to be November 23, you still won't give me the answer I'm looking for. The official Thanksgiving Day goes all the way back to 1789 when President George Washington proclaimed November 26 as a day of Thanksgiving.

After that, Thanksgiving Day continued to be celebrated on different days in different states until finally in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a White House proclamation calling on "the whole American people to observe a special day of thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November every year." Ever since, each President has issued a Thanksgiving Day proclamation designating the fourth Thursday of each November as the official Thanksgiving Day.

As followers of Jesus Christ, there is great news for us. Though every day is certainly not a holiday, every day is a Thanksgiving Day. Praise God that Thanksgiving is every day in the life of His followers. As believers, we have the amazing privilege of not only praying to our Heavenly Father, but having an attitude of Thanksgiving in our hearts.

In fact, our Heavenly Father wants His children's lives to be characterized by gratefulness. Philippians 4:6 says, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (NKJV). I believe His Word tells us that an appreciative attitude should be evident in our worship (Psalm 95: 2-7; Colossians 3:16), giving (2 Corinthians 9: 7-13), relationships (Philippians 1:1-3), and even the way we approach spiritual battles (1 Corinthians 15: 57-58). In other words, thankfulness to our Lord needs to permeate everything we do. In the Scriptures, our Lord mandates our gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18), which some might find perplexing. But our Lord knows a grateful attitude affects our hearts. Thanking Him.....

- Keeps us aware of His presence
- Focuses us on Jesus: pride diminishes when we remember life is all about Him.
- Drives us to look for His purposes in our challenging situations.
- Reminds us of His goodness, which leads to hope, even when we don't understand.
- Encourages our continued dependence on Him, reducing anxiety with peace and joy.

When we maintain an attitude of Thanksgiving in both happy and difficult times, our lives will be filled with purpose and fulfillment. But more importantly; God will be glorified. As we approach Thanksgiving Day, let us ask Him to bring His blessings to mind so we can say, "Thank You!"

Happy Thanksgiving!!

Ed Couser is the pastor for the Burnsville and Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Previously he served churches in Ontario (Canada), New York, Kentucky and North Carolina. He also is a retired Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, having spent 29 years in the US Air Force. Pastor Couser, and his wife of 25 years, Carol have four adult children: Melissa, Kaylee, Meagan and Drew. He enjoys sharing the love of Jesus and encouraging others to prepare for His soon return.



SafePlace

Making a Difference

By Tracy Black
Mitchell County



It was late on a Friday afternoon; the doors were locked, and the staff of the SafePlace Thrift Store was ready to go home. A tap on the door led to the discovery of Sheriff Street and another man who was dressed in an orange jump suit and orange rubber sandals. The Sheriff explained that he was escorting this young man to his grandfather's funeral and he hated to take the man there dressed in jail clothes. Could we help? Indeed, we could. One staff member stayed behind and "dressed" the young man in slacks, dress shirt, sports coat and dress shoes. The young man's eyes welled up as he stated that this was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for him.

Mitchell County SafePlace is an agency that serves the needs of the victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and elder abuse. The grants that we get help to cover our overhead, staff wages, utilities, office supplies, etc. What these grants don't help with is assistance for the victims we serve. With the overwhelming generosity of the folks of Mitchell County and the surrounding area, we are able to assist not only those victims but also to give back to the community that has been so generous. Whether it's a teacher needing supplies for their students, a family who has lost everything in a house fire or lending dignity to a young man attending his grandfather's funeral, SafePlace tries to bridge the void.

Last year alone, SafePlace gave away merchandise valued in excess of \$30,000 to those in need. How does this all come together? The answer is VOLUNTEERS!!!

Volunteers are the life blood of any non-profit. As hard as our store staff works, and boy do they work hard, it is not enough. Volunteers are used to fill the gap. You might wonder what a volunteer at SafePlace does.

- Volunteers:
- Sort donations
 - Hang and steam clothes
 - Stock shelves
 - Help on the sales desk
 - Interact with customers, serving as ambassadors for SafePlace

If you have as little as an hour to donate, please contact Cheech Stewart at 765-7115. No matter what your talents or ability level, Cheech will find the perfect job for you.

Tracy Black is the Associate Director for Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or tracyblack@bellsouth.net.



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Allen's Offerings

Thankful

By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

I am so blessed that I doubt I could list all of my blessings so I want to share some of them with you.

I'm thankful that there is a God and He knows my name.

I'm thankful for God's son, Jesus Christ, the price He paid for my sins and the promise of spending eternity in heaven with Him.

I'm thankful that God brought Sherri, a Christian and I together.

I'm thankful for Godly parents and a Christian home.

I'm thankful for my brother, Chris.

I'm thankful I was born in America.

I'm thankful that though I was born with Muscular Dystrophy, my parents love me and encourage me to live my life to its fullest.

I'm thankful for prayer.

I'm thankful for God's Holy Word, the Bible.

I'm thankful for forgiveness, mercy and grace.

I'm thankful to have had Christian in-laws.

I'm thankful to call Mitchell County home.

I'm thankful for the Blue Ridge Mountains.

I'm thankful for Bear Creek Baptist Church.

I'm thankful for everyone I've met in life that helped me, encouraged me and for those that remain a close friend today.

I'm thankful for Rev. Billy Graham. At age 7 I heard his invitation to accept

Jesus as my personal Savior and my parents led me to the Lord.

I'm thankful for my Pastor, Rev. Bruce Cannon and his wife, Wendy.

I'm thankful for every minister I've had the privilege to know and love.

I'm thankful for God allowing me to attend Ledger Elementary where the Bible was read, allegiance to the flag was said daily and classmates cared for one another.

I'm thankful for indoor plumbing, electricity and a roof over my head.

I'm thankful for my powerchair and minivan which provides independence and transportation needs.

I'm thankful for the wisdom given to doctors, nurses and those who develop new medicines or equipment to extend our lives.

I'm thankful for all aspects of nature; heavens, clouds, Carolina blue sky, eagles, hummingbirds, robins, deer, flowers, trees, waterfalls, lakes, fish and rivers.

Those are just a few of the things I am thankful for.

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist church.



Morganton Baptist Church

Why, God?

By Pastor Dan Qurollo
Burke County

We face real life events that often cause us all to ask the question "Why?" Why did God allow a deranged gunman to open fire on a large crowd of concert attendees, killing many and wounding hundreds? Our community struggles to understand why God allowed one of our own firefighters to be killed while serving our community. Why does God allow loved ones to experience the horror of cancer? Why does God allow loved ones and friends to pass unexpectedly?

These are obviously questions for which there are no easy "cookie-cutter" answers. In some cases, we may believe we know the answer or at least have a good idea regarding the answer. In many cases, we are speechless as we try to rationalize that which God has allowed. If we are honest, we have felt at times that it even seems unjust.

When we are faced with circumstances we simply do not understand, we must learn to respond to these circumstances Biblically. God often does not reveal the reasons behind why He allows certain things; if He did, that would eliminate the need for faith. How do we respond when these things happen?

1. Remain confident in God's nature. Regardless of what we face in life, we must remain firm in our conviction that God is always faithful and that God is always good. An unwavering confidence in God's nature enables us to respond properly to these difficult circumstances. When we begin to question God's nature, we will often find ourselves bitter at what God has allowed.

2. Trust that God knows best. Often, we mistakenly feel that we have a better idea of how to handle something or how something should be resolved. We have little understanding and certainly do not know what is best. Our perspective is limited; the finite will never understand the Infinite. We therefore place these difficult circumstances in God's hand with the confidence that He knows best.

3. Trust that God is at work. He may be using difficulties to draw us back to Him or to draw someone else to Him to be saved. He may be refining our spiritual character. He may be doing many things, but we must maintain an unwavering confidence that God is at work.

4. Submit to God's plan. Rather than arguing and questioning His plan, learn to submit to it. We know it is always best, yet we often struggle when our ideas are not reality. These are the moments when true submission to God is evidenced.

It is possible – and even expected – to respond Biblically to the challenges of life. Doing so is essential to maintaining a proper, God-honoring attitude, even when life does not make sense.



Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.net or find us on Facebook and YouTube.



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Christ is the Only Answer

By Billy Graham

We are living in days of tangled thinking. Purposes, ideals, motives and ideas are all crashing. Lawlessness and revolutions have now become the spirit of the age. And it has penetrated into every realm of human thinking.

The Apostle Paul warned us that in the latter days a spirit of lawlessness would prevail in the entire world. We are told that this spirit of lawlessness is the spirit of antichrist. The new Testament even warns that this spirit will invade the church and that the church must constantly be on her guard.

Mental revolution is in the air. People are turning consciously or unconsciously against the status quo. In every relationship of life, some of the commonly accepted opinions have been thrown on the scrap heap. Any method or idea that is old has come under suspicion. There is a general opinion that if an idea is to be useful in this generation, it must be new.

There is a revolt against authority of all kinds. Lawlessness is the spirit of the times. Analyze every expression of it, and you will find in it an unwillingness to be controlled. Tradition, substance and precedent are all discarded. Governmental authority is questioned, moral standards are laughed at and the church is considered a useless institution. In the United States, even the Constitution is considered out of date.

Jesus Christ can give mental rest to those who are confused and bewildered. He can quiet your heart and give you inner serenity and joy if you will let Him have control of your mind and heart.

Today there is revolution in the industrial world. It is too bad that in labor-management discussions selfishness reigns. Selfishness is sin, and people are sinners. The heart must be made right before there can be any proper adjustment of external affairs.

The spirit of lawlessness is in the home. There is very little discipline in many homes. Each child is a law unto himself. The modern rendering of Paul's familiar injunction might well be, "Parents, obey your children, for this is right." In many of our homes, if there is a voice of authority at all, it is the voice of the child. Parents have little or nothing to say about the life of the child. As a result of all this, there is a grand rush for amusement on the part of the children.

If children do not hear in the home a voice that speaks with authority, how can we expect them to obey the voice of the national government? We are now reaping exactly what we have sown for many years. We have allowed our children to run wild without discipline.

There is one answer to the many problems that beset the average home, and that is Jesus Christ. As Christ blessed the home of Mary and Martha long ago, so He can bless your home. If the individuals in your home will put their trust in Him, there is not a problem that you and your family face today but what He has a solution.

There is a revolution in the realm of morals. Never in the history of the world have we seen such a casting aside of moral restraint. Things that a generation ago were considered shocking are now accepted as commonplace. The entire country is obsessed with an excess of sexual individualism. The principal topic of conversation seems to be sex. Why are we suffering from such an excess? Because all the Christian social barriers and moral restraints have been broken down. People have little or no restraint. They refuse to be controlled. They insist on setting their own standards.

If the church raises its voice against the deplorable morals of our day, we are called old-fashioned and puritanical. The moral restraint placed by God upon men and women is now laughed at and ridiculed. Every person wants to do what is right in his or her own eyes. A Congressman once told me that immorality was the curse of Washington. Where will this end? Where will it stop? How much farther can we go without falling apart at the seams?

There has never been a nation in the history of the world that has ever improved morally apart from a revival. Nearly all great nations of the past have been destroyed by disintegration of moral character. That is now happening in the United States. History gives us only one remedy, and that is a spiritual revival. As revival injected into Great Britain brought a new moral fiber during the days of Wesley, so turning to Christ can save us now.

I warn you—the issue in the United States at this moment is not political. It is spiritual. What are we going to do with Jesus Christ? That's the question that should confront every person today. The modern expressions of revolutions are the natural results of a lawlessness in the hearts of men. We are rebels against God.

Thank God, however, there is a splendid company of people who have not bowed the knee to Baal. The true child of God has nothing to fear in all of today's threatening situations.

God is not surprised at these happenings. He is not dependent upon our puny plans and political conventions for a solution. The hope of the world is the Man whom the world has rejected. It is for us to uphold that God-man, Jesus, as Redeemer and Savior and leave the rest to Him.

There are times when revolts and revolutions are right and just. Great Britain has the Magna Carta because of her revolution. The United States has its Declaration of Independence because of a revolution.

We have come to a place where we must have another revolution if we are to be saved. The church must lead this revolution. We must have a revolution against corruption in high places, against immorality, licentiousness and sensuality, which are pervading every realm of our society. We must have a revolt against alcoholism and drug trafficking. We must have a revolt against lying, cheating and cutting corners in business. We must have a revolt against discrimination because of race, color or creed. We need a revolt against hypocrisy,



spiritual indifference and slothfulness on the part of church members.

I call upon the church today to fall on its knees before God and ask the God and Captain of our salvation to lead on in a spiritual revolution that will shake the very foundations of the social structure.

Christianity is not a religion for weaklings. The challenge of the hour in which we live is so tremendous that it calls for the very best in us. We must be strong, virile and dynamic if we are to stand. The only thing that can give us this moral spiritual strength is a return to Christ. Unless we turn to Christ, I despair for our future. I am convinced that unless we have a great spiritual revival, we cannot endure much longer. We are at enmity against God. We have disobeyed His laws.

We are fighting and rebelling against God and His plans, laws, statutes and commandments. The Bible says that we are enemies of God. However, thanks be unto God, there is a way to be reconciled to Him. The Scripture says, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10).

An enemy, reconciled, is a friend. A disturbed relationship has thus been made right, and the result is one of joy and satisfaction with each other. This is what God has done through Christ Jesus. Man, the enemy of God, has been reconciled through the death of Jesus Christ and having been reconciled to God, the Bible says, "...much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

The Bible teaches that you are at enmity with God, that you are separated from God. The Bible teaches that there is no way back to God except through Jesus Christ. And if God says that to the individual, God also says it to the nation. Until this nation humbles itself and prays and seeks God and falls upon its face and receives Christ as Savior, there is no hope. There is only one road—one way out—and that is through a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

And for your own personal life—the problems you face and the sins that beset your soul—there is only one way to peace, joy, rest and the hope of eternal life. That is by personal faith in Jesus Christ. Right where you are now, you can say "Yes" to Christ. You can trust Christ. You can surrender yourself to Christ. ©1957 BGEA

The Scripture quotation is taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version.

THE ONLY WAY BACK TO GOD

Are you ready to fight back against the spirit of the age? The only way is to come to God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. He died so your sins could be forgiven, and He promises to save anyone who will turn from sin and receive Him by faith. You can do that right now. You can have abundant and eternal life if you will surrender to Christ.

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Swordfish

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

Have you ever heard of a swordfish? They are an amazing fish that is believed to be the fastest and strongest fish in the seas. They can swim up to 50 mph! Swordfish are predatory fish that hunt at night and migrate to different warm waters for food. Born with smooth two-toned, brown skin (no scales), the swordfish's favorite food is tuna, flying fish, squid, and barracuda. The Swordfish do not have teeth, but who needs teeth when they can thrash and slash their long sharp swords around to knock out, slice, and chop up their dinner! These fish love to jump out of the water, sometimes it's to catch prey, other times it's to rid themselves of parasites.

Swordfish can grow up to 15 ft. long and weigh as much as 1400 lbs. Did you know that God gave swordfish a super power? Their super power is called cranial endothermy. This gift allows the swordfish to heat their large, tennis ball eyes, and their brain up to 60 degrees warmer than the current water temperature while the rest of its body stays cold. This allows their big, blue eyes to move and work ten times faster than the fish that have cold eyes. The swordfish are then able to capture light quickly in the dark depths of the cold ocean and find fish to eat. Swordfish protect themselves from Mako sharks by ramming them in their gills and stomach with their sharp swords. These fish have also been known to ram their swords in the planks of small boats when they are harpooned by fisherman. Did you know that God has equipped us with a sword? He sure has, it's part of the armor of God. Do you know what our sword is? It's the Word of God that is found in your Bible! You see, by reading your Bible and memorizing verses you are preparing yourself for hard times that you might go through in the future. Try it and see. I guarantee the next time you are scared, sad, or anything you might be feeling, a Bible verse will pop in your mind to comfort you. Not only that, but when you meet other kids that ask you questions about God you will be able to answer using what you have read in your Bible. You see the Bible is like a key that opens doors and answers questions. Our sword is one of the best pieces of armor against Satan. He hates the Word of God, so my friend, open up that Bible of yours and start reading so we can defeat the enemy! Not only that, there are really cool stories in the Bible to read about! Just as God equipped the swordfish with a sword, a warm brain, and large heated eyeballs, He also equipped you with the best sword of all, your Bible! Take it everywhere you go and read it often! It will guide you in your life!

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17 NIV

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews



4:12 KJV

Dear Lord, I pray that you will show these children how to use their Bible, the Word of God, as a sharp two-edged sword to defeat and conquer our enemy. Give them an unquenchable thirst to read their Bible daily so they might learn more about You. Help them be bold and brave as they share what they read with others. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN.

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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, 'like' her author page on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or christysoaps@yahoo.com.

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Marlene's Meditations

A Life Lived Not Lost

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

The loss of a child ripples through the lives of loved ones and those who hear about the tragedy. Many parents live on in disbelief, wondering how they could have outlived their child. Even King David in the Bible completely shut down his governmental activities and concentrated wholly on praying for his newborn baby who was desperately ill. His tiny son died, and David was able to pen divine inspired words that have comforted a multitude of parents.

I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. 2 Samuel 12:23

This biblical baby emphasizes the fact that all human life is precious and makes a powerful statement beyond their earthly existence. King David's son's short life has shown to us that love transcends the loss of a child and underscores the significance of a life lived, not lost.

Michael and Cynthia Staton lost their sixteen-year-old daughter, Victoria, to Cystic Fibrosis on November 9, 2012. The grieving process urged her to write a book about her path through the grief and her daughter's influence on Cynthia's journey of faith.

The core message of the book, *A Life Lived, Not Lost*, chronicles Cynthia's journey of hope. She saw the miracles of faith through Victoria's eyes as she struggled with her disease and then saw them through her own eyes after her salvation. Cynthia's path to faith emerged from her daughter's love for the Lord.

In a recent interview with Cynthia, I asked her more about her book, *A Life Lived Not Lost*.

Interviewer: Why did you write this book?

Answer: Victoria touches thousands of lives even today, five years after her passing. I wanted everyone to know that God is always there even though we don't see Him. Victoria pointed me to God through her kindness and exemplifying His love to me. I watched Victoria and learned God-sized lessons. One time, as she waited on her gurney to enter the operating room as a little girl, Torrie (Victoria) noticed a young woman crying on her own gurney across the room. Although Torrie had already received a relaxant, she slipped off her bed, crossed the room and snuggled her special surgery companion, a crocheted angel doll, to the 19-year-old and talked with her. It was simple acts of love such as this that I remembered, and they helped me to understand God's love for me.

When I got saved, Torrie knew as soon as she came down to breakfast that I had received Christ. My eyes were opened, and I saw Victoria differently. Torrie assured me that Jesus would never drop me. Although it hurt to relive the memories, this was my purpose. The hardest part of writing the book was that I wrote the second half of the book first which recorded my thoughts after she passed away.

What is the core message of the book?

Answer: God is always with you. For each person, God has a purpose. Victoria's purpose was completed, pointing me to God. I could now carry on her legacy because her body could no longer carry her.

Which chapter of the book is most meaningful to you?

Answer: The last chapter, #24-Completing the Circle, is the most meaningful to me. When my father discovered his liver cancer, his hardened heart softened, and I was able to lead him to the Lord. I explained to my father about God in the same way that Victoria had explained Him to me, slowly and lovingly. I found my purpose in helping others such as my father to find God.

A few months after that, Gerald Kaye, my father, died at Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, NY. I had pointed him to Jesus just like my daughter had pointed me to the Savior of the world.

Do you plan to write another book?

Answer: I'm working on a devotional to help others walk through grief in the loss of a child.

A Life Lived Not Lost will be available on Amazon in January 23, 2018, or you can purchase a signed copy from her website: www.authorcynthiastaton.com. Cynthia donates a portion of the proceeds from the sale of her books to children in need and also to help pay for the funerals of children. Cynthia is also available for speaking engagements. You may contact her at: cynthia@authorcynthiastaton.com (828) 390-5271.

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net

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Avery County FFA Host PALS

Program for Heritage Homeschoolers

By Gwen Clark
Avery County

Dawson Buchanan and Blake Williams, Avery County FFA members, hosted the Avery County Heritage Home School students for a PALS program. PALS (Partners in Active Learning Support) is a program of the National FFA Organization. The PALS Program can work with all types of educational support activities and fun, hands-on learning activities for children in elementary and middle school. Avery County FFA has worked with the PALS Program through their work with tutoring, teaching hands-on agriculture lessons to local elementary and middle schools, and working with local home school groups. Many Avery County FFA members have worked with the PALS Program and this school year has started off with a successful program with the Avery County Heritage Homeschoolers.

36 students with the Heritage Homeschoolers meet on Monday, October 16, 2017 to learn about growing pumpkins and the edibles parts of pumpkins, beekeeping and the importance of bees to agriculture, and to explore the components of the soil.

Dawson Buchanan is a Senior at Avery High where he is involved with FFA, BETA, Student Government and the Theater Department. He is the current Student Government President and he is a Northwest Region FFA Vice President.

Dawson presented his portion of the PALS Program on Pumpkins. He cut open a giant pumpkin and taught the layers of the pumpkin and how the seeds were formed. After his presentation, the students ate roasted pumpkin seeds and each student decorated a miniature white pumpkin to take home.

Blake Williams is a Senior at Avery High and is involved with FFA, BETA, TSA and is 3 sport Athlete. Blake is an avid outdoorsmen and is an Eagle Scout. He has become a master beekeeper. He presented his portion of the program on Beekeeping, the importance of bees to agricultural crops, and had samples of honey for the students to try.

Mrs. Gwen Clark, retired Agriculture teacher/FFA Advisor presented the importance of the soil to all agricultural crops and each student made "dirt cups" from cookies and pudding, which provided for another tasty treat.

The students and parents had many questions and each lesson presented is part of the science curriculum.

A special thank-you goes out to Avery County Manager Phillip Barrier. The PALS Program used the County Board room for the presentations.

Mrs. Gwen Clark is the Agricultural Education Teacher/FFA Advisor at Avery County High School. She is a graduate of NC State University (BS) and NCA & T State University (MA). She is a National Board Certified Teacher and has been teaching for 29 years. She and her husband, Dee Clark, have been married for 26 years and attend Crossnore Baptist Church.



McDowell Tech

2nd Highest Performing Community College—Again!

By Michael Lavender
McDowell County

For the second year in a row, McDowell Technical Community College has been ranked second highest performing college among the 58 community colleges in North Carolina.

The ranking is an annual assessment by the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to determine how each of the state's community colleges stack up against seven performance criteria that measure student success.

"I've said it before and I'll say it again—our faculty and staff are some of the best anywhere," said Dr. John Gossett, McDowell Tech's president. "While we have much more limited resources than schools in wealthier communities and with larger endowments, our folks continue to perform better than almost all of those colleges, whether you're talking about larger schools, smaller schools, more wealthy schools, schools whose students enter college with better academic performance and so on."

The 2017 Performance Measures Summary identifies seven key areas that state education leaders use to measure performance progress: Basic Skills Progress, English Success Rate, Math Success Rate, First Year Progression, Curriculum Completion Rate, Licensure and Certification Passing Rate and Transfer Performance. Results of each measure are compared in several ways, including individual college performance measured against a baseline, performance measured against the average performance of all 58 colleges and performance measured against an "Excellence" standard established by NCCCS administrators.

Dr. Gossett and Ladelle Harmon, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, shared specifics from the performance summary with MTCC Trustees at the board's monthly meeting in mid-September. Harmon told trustees that all 58 colleges were scored according to how many measures met or exceeded the "Excellence" standard, how many exceeded the average of all colleges but did not meet the "Excellence" standard, how many were above the baseline but did not meet the average of all colleges and how many did not meet the baseline.

"We were above the baseline in all seven measures, exceeded in the 'Excellence' standard on four measures, and exceeded the state average of all community colleges on two additional measures," said Harmon.

Board members were very proud and complimentary of the college's faculty and staff, particularly since the college not only performed well in the overall performance ranking, but had first, second and third place rankings in three of the seven individual measures: Credit Math Success, Credit English Success, and Licensure and Certification Passing Rate, respectively.

Credit Math Success measures the percentage of first-time Associate Degree seeking and transfer pathway students who pass a credit-bearing Math course with a "C" or better within two years of their first term of enrollment. Credit English Success measures the same thing, but in English. Licensure and Certification Passing Rate measures the aggregate institutional passing rate of first-time test takers on state-mandated licensure and certification exams required before becoming an active practitioner in a particular profession.

In overall performance, McDowell Tech trailed first place finisher Coastal Carolina Community College for the second year in a row. Only one measure separated McDowell Tech from Coastal Carolina's ranking: Curriculum Completion Rate. MTCC was one of 21 colleges who fell just below the state average in this category. 7 colleges did not even meet the baseline for this measure.

"We know that we have to continue working on our Curriculum Completion Rate," said Gossett. "We had already begun putting measures in place that we think will help more of our students complete their degrees, but it takes time for those efforts to pay off for us."

The college is working more pro-actively with students who appear to be falling behind in completing their degree. "We have to help people overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of them completing a degree and becoming successful," Gossett continued.

"In addition, we are doing things like making diploma programs available in some curriculum areas for students who decide in mid-stream that they do not want to complete a full associate degree in their chosen field, but are able to complete a shorter diploma program," said Dr. Penny Cross, Vice-President of Learning and Student Services. "Having that credential will help open more doors for them professionally as well."

Gossett thanked the board of trustee members for their support and accolades. "It is great to see our performance and the success of our students in black-and-white," Gossett concluded, "but it is even more important for our folks to know that they are valuable and valued. We have been providing quality education in McDowell County for 50 years now, and this ranking proves it."



MTCC President, Dr. John Gossett

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Michael is the Media and Promotions Director for McDowell Tech in Marion, NC

Morganton Seventh-Day Adventists Church

Thankful to Be Giving

By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

Hundreds of academic professionals gathered to honor a man who had earned a Nobel Prize in science. During the preliminary ceremonies his wife waited backstage with the wives of other men who would be honored also. The wife of the Nobel Prize winner didn't seem particularly excited. The other women asked her why.

"How can I be happy with a husband like that?" she asked, and went on to describe a rather pathetic home life.

Immediately the other women chimed in. "Why, that's my story exactly!" All had the same experience of neglect and abuse.

While cameras flashed on the stage and dignitaries gave admiring speeches, a very different story was unveiled backstage. Those closest to the honorees could only describe a common misery.

It is one thing to be right. It is another thing to be nice. It is possible to have a high IQ (Intelligence Quotient), but a very low KQ (Kindness Quotient).

KQ or Kindness Quotient has to do with our interpersonal relations. Success in life results not simply from how smart we are, but from how we treat other people. The kindness factor makes all the difference.

Kindness is one of God's attractive attributes. He is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness" (Neh.9:17).

The psalmist asserts, "His merciful kindness is great toward us" (Ps.117:2).

Kindness looks for opportunities to do others good. It delights in making others happy. Kindness is not demanding; it is giving.

As we approach Thanksgiving, consider a little extra tenderness in your heart. We have so much to be thankful for! It is easy to quickly say we are thankful for our family, a job, or even food on the table. But what about the mail carrier who



delivers your mail and packages in a variety of weather elements almost every day or the co-worker that goes the extra mile to help you with a task at your job? Then, there is the unexpected card or phone call of encouragement that arrives exactly when you need it the most.

Think of what the atmosphere in our homes would be like if we all were a little kinder. Think of what the workplace would be like if we were a little kinder. Think of what our schools, our churches, and our committees would be like if we were a little kinder.

Just like fruit trees produce fruit...Kindness produces kindness. The people around us often reflect back the attitudes we project toward them. They are like mirrors imaging what we are.

We sometimes feel "empty-handed" in the giving department, but surely we can find a little kindness to give each day. We truly can be thankful to give!

The little girl was on target who one night prayed, "Lord, help all the bad people to be good, and help all the good people to be kind."

Why not think of someone you can perform an act of kindness for today? You will be thankful that you did! There really is "Thanks" in the "giving."

Rick Mercer is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton. They can be reached at 870-820-3549 or cjmercer@tds.net. Check out www.morgantonsda.org. Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.



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2016
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The present volume is an attempt to preserve their memory.

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The Christmas Story Comes Alive

By Sylvia Murphey
Madison County

As a ministry outreach to the community, Gabriels Creek Baptist Church at 111 Gabriels Creek Church Road in Mars Hill will be presenting its seventh annual LIVE drive-through Christmas Pageant on Saturday, December 9 and Sunday December 10 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. (rain or shine). One will see the portrayal of the Angel's visit to Mary through Jesus' ascension into heaven as you tour in the warmth and comfort of your vehicle.

The tour begins outside the little town of Bethlehem. One will be able to see the shepherds and where the birth of Jesus took place with live animals surrounding the stable. Travel through the little town of Bethlehem with shops where people in Jesus' day were able to buy commodities and transact business. See the residents of Bethlehem worshipping in the temple.

At this point one will begin to see some of the ministries/miracles of Jesus—the healing of the blind man, calling out his fishermen disciples and letting them know they would now be fishers of men rather than fish. He is shown speaking with the hated Samaritan woman and then raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

Jesus then begins his final few days on earth. He is taken to Pilate's Hall, condemned, beaten and then bears his own cross to Calvary. One will then find the tomb empty on the day of His resurrection when He arose. The finale shows Jesus ascending into heaven to be with His heavenly Father.

One will not be disappointed in attending this "Life of Christ" portrayal. People have been very complimentary and end up coming back each year and sometimes attend both nights it is given. There is no charge and no reservations required. Just come as you are and invite friends to attend with you. Bring the children in their pajamas since you will not have to exit your vehicle at any time. Rev. Gary Coates, Pastor, and our church family invite and welcome you and your family to go back in time and visit with them in Bethlehem.

Information/directions: Visit the Gabriels Creek Church Facebook page or email smurphey@mbu.edu or call 828-682-6755 or 828-206-6755.

Sylvia Murphey is a member of Gabriels Creek Baptist Church, works in the pageant as well as does the pageant publicity. She retired from Mars Hill University in 2012 with 45 years of service as an administrative assistant. Sylvia lives in Bald Creek Community of Yancey County. She is deeply involved with the missions outreach of her church and is a volunteer for both MemoryCare (a nonprofit physician's office in Asheville caring for patients/families affected by dementia) and the Mountain Area Pregnancy Services in Mars Hill. For questions or further information, please contact Sylvia Murphey at smurphey@mbu.edu or call 828-682-6755 (home) or 828-206-6755 (cell)

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Colossians 3:15-17





McDowell Technical Community College

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- Basic Law Enforcement Training

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- Business Administration: Operations Management

- Carpentry
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- Early Childhood Education
- Electrical Systems Technology
- Emergency Management
- Engineering
- Esthetics Technology
- General Education
- General Occupational Technology
- Health Information Technology
- Industrial Systems Technology

Information Systems:

- Information Technology
- Information Technology: Network Management
- Information Technology: Software and Web Development
- Information Technology: Web Administration

Landscape Gardening

Nursing:

- Associate Degree Nursing
- Nurse Aide
- Practical Nursing Education

- Office Administration:
- General Office Administration
- Office Administration
- Office Finance
- Office Software

- Photographic Technology
- School-Age Education
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Classes Begin:

January 5th

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Avery County

Avery County Chamber

November 25 Holiday Market, Buckeye Recreation Center, Beech Mountain
December 1 Christmas Parade, Downtown Newland
December 2 A Small-Town Christmas & Parade of Lights, Banner Elk

Burke County

Burke County Chamber

November 16, 2017 Thursday, 3:30-5:00 Event
5:00-7:30 Open to Public
Foothills Higher Education Center
2128 Sterling St. Morganton
Business Showcase
What is your favorite Olympic Sport or Team?
This year's theme is World Games and can be any team or sport.
Past, Present or Future!
The Chamber will be Sport Sailing, so jump on board with your best theme and see if you can win the Gold, Silver or Bronze Medal.

Catawba River Baptist Association - Renew: Breathing New Life into Sunday School, High Peak Baptist Church, 3073 High Peak Rd, Valdese, NC, November 6, at 7:00 pm, Speaker is Dr. Ken Hemphill

Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church Of Valdese will be celebrating their one-year anniversary with a special Creation Weekend will be celebrated November 4 and 5 at Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church located at 2907-D, US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from the Foothills Thrift Store). Retired science teacher from Mt. Pisgah Academy, George Grow will be the fascinating speaker for the Saturday worship service at 11:30 am, entitled, "Noah Built an Ark," and 2:00 pm afternoon seminar entitled, "Under Water." The public is invited.
Sunday afternoon, November 5, 2:30 at the Old Rock School's Waldensian Room in Valdese, an incredible and convincing movie, "Is Genesis History?", will be shown. This features over a dozen scientists and scholars explaining how the world intersects with the history recorded in Genesis. From rock layers to fossils, from lions to stars, from the Bible to artifacts, this fascinating film will change the way you see the world. The film's goal is to provide a reasonable case for Creation in six normal days, a real Adam and Eve, an actual fall, a global flood, and a tower of Babel. Dr. Del Tackett, creator of "The Truth Project," serves as your guide—hiking through canyons, climbing up mountains, and diving below the sea—in an exploration of two competing views... one compelling truth. Please invite your family and friends, especially teenagers and young adults. A love offering will be taken.

HOLIDAY COOKING--PLANT-BASED will be Tuesday, November 7, 6:00 pm upstairs in the Old Rock School in Valdese. The charge is \$8 which covers handouts, food samples, food demonstrations and inspiration to cook healthfully. Pre-register by calling Sharryn at 828-334-0084. Sponsored by Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church of Valdese.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - God's Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day will take place on Friday, November 3rd., from 9:00 a.m., until 12:00 p.m. There will be FREE children's clothing, shoes and bedding. No documentation required. We do ask that all shoppers pay a \$1 entry fee. This event will take place at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C.

If you or someone you know in the Burke County area is in need of a Thanksgiving Food Basket, please call or text Kiersten at 828-803-5746 by November 13th. (This distribution is sponsored by the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Adventurer Club).

Aglow International Hickory Lighthouse Hickory - Lighthouse meetings are the second Saturday of each month.

McDowell County

Marion Community Building November 11, 2017 | 9:00 am J. Andrew Wagner, ISA Certified Arborist, from Heartwoodtree.com will present on proper pruning techniques on Saturday, November 11 at 9 am at the Marion Community Building, 191 N. Main St, Marion. We will then have a hands-on tree pruning demonstration. For the pruning demonstration, the tree that will be used for the demonstration was planted by the City of Marion to honor Geneva Blanton in January 2000. The workshop will conclude at noon.

This workshop is ideal for landscape professionals, school maintenance workers, real estate agents, and homeowners. Landscape Contractor Continuing Education credits (2.5L) have been approved, and Pesticide Recertification credits have been applied for.

The workshop is hosted by City of Marion Tree Board and North Carolina Cooperative Extension-McDowell County Center. Cost of the workshop is \$10. Please make checks payable to NCCE-McDowell County Center. Mail to: NCCE-McDowell County Center, 60 East Court St, Marion, NC 28752. Questions? Please contact Molly Sandfoss 828-652-8104.

Grace Community Church--New Prayer Line Launches in Marion, North

Carolina - James 5:16 says "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." A. J. Gordon said, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed." Churches in McDowell County believe God's Word and agree with A. J. Gordon. That's why they have launched 659-PRAY, a prayer line where people can call anytime, leave a message and know that churches in McDowell County will be praying for them. Here's how it works. The prayer line (659-PRAY) is housed at Freedom Life Ministries (freedomlifeministries.org). Each day prayer requests will be sent to 25 partnering churches in McDowell County who will immediately send those requests to prayer warriors in their churches who will pray for them. The effect is knowing that your prayer request is covered daily by hundreds of people across McDowell County. 659-PRAY will begin on September 1. Between now and then, please ask your pastor if your church is involved. If not, encourage your leaders to reach out and get on board. For more information, please call Robin at (828) 724-9599. -- Contact: Chris Allison Cell Phone: 828-559-7312 E-Mail: chris@rocketslidedesign.com.

Mitchell County

All Saints of America Orthodox - On Saturdays beginning in June, All Saints of America Orthodox Mission will be having Divine Liturgy at the meeting hall located at Trinity Episcopal Church, 15 Hemlock Ave, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. The Liturgy will be served weekly on Saturdays at 11:00 AM. Fr. Steven Webb, the priest appointed to serve the new mission, will be officiating. While All Saints of America Orthodox Mission is a part of the Russian Orthodox Church, all services are performed in the English language. Afterwards, all are invited to a picnic at 1064 Deer Park Lake Rd. Spruce Pine, NC.

Bear Creek Baptist Church-Ledger - November 12th following the Morning Worship there will be a Church-wide Thanksgiving Meal.

The Sunday Night Service will be a Talent Sharing Night. Sign-up sheets are on bulletin boards at front and back of church

Celebrate Recovery

This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hip and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 79 Sean Dr. (Estatoe area--off Brushy Creek Rd). Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Charis Children's Foundation: Meet and greet. It is Nov 4 from 2-4 at The Bridge WNC. There will be light hors d'oeuvres and a presentation at 3 pm detailing our vision. The board will be there to meet and answer any questions people have. We will be taking information for volunteers for future events and hopefully will have some representation from DSS, so if people want to sign up for foster care classes they can.

We are believing God is about to do a mighty work in this community!! Great Things Are Going to Happen. John and Stephynia Limongello

Spruce Pine Citizens and Businesses--Due to the outpouring of complaints of speeding on Oak Ave., We will start a zero tolerance for any speeding inside the city limits in Spruce Pine, NC. Effective Wed. Nov 1 we will start enforcing the speed limits and the citation will be issued by the state. Everyone make your travels to Spruce Pine a Safe and Slow trip!!

Spruce Pine First Baptist Church Drop-Off Center for Shoe Boxes - 125 Tappan St. Spruce Pine, NC 28777, 828-765-9411
Hours 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM Monday - Sunday, November 13-19, Monday /November 20 hours 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Support Group For Caregivers Of Those With Memory Loss To Hold Meetings The First Friday Of Each Month From 1-3PM Care & Share, a newly-formed support group for caregivers of loved ones who have memory loss, will hold monthly meetings at the offices of Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, 236 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine, from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. High Country Caregiver Foundation welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Families dealing with a loved one with memory loss can quickly become exhausted, traumatized, and isolated, and this new group intends to provide support, friendship, education, information and referrals for caregivers. Monthly meetings held on the first Friday of each month will offer refreshments and fellowship. There will be opportunities for caregivers to tell their stories, learn useful tips, trade information, and give and gain support to others in the same situation.

For further information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell at (714) 614-5867 or Janet Ouzts at jnutozts@yahoo.com.

Mitchell Baptist Association - 187th Annual Session Baptist State Convention of NC Nov. 6-7, Joseph S Koury Convention Center Greensboro, NC Theme: Return to Me

Mitchell County Chamber - Over There and Over Here: World War I in the Mountains. Don't miss our special Veteran's Day Celebration on November 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the Mitchell County Senior Citizens Center. We will have a special program on World War I in the Toe River Valley with presenter Jonathan Bennett.

Toe River Arts Opens Bi-Annual Studio Tour Exhibition In Spruce Pine
It's only the very beginning of the holiday season in the mountains, but already leaves have turned brilliant and fallen, holiday get-togethers are being planned and the Toe River Arts Studio Tour Participant Exhibition is about to begin—November 18 at their Spruce Pine facility at 269 Oak Avenue. It may be too soon to enjoy a real nip in the air, but not too early to visit the gallery and see work from all the artists on this year's Holiday Tour (December 1-3). With over 100 artists in the 58 studios submitting work, the walls and the pedestals will be filled from gallery front to back with new and exciting work. And this tour features 13 artists—new or returning after a multi-year hiatus.

Red Cross Blood Donation

The American Red Cross serving Mitchell and Yancey County has volunteer positions open as Blood Donor Ambassadors assisting in the areas of Reception and Hospitality at local blood drives in Spruce Pine and Burnsville. With the need for blood donations increased during the holidays, this is a critical role and meaningful way to serve an urgent need through the Red Cross. Drives are held at the First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine and the Higgins Memorial Methodist Church in Burnsville. Volunteers serving in this role help the Red Cross provide a great blood donation experience for donors - helping to save lives. For more information and to apply go to <http://www.redcross.org/volunteeror> contact Kimberly Brewster, Volunteer Services Specialist supporting the Mitchell and Yancey area blood drives at kimberly.brewster@redcross.org or 828-333-9809.

Spruce Pine Farmer's Market - We will have food for any mood!!! Winter squash, tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, kale, mustard, chard, microgreens, collards, eggs, pork, beef, cookies, ciabatta, scones, brownies, cheese strip. You can also find essential oils to heal and help with what ails you! Come out and see us, Wednesdays 2-5 in the parking lot under the blue tents.

Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) - Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 - 10:30 am, at the old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice and coffee. Eat in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

Women's Prayer Breakfast: If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God's will, and fellowshiping, come join us for breakfast at DT's in Spruce Pine. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all-for more information call Barbara Harrell at 828-467-3644 or email at barbarah@brcnews.com.

Yancey County

Higgins Memorial United Methodist Church - ROC Gottem' Rockin' Talent Show November 12, 5 pm - 8 pm Burnsville Town Center, 6 South Main Street
It's your time to shine! Can you sing? Can you dance? Can you entertain the crowd? Join the tri-county talent show! The event is free, any donation will benefit local charities. Some snacks and drinks will be provided. There are prizes and raffles available to win. Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate on a new album with Christian rap artist, ROC. Talent show from 5-6:30, concert from 6:30-8:00, featuring ROC and special guest, FLUXX Daddy Records. Second Event: 15th Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner
Thursday, November 23, 11 am - 2 pm
Higgins Memorial UMC, 101 N Main Street, Burnsville

Join us on Thanksgiving Day for a free meal. Higgins serves around 1,500 meals to the community on Thanksgiving. If you would like to help serve, please call 828-682-2835 to find out about opportunities. If you are homebound and living in the Burnsville area, please call that number to inquire about having meals delivered.

Shoal Creek Baptist Church - Praise Night, Saturday Nov 4, 2017 at 7:00 PM with Beyond Measure

Yancey County Meals on Wheels (Burnsville) - Volunteers needed to deliver meals to Yancey County shut-ins, any weekday, 10:30 am - noon. If you would like to volunteer, please call the Yancey County Senior Center at 828-682-6011.

Mayland Community College

For more info Contact Allen Cook

QuickBooks Test Drive Series

Want to try it before you buy it? Taught by a CPA, this four-class series allows students to work with a sample business to learn the features of Quickbooks. This class typically costs \$200 per student, but is being offered free through the Mayland Small Business Center! Seats are limited so sign up today.

Introduction to QuickBooks: Class One (3 Hours)

Taught by a practicing CPA who knows all the tricks, tips, and trends related to QuickBooks. Class one of this four class series will discuss the features

of QuickBooks Online and compare it to QuickBooks desktop. Determine if QuickBooks is a right for you by "test driving" the software on a sample business. Computers with QuickBooks installed will be available to use at this class. 11/28, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee Waived Sisk-Morris
Yancey 828.766.1295

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Two (3 Hours)

QuickBooks taught by a CPA! Class two will focus on setting up QuickBooks in a manner that will work best for your business. Explore features while learning how to launch QuickBooks the right way. Class will work with a sample business downloaded on the Mayland computers.

11/30, Th, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee Waived Sisk-Morris
Yancey 828.766.1295

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Three (3 Hours)

This class will focus on recording income and expenses in Quickbooks as well as balancing transactions. We will also look at various scenarios that your business may face when keying transactions into QuickBooks. This a great class to get answers to QuickBooks questions.

12/5, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee Waived Sisk-Morris
Yancey 828.766.1295

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Four (3 Hours)

The final class of this series will explore the use of QuickBooks for payroll. Learn how to set up payroll and cut checks using QuickBooks payroll features. Cut checks and make deposits on a sample business in this test drive of the most popular small business accounting platform in use.

12/7, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee Waived Sisk-Morris
Yancey 828.766.1295

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Hope & Help from

Addiction Through Christ

Mountain Community Health Partnership

Mountain Community Health Partnership's Outreach And Enrollment Department Receives Western NC Mini-Grant.

By: Amber Dillinger

Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP) is pleased to announce that their Outreach and Enrollment Department has been awarded a \$10,500 Mini-Grant Award. The award amount will be used to support our Health Centers Affordable Care Act Outreach and Enrollment efforts. It will allow us to purchase needed outreach materials and advertise our services during Open Enrollment.

MCHP was among nine organizations in Western North Carolina to receive money for our efforts. We would like to thank Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and NC Get Covered for this award and for their support.

Affordable Care Act/Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment will begin on November 1st and will end on December 15th this year. For free assistance, please call 688-6621.

For more information, or to learn more about our health center please contact: Amber Dillinger, Outreach and Enrollment 828-688-6621 adillinger@mchp.care

Amber Dillinger is the Outreach and Enrollment/Certified Application Counselor at Bakersville Community Health Center



Learning from Children

Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County

Isaiah 11:6 says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

The Scripture which I have referred to in the beginning of this article, has reference to a coming time that we call the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth in a future day. The church will be raptured out of this world (Revelation 4:1). After that there will be a seven-year Tribulation Period upon the earth, a thousand-year earthly reign of Christ that will follow, and finally new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13).



The literal interpretation of Isaiah 11:6 is that children will be able to lead wolves, leopards, and lions in the coming 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth. Those kinds of animals during that time will lose their desire for meat and will eat vegetables. It will be safe for a little child to have animals for pets that are listed in our text verse. That is the primary interpretation of what that verse says.

I am going to make a secondary application. In our text verse we have children leading previously wild animals. However, I want us to consider this verse in the light of children teaching adults valuable lessons. We seek to teach and train children, but there are many things we can learn from them if we observe them carefully.

Lesson About Unconditional Love

One of the most needed traits adults need to possess is an unconditional love. This is a reference to love without conditions. Sometimes we want to love a person because they meet all of our expectations for them. What about those times when someone does not always do the way, act and react the way you want them to do? That is where love without conditions steps in and takes over. This kind of love still loves when there are few reasons to love. Kids do not love on the basis of conditions but rather spontaneously.

God loves us with an unconditional love. He knows everything about us and still yet He loved you and me. God declares in Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." The love of God for us will never end no matter what we do or say.

Lesson About the Spirit of Forgiveness

I have been privileged to raise four children and have thirteen grandchildren. I have observed some very important things in kid's relationships to one another. I have watched grandchildren fight and struggle with one another. They can become mad enough with one another to about choke each other and look as frustrated as a bull in a china closet. In a short while they go outside to play with one another, acting as though nothing ever happened.

Adults are so different. When an adult is wronged by another person, he or she tends to want to hold a grudge and not forgive the one who gave the offense. That is not the course of behavior the Lord wants us to take. Matthew 6:14-15 says: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." That is plain, pointed, precise language.

Many people miss blessings because they will not forgive someone who they felt has wronged them. Let's be more like little children in the sense of being willing to forgive those who trespass against us. Since the Lord forgave us when we believed, we should be ready to forgive those who trespass against us. Keep short offense accounts with others.

Lesson About Friendliness

So many adults are lacking in social skills. Some complain about not having friends when they will not make themselves friendly. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly..."

Most kids will smile and are friendly with a stranger. I love to smile at little kids and see them smile in response, even when I do not know them. So many folks come to church looking like they have lost their best friend, and as though there is no hope. Come to church to be a friend and plan to be friendly to those who are gathered there to worship. Don't be a discouragement to others, be an encouragement.

Lesson About Perseverance

I watched one of my grandchildren many years ago building a structure with blocks. Time and time again he tried to stack the blocks, but they would tumble down before he could ever use them all. The little fellow did not give up very easily. The blocks would fall, then he would pick them up until he finally stacked every one of them in their proper place.

Adults give up too easily. The Bible says, "In due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). That word "faint" means "to break up, to dissolve, or to melt." God's people need a backbone like a saw log to stand in these evil days. We cannot give up when the going gets tough in life.

Lessons About Laughter

Kids do a great deal of laughing. They laugh about some of the silliest things but at least they laugh.

Some adults have forgotten how, thus the trials and problems have piled upon them, hindering the quality of their lives. The Scriptures tell us in Proverbs 17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones." We adults need to learn from the example of little children to laugh more than we do.

Lesson About Activity

Most children are very active. They want to do something so sometimes they get into things they should have no part of being involved with in daily life. They are moving and doing something all the time, even if it is nothing more than playing with the controls on a video game or touching the screen on a tablet.

Adults need to be more active for the Lord. The spiritual "harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:27).

Lesson About Trust

Overall children are more trusting than adults are. Adults have seen so many things happen in life, thus, they do not trust as easily as kids do.

We may not always be able to trust others. On the other hand, we can certainly trust God in life for power, provision, guidance, and help as we go through this present world. Psalm 37:5 says, "Trust in the Lord, do good; so thou shalt dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed."

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.

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Bridge42 Church

I Don't Want to Talk About It: Part One

By Jason Koon
Burke County

There are certain issues in the evangelical world that are hot button issues. Denouncing abortion, same-sex marriage, sports on Sundays, or gender-neutral bathrooms plays well in Evangelical circles, and while blogging about them may run the risk of drawing the ire of liberal detractors, most of us who are in the blogosphere know that accumulating liberal detractors can be a big key to success for a Christian blog. There are also certain key issues that everybody in the evangelical world should be talking about, but most are afraid or unwilling to because these issues run the risk of raising the ire of Conservative Evangelicals. So, in my never-ending pursuit to make everyone mad at me I figured I'd tackle as many of these issues as I possibly could and see what happens. Here goes:

Social & Economic Justice

One talk radio host recently said that any Church leader that uses these phrases should be avoided because they are covert communists. Well, I'm not a communist, and I recognize these words have been coopted by the militant left to mean anything from reparations for slavery to a call for a global currency. However, we can't just dismiss them because there is one more thing we must admit. They are thoroughly biblical. Leviticus 19 says:

"Treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native...love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt..." "You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. You shall have just balances."

In today's world, the word sojourner could be translated immigrant. It's God's call to treat the lowest in society with justice, and not just that but to love them. He gives a profound reason, "because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt." The reality is I have nothing. Everything I think is mine belongs to God. The land I live in, the food I eat, even the air I breathe doesn't belong to me. This is the heart of social and economic justice for the believer. It is not mine. Whatever I've been given, whatever influence I have, I must use that to make sure that, as Jesus said, "God's Will is done on Earth as in heaven."

This means that I'm not ok with a homeless man dying in the cold this winter if I have the power to stop it. It means that since the starvation, sex trade, and the treatment of widows and the disabled that goes on in majority world nations will not be acceptable in the Kingdom of Heaven, it's not acceptable now.

I know these are big issues. What can I do to even make a dent in these problems? Leviticus 19 has something to say about that. In verse 9 it says that a farmer is not to harvest the corners of his field. This should be left for those in need. What a brilliant solution; no wealth redistribution, no global currency, or reparations, simply everyone being willing to share a little bit of what they have left over. If you have a field, leave a little bit of food in the field. If you need food, go get it. Don't expect us to box it up and hand it to you, but it's there if you need it and are willing to go get it. If everyone did this in every area of their lives, if we recognized that none of this is really ours to begin with, we would go a long way toward seeing God's Will done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jason Koon is Pastor of Bridge42 Church in Morganton, NC.

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Psalms 107:1



Evergreen Church

Thanks-giving

By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee



We should follow Jesus' example in giving thanks. When Jesus fed the five thousand, he "took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much they would." (John 6:11) When Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, died, the women sent for Jesus, but Jesus delayed his coming. When he did arrive, he went to the tomb. "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 11:41-42) To whom should we give thanks? First of all, we should give thanks to God. "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (I Timothy 1:11-12) For what should we give thanks? We should give thanks for everything. "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (I Thessalonians 5:18) Thanks be unto God for the gift of Christ "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Corinthians 9:15) Thanks be unto God for all his good spiritual and material gifts. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20) Why should we give thanks unto God? He has commanded us. It is the right thing to do; it is the Christian thing to do. How can we express thanksgiving? We can express our gratitude by committing our lives to God in faithful service. "By him [Jesus] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate [share with others] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:15-16) We read in (I Thessalonians 5:18) "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God concerning you." As we rendered thanks or graciousness. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17) The grace of God not only brings forgiveness of sin, it also brings joy and thankfulness to the repentant sinner. The imparted grace of God can make us a gracious and thankful person. The dictionary also tells us that the English word thanks is akin to the word think. When we think favorable thoughts of good will, and gratefully acknowledge the source of benefits and blessings received, that is thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, as an annual festival in the USA, was first celebrated in the Plymouth Colony in 1621. Historians tell us that our Pilgrim fathers had custom of putting five grains of corn upon each empty plate before the Thanksgiving dinner was served. In answer to the questions of the children, parents explained that, in the past, things were so bad that the Pilgrim fathers had to ration food to five grains of corn per person per day. I am glad for an annual day of Thanksgiving, but thanksgiving must be more than an annual event. We need to think and thank God, the faithful source of our blessings, continually. "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23) "Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1: 17) As God's children we are often unfaithful and unthankful. "The ox knoweth his owner, the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah 1:3) Let us remember to think of the goodness and generosity of God to sinful man. "He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Act 14:17)



John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.

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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

US House of Representatives NC District 11



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Speech at Family Research Council's "Values Voters Summit"

Last week I was honored to speak at the Family Research Council's "Values Voters Summit"—speaking just before President Donald Trump! It was great to see the President—he sends his best wishes to the people of North Carolina and remembers your voices well from the campaign season. How encouraging it is to have a President that has not forgotten the men and women who put him in the White House.

Bipartisan Tax Reform Efforts

A tax reform update: my House Freedom Caucus colleague, Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), and I are in conversations with some of our Democrat colleagues to see if we can find some common ground on tax principles.

We're committed to seeing if we can work across the aisle to get something done—making our tax code simpler, fairer, and better for middle class families is a bipartisan issue. We're very hopeful about where some of the discussions might lead in the coming days. Ultimately, this isn't about party or politics—it's about delivering results to the voters who put us in office.



NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise
Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net
919-733-3460

On October 20th at the Spruce Pine Fire Department, I was pleased to attend the kick-off for the initial phase of Smart Start's statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. I first learned of the Imagination Library several years ago when I attended Childfest in Mitchell County with my twin sons and signed them up to receive a free monthly book. At that time, I expressed to Jennifer Simpson, Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children, my desire that the program go state-wide.



And so, I have worked to make that happen. I started with Senate Bill 280 – Early Literacy Initiative/Funds, which became a provision in the Senate budget. Sponsors of the House companion bill, Representatives Josh Dobson and Justin Burr, helped shepherd the provision through the House and the Smart Start Reading Initiative became an appropriation of the state budget for \$3.5 million for 2017-18, and \$7 million for 2018-19. Once fully implemented in fiscal year 2018-19, access to the program will be statewide.

This early literacy program mails high quality, age-appropriate books to each registered child on a monthly basis, from birth through age five, providing each child with a library of 60 books by the time they start school. I believe taxpayers get the biggest bang for the buck when dollars are focused on children's earliest development years, before they enter school. Literacy is a cornerstone of success in school and beyond, and investing in literacy for every child will result in the educational outcomes we need for our citizens to have enriching, productive lives

and keep our state competitive. The added bonus is a lifetime love of reading for children who are exposed to books from an early age.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.

NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net
919-715-7823

I recently visited the Continental AG plant in Morganton on October 17th to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary in that location. Continental has been a wonderful employer in Burke County and a contributor to the North Carolina economy as a whole. I am very excited for our future with Continental, as they have officially begun construction on an 82,000 square foot expansion which will extend the warehouse and supporting areas for increasing production and logistics. The expansion is expected to add approximately 150 new full-time jobs and will enable Continental to supply their state-of-the-art MKC1 braking systems to the world's leading vehicle manufacturers.

The expansion of Continental is just one example of the frequent positive economic news stories all across North Carolina. Here are some other remarkable facts:

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released wage data estimating North Carolina had the fourth fastest household income growth in the nation during 2016. According to the Census Bureau study, North Carolina's median household income was \$50,584 in 2016, up 4.5 percent from last year after adjusting for inflation. North Carolina's wage growth ranked substantially higher than the national average of 2.4 percent.

Also, North Carolina's unemployment rate is below the national average at 4.1 percent, its lowest point in 17 years. The national average is 4.4 percent. And North Carolina had two regions ranked in the top 3 for national tech job growth over the last 5 years in a recent study by the CBRE real estate company.

It seems like a long time since 2011 when the newly-elected Republican General Assembly had to dig out of a \$2.5 billion deficit hole created by our predecessors, but recent economic results speak for themselves. When you reduce taxes on hard working people and combine that with spending discipline and limited growth in government, it's good for the economy, it's good for businesses and it's good for working families. We know that economic downturns are cyclical, and that tough times may lie ahead, but for now the "Carolina Comeback" continues. And I intend to work with my colleagues in the NC Senate to make sure we keep making prudent decisions that keep North Carolina on an upward economic path.

Best wishes to you and your families for a wonderful holiday celebration this Thanksgiving.



YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC House District 118

Madison County company to create 47 new jobs

Advanced Superabrasives, Inc. will create 47 new full-time jobs over the next four years as part of a \$26 million investment.

The company will expand its Mars Hill operations into a 110,000 sq. foot building. Advanced Superabrasives manufactures high performance grinding wheels and equipment.

The hard work of employees at the company has paid off, and they are now poised to expand. I couldn't be more excited that they have decided to remain in Madison County and expand locally.

Advanced Superabrasives works closely with Anspach Advanced Manufacturing School in Yancey County. The nearby availability of high quality vocational training will aid in the expansion.



If you or someone you know is looking for work or looking for a career change, Advanced Superabrasives is a great place to inquire. They have demonstrated their commitment to providing employment in Madison County, and their expansion shows their intent to carry that momentum well into the future.

A \$100,000 performance-based grant from the North Carolina One Fund will be provided to help facilitate the expansion. The fund provides matching grants to local governments to help attract and retain businesses.

I would like to thank staff at Advanced Superabrasives for having me down for a visit on Thursday.



Rep. Michele D. Presnell
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net
919-733-5732



This week, the Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act. This legislation is critical to accomplishing the federal government's most important responsibility: keeping our country safe. As the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and your Senator from North Carolina, I am all too aware of the wide-range of threats facing our nation and how versatile our military must be to fight them. We cannot stand idly by as Iran, North Korea, Russia, ISIL, Al-Qaeda and others present a threat to the United States.

For the previous eight years, our armed forces have been asked to carry out an ever-growing range of missions without the necessary resources to do so. At the same time, Secretary of Defense Mattis and America's military leaders have consistently stated that budget cuts have hindered their ability to address the troop training and readiness shortfalls they currently face. The National Defense Authorization Act addresses these concerns and includes \$358 million for military installations in North Carolina. As the home to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, the Army's Fort Bragg, and several more, North Carolina's military bases are especially well-served by the investments made in this bill.

This legislation also includes a provision I wrote that will improve standards for child care centers on military bases. It also requires child care providers on military bases to go through a criminal background check before they can work with the children of our troops. Our military families have enough on their plate to worry about when they are working to keep our country safe; they should not have to worry about whether their children are in safe hands during the day. I was very proud to see this common-sense provision included in the legislation.

Overall, the National Defense Authorization Act will give our troops the tools they need to defend the United States and her interests abroad. I will continue fighting to honor our troops and veterans and restore America's military strength.

Local Effort Underway to Support Wreaths Across America™

By Gloria Huskins
Mitchell County

Volunteers to host fundraising efforts to ensure that all veterans at Western Carolina Veterans Cemetery are honored Columbia Falls, MAINE, and Spruce Pine, North Carolina – November 2017 — Local volunteers are working hard to ensure that all veterans laid to rest at Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery are honored this December on National Wreaths Across America Day. This year, the ceremony, held simultaneously across the country at more than 1,200 locations, will be on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017. The goal: to place a live, balsam fir wreath at the headstone of every veteran buried there and spread patriotism and commemoration for the ultimate sacrifices they made for our country.

From now until November, volunteers will host various fundraisers to sponsor the 4,450 wreaths needed to honor every veteran at Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery. Each wreath sponsorship costs \$15, with \$5 going to the local fundraising group for American Heritage Girls.

American Heritage Girls Troop NC0516 will be collecting donations for wreaths from now until November 21, 2017. Altapass Baptist Church is the Troop Charter. For more information visit the troops Wreaths Across America Donation page: <https://wreaths.fastport.com/donateLocation.html?page=43015&relate=45969>

"Every donation and wreath sponsorship is a meaningful gift from an appreciative supporter who knows what it means to serve and sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy," said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America. "We are so grateful to the community of Spruce Pine for participating in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach."

The leaders and girls of Troop NC0516 are honored to participate in such an amazing event that honors America's heroes. They are using this event to teach the young ladies to Remember and Honor all veterans.

National Wreaths Across America Day is a free event, open to all. For more information, to donate or to sign up to volunteer, please visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.



About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at more than 1,200 veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

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Gloria Huskins is County Liaison/Licensed CSR at Mitchell County Farm Bureau and attends Altapass Baptist Church.

The Beginning of the Story

John and Stephynia Limongello
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

When God controls the story of your life He adds things you could have never dreamed, calls you deeper than you ever thought you could go, and demands more than you thought you could ever give. In that place of the great big unknown of God is where we find ourselves today.

God has given me (Stephynia) songs for several years. In 2015, I was sitting at my keyboard and heard the line "somebody love me". I knew that this was the heart cry of a child. I knew the song had something to do with a foster community, perhaps a fundraiser song. I began looking for someone who needed the song but could not find a place for it, so I put it on the back burner.

In spring 2016, I tried to find a place for the song again but did not hear any direction from God. I was in school full time, pregnant and taking care of a two year old, so once again I laid the song down. In late 2016 God told me I was supposed to record an album. I had no idea where to start or what to do, so I kept it to myself, but God began pouring songs into my heart faster than they had ever come before.

During the same time, John and I became friends with a couple from the church we were attending who had five adopted children. They asked us to help pray whether they should open their home to one more child. In February, they received a call asking them if they would take a three day old girl who was taken into DSS custody at birth. We received a text asking us to pray for wisdom for them. The next day our friends called to let us know they were taking the baby and were allowed to name her. Baby Charis (which is Greek for God's grace) became a part of their family and unknown to us, a part of our story.

A few days after Charis came home from the hospital we were honored to be asked to come and pray over her dedicating her life to God. The next morning while having a conversation about Charis, I heard God say "that song is for Charis". I knew immediately which song he meant. Before I could tell anyone, I again heard Him say, "and the name of your album is The Charis Project: Live it out and it is to fund The Charis Foundation". I was so overwhelmed; all I could do was cry.

Later that day, I shared what I heard with John. I told him I had no idea what the Charis Foundation was but I thought it had something to do with foster children. John quietly said "I know what it is". Then he began sharing, with tears in his eyes, the vision God had been speaking to his heart about building a foster community... And the Charis Children's Foundation was born.

The vision for Charis Children's Foundation is to house children in multiple houses in a community setting with permanent foster parents. We know the vision will change and grow as we do, but our heart is to provide long term Christian homes for foster children sharing the love of Jesus and the hope of the Gospel will always be our mission.

We believe God has uniquely trained and called us through our life and career experience to create The Charis Children's Foundation. Children have unfortunately been lost in the madness of a world that promotes materialism, selfishness, and hedonism. Judeo-Christian values are shunned in this modern era of acceptance and tolerance.

We believe God created marriage, between one man and one woman. He cre-



ated family. It is all to reflect who He is and His relationship with us. He sets the standards by which man should live.

Our goal is to bring the hope and love of the true gospel to a generation of kids who have been thrown away. We want to see the church rise up and take its place as the center of family and community again. We want every child that God allows us to reach to feel the safety of knowing there is a God that loves them and a family that does as well.

The first phase of the Charis Children's Foundation includes the building of a community health center that will provide medical care, social support services and recovery services for the foster children, their families and the community. We are donating a home near Burnsville to Charis Children's Foundation which will be remodeled and enlarged to serve as the community health center. Phase one is necessary to receive the credentialing required to be licensed to house foster children in a community setting.

We believe the foster care issue is the mandate of the church to address, not the government. We believe no one can address the wounds caused by addiction, abuse and neglect without the power of the love of Jesus. We can provide housing and services, but only Jesus can make a wounded heart whole again.

The Charis Children's Foundation is currently in the planning and fund raising stages. The Charis Project album is being recorded at Cross the Bridge Ministries in Spruce Pine, NC. We are prayerfully taking each step as God directs. We believe that God will bring to fruition what he has started. We are challenging the body of Christ to partner with us to care for these children.



John and Stephynia Limongello reside in Burnsville, NC. They were married in 2009 and have two beautiful young boys, John David and Daniel. John was raised in New Jersey. He has earned his Bachelor's and Master's in Social Work. Stephynia was raised in Yancey County, NC and works as a Nurse Practitioner. They attend the Bridge Church of WNC. View our video and donate at <https://www.gofundme.com/charischildrensfoundation>. Contact at charischildrensfoundation@gmail.com. Facebook: Charis Children's Foundation and The Charis Project: Live It Out. Call 828-467-5485 for more information.

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Mitchell Soil and Water

Farm City Banquet

By Nell Smith English
Mitchell County

Mitchell Soil and Water Conservation District and Mitchell County Extension held their 10th Annual Farm City Banquet on September 28th at the Senior Citizen Center in Bakersville.



Mark Byrd, Mitchell Soil & Water District Technician, presents the award for Conservation Farm Family of the Year to Mr. Paul Greene and Mr. Nathan Greene.

The event celebrated local individuals and their achievements in the agriculture field. Approximately 100 people were in attendance. Mitchell Soil and Water and the Extension Office would like to express their sincerest gratitude for those business and individuals that helped make the event possible.



Attendees of the 10th Annual Farm City Banquet enjoyed a wonderful meal and program.

Nell Smith is the Administrative Assistant at Mitchell Soil and Water Conservation District. She received her Bachelor's degree from Lees-McRae College with a major in English. She currently lives in Spruce Pine and loves spending time with her dog, Merle, her husband, and her family

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Accentuating the Positive

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

Senior starts book drive for former elementary school

By Natalie Ollis, Burke Middle School student

Burke Middle College senior Olivia "Ollie" Hilton is going back to her elementary school for her senior project. She is hosting a book drive at W.A. Young Elementary School to garner support and encourage reading. Ollie has always enjoyed reading and realized at an early age how vital it is. She decided to build her project off of this passion because she understands the importance of giving back to the community in a way that will be beneficial and continue to have an impact for years to come.

For her graduation project, Ollie is working with W. A. Young media coordinator Stephanie Price as her project mentor. Price was Ollie's librarian when she was in elementary school and looks at her project as a way to repay the woman who helped foster her love of reading at a young age. Ollie has spent many hours volunteering and helping behind the scenes at the media center, checking new books into the system, sorting returned books, and giving book recommendations to the students visit. The school has new critical thinking and maker space stations in the media center that include puzzles to help students learn to connect and develop ideas. The books that Ollie gathers from the book drive will go directly to the W.A. Young Elementary School library so the kids will have more books to choose from.

Ollie chose this project because of her love for reading. Her goal for the book drive is to get as many books as possible for the school; her goal for her project is to learn more about kids' involvement with reading and also the inner workings of being a librarian. She also wants the ease of talking to children to branch out into other aspects of her life, garnering critical communication skills along the way. Lisa Wall, Ollie's English teacher at Burke Middle College said, "I'm excited about the project because many more children will have access to fun books that will spark their continued interest in learning." Ollie knows that everyone needs to be able to read in order to learn and wants to set a good example for the children and give them new reading materials. She said, "I want to show that reading isn't boring and that it can actually be an escape to take you places you can't go otherwise." Ollie is taking book donations at the Burke Middle College office and classrooms at Western Piedmont Community College through Oct. 20

Senior volunteers at BUCM

By Natalie Ollis, Burke Middle School student

Rebecca Parker has been working on her senior project at the Burke United Christian Ministries over the past few months. She understands that volunteering is important, so she has been working hard to help the organization and the people in the community it serves. Rebecca has been helping BUCM unload trucks of supplies and by working in the food pantry and clothing closet. She hopes to be able to volunteer in their soup kitchen soon as well.

Rebecca wants to spread awareness for homelessness, because, she said, "providing help for (others) will benefit you just as much as it will benefit them." With cold weather coming soon, Rebecca is running a drive to help get donations for the ministry. She is taking "camping supplies" such as tents, canned foods, tarps, clothes, boots, coats, and toiletries through Friday, Oct. 13 in the Burke Middle College offices.

Rebecca has set several goals for herself through her project. For her drive, she wants to get enough donations to keep people out of the cold. She also wants to spread awareness for homelessness, be more selfless and encourage others to be more willing to help others in times of need. She explained that although she has never been homeless, she remembers a time when she wasn't as fortunate as she is now, and doesn't want to take the privileges she has for granted. Because of this, she'd like to go back to her roots by being more caring and providing help for others in similar situations. Lisa Wall, Rebecca's senior English teacher, said, "Rebecca's work at the Burke United Christian ministries and donation drive to help homeless people in our community shows her passion to make a positive impact on the world around her." Rebecca plans to continue to work with BUCM even after the end of her project in hopes to accomplish these goals.

Teacher receives math grant

By Anna Burkhalter, Patton High School student

Hildebran Elementary School fifth-grade teacher Tracy Poole has received funding through Donors Choose to help her students see that math can be fun. She called her project "Whaty?! Math can be Fun?" and asked for seven different math games and kits. The games and kits totaled \$450



Helping Our Farm Families

By Marianne Jones
Mitchell County

The Mitchell County Farm Bureau Women's Committee has been very active this year in furthering our mission statement of supporting agriculture through legislation and education. Agriculture has always been a fundamental part of life here in the county. According to data from the USDA's censuses of 2007 and 2012, Mitchell County has lost 15% of farm acreage, as well as seen a decrease in the number of farms and animals produced. It seems though that the way farmers sell their products is changing, as we are seeing a substantial increase in sales directly to consumers. There has been a 25% increase in vegetable farms with a 17% increase in sales over this same five year period. Local farms accounted for nearly \$1 million added to our local economy. Agritourism, or tourism centered around a farm or farming activities such as a corn maze, winery or farm store, is growing rapidly.

For the last 3 years, MCFB Women's Committee has awarded a scholarship for a local student to pursue an education in an agriculturally related field. We have tried several different ways of raising money for this scholarship. This year, we raised money at the Rhododendron Festival selling rhododendron raised here in the county and hosting a Cow Patty Bingo game. The game is played by releasing a Cow into a field marked by a grid and waiting to see where the first cow patty lands. Squares were sold ahead of time and a \$500 prize was awarded to the owner of the square, which this year was given to Kim Slotnick.

This August, we planned our first Agriculture Science Night for county 3rd and 4th graders. Student teachers came from Lees McRae College to assist us. Our sessions included parts of a plant, an agriculture fact or fiction quiz, Christmas tree farming, healthy snacking and composting. There were lots of hands on activities for them to do, dinner was served, and we finished up with door prizes and individually made ice cream desserts. The students had a wonderful time learning the science of agriculture and the parents all agreed it was a most informative evening. We hope to continue the Ag Science night annually for the benefit of local students. Children get excited about agriculture. Understanding where food comes from and ways to get involved in growing their own can certainly help today's children make better choices as consumers. A scholarship helps insure those with a passion for agriculture will learn and pass on their knowledge for the improvement of all. Agriculture affects all of us, every day.

Marianne lives in Red Hill N. C. She works for Mitchell County School Systems and is the Director of the Women's Group of Mitchell County Farm Bureau.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Storms

By Jim Hart
Avery County

Several years ago, I turned off the TV, not just for the evening or for the day, but for what I thought would be forever. People would ask me why? "Are you tired of all of the violence?" "Are you tired of all the negativity?" "Do you find that you now have time to read, fish, talk with your wife...?" As much as I would like to have given those folks some lofty, noble reason for turning off the TV, I could not. I was not trying to spend more quality time with Caroline. There were no books begging to be read. My garden did not have any less weeds in it. Much like Forrest Gump when he said, "I just felt like running." I just felt like turning off the TV.

Twelve months, seven days and thirteen hours later (or there about), I decided to turn the TV back on. It was one of those old school console TVs with the dial. The kind that your mom or dad used to tell you to get up and change while your brother went outside and turned the antenna. The kind folks now turn into aquariums. I just walked up to it and turned it back on. It spit and sputtered and blinked back to life after a year of service as a collection area for keys, wallets and plants that needed more sun. And just like that, I sat down in my favorite chair and started watching TV again.

Today, I still sit in my favorite chair and watch TV. Gone is the old console model covered with spare change, keys and plants needing more light. In its place is a fancy swanky, super thin 60inch plasma TV. For all its attributes, it is not a good place for your wallet or plants that need more sun. They fall right off. However, there is still one holdover from my yearlong sabbatical from the tube. I still do not watch the news or the weather. Caroline always asks if I am worried if it's going to be cold or if it's going to rain. How about if something important happens in the world? You will miss out. If I walk outside and its cold, I put on a jacket. If it's downright cold, I put on two. When I look out the window each morning, if I see rain, there is a 100% chance of rain for the day, so I wear a rain coat. If the wind is blowing, I know it's a bad day for squirrel hunting or fly fishing. When Caroline informs me that something bad or important has happened in the world, I pray and reflect on how I can help. Simple, real simple!

That all changed in the month of September. I became fixated on the news and the weather. My morning routines and daily schedules were disrupted by the looming monster Hurricane Irma. Where would it make landfall? How could anybody in the Caribbean survive such a storm? Will it hit Southern Florida and make a beeline for the mountains of North Carolina or will it go east and destroy Wilson, where my mother lives. I was so consumed with this storm that I forgot to do the things that are such a part of my daily life, of who I am. I had failed to do what Paul urged the church in Thessalonica to do in his epistle, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1Thess. 5: 16-18, NIV). I let a storm far out in the Atlantic drive a wedge between me and God. I had let fear of the unknown pull me away from living a life that is itself a living testament of scripture reading, prayer, thanksgiving and discernment. I was afraid for the wellbeing of my loved ones.

Something that was completely out of my control had taken control of my life, yet I was fixated on it, trying to find some control in the chaos.

Storms will come. There will be things that are completely out of our control that will deeply affect our lives. There will be hurricanes and crashing waves in our lives, storms that deeply affect our hearts, minds and souls — blowing winds that make us bend, drive wedges between us and God and ultimately cause us to break...if we let them, if we only focus on the storm.

Living with the diagnosis of ALS, Ed Dobson, pastor emeritus of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan wrote, *Seeing Through The Fog*. Facing only a few years left in his life, Ed shared his journey of finding joy and hope in the midst of the storm of a failing body. Searching for answers and healing, Ed asked a pastor friend to anoint him with oil and pray over him for healing. He was not just looking for someone to pray the words, "God, heal him if it is Your will." He wanted someone to pray who deeply believed Ed could and would be healed. He wanted someone to pray the words, "God, heal him!" His Pentecostal friend and pastor did just that and then told Ed, "Don't become obsessed with getting healed, Ed. If you get obsessed, you will lose your focus. Get lost in the wonder of God, and who knows what He will do for you."

Today, as I sit here looking out the window of my office at Crossnore School and Children's Home there is 100% chance for rain. I heard it pelting the roof this morning, so I wore a rain coat. Since Irma, I have turned off the news and the weather and picked back up where I left off in my morning routine — pray the Psalms, give thanks, breath...focus! I pray that when the next storm comes, and it will, that I do not become obsessed with the healing, with



the diverting, with asking to spare me and my family. I pray that I get lost in the wonder of the storms and God's amazing grace in the midst of the chaos.



Jim Hart is the student pastor of Crossnore School in Crossnore, NC

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Crossword

ACROSS

1 The fear of the LORD ____ length to life (Prov 10:27)
 5 When they had ____ three or three and a half miles (John 6:19)
 10 Bring me a heifer, a goat and ____ (1,3) (Gen 15:9)
 14 and an hundred sheep, beside ____, and roebucks (1 Kings 4:23) KJV
 16 This is the ____ of those who trust in themselves (Ps 49:13)
 17 before me was a ____ horse! Its rider was named Death (Rev 6:8)
 18 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the ____ on my holy hill (Joel 2:1)
 19 David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a ____ (Romans 11:9)
 20 his house is to be made a ____ of rubble (Ezra 6:11)
 21 the woman said, The serpent ____ me, and I did eat (Gen 3:13) KJV
 23 "You ____ one of his disciples, are you?" (3,3) (John 18:17)
 25 from my own ____ and from my father's family (Gen 24:40)
 26 saw what took place, they beat their ____ and went away (Luke 23:48)
 27 Jacob ____ out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is (Gen 28:16) (KJV)
 30 they shall even fall into the mouth of the ____ (Nahum 3:12)
 31 David went to ____, to Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam 21:1)
 32 you as a father ____ with his own children (1 Thess 2:11)
 34 the ____ forest has been cut down (Zech 11:2)
 38 And ____ begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Gen 6:10)
 40 the vine is ____ up and the fig tree is withered (Joel 1:12)
 42 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the ____ (Matt 10:8)
 43 snake (Isa 30:6)
 45 ____ seizes him by the heel; a snare holds him (1,4) (Job 18:9)
 47 member of the first family of the Bible
 48 The city was kept under ____ until the eleventh year of (II Ki 25:2)
 50 steered by a very small ____ wherever the pilot wants to go (James 3:4)
 52 Who would approach him with ____? (1,6) (Job 41:13)
 55 They left ____ Jaakan and camped at Hor (Num 33:32)
 56 a papyrus basket for him and ____ it with tar and pitch (Ex 2:3)
 57 Christ is the ____ of a new covenant (Heb 9:15)
 61 John to the seven churches which are in ____ (Rev 1:4)
 62 whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ____ (Eccles 3:14) KJV
 64 like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a ____ (Mic 1:4)
 65 is alive again; and was ____, and is found (Luke 15:32)
 66 the people shall go out and gather a certain ____ every day

(Exodus 16:4)
 67 ____ the bridegroom! Come out to meet him! (Matt 25:6)
 68 to let the oppressed go ____ (Isaiah 58:6)
 69 he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his ____ (2 Kings 3:27) KJV
 70 Then the high priest ____ his clothes (Mark 14:63)

DOWN

1 husband of Jezebel (IKing 19:1)
 2 reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's ____ (2 Sam 18:18) (KJV)
 3 catch them in their net, and gather them in their ____ (Hab 1:15)
 4 he slung it and ____ the Philistine on the forehead (1 Sam 17:49)
 6 Jesus ____ withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:16)
 7 they did not expose your sin to ____ off your captivity (Lam 2:14)
 8 eighth letter of Greek alphabet
 9 words that I have put in your mouth will not ____ from your mouth (Isa 59:21)
 10 Then he ____ to James, then to all the apostles (1 Cor 15:7)
 11 The winter is past; the ____ are over and gone (Song 2:11)
 12 You are to ____ it as an inheritance for yourselves (Ezek 47:22)
 13 so does the church that ____ at their house (1 Cor 16:19)
 15 When I ____ at them, they scarcely believed it (Job 29:24)
 22 And they ____ their asses with the corn (Gen 42:26) KJV
 24 a ____ like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure (Rev 11:1)
 26 took unto them certain lewd fellows of the ____ sort (Acts 17:5) KJV
 27 a prophetess, ____, the daughter of Phineas, (Luke 2:36)
 28 The boar out of the ____ doth waste it (Ps 80:13) KJV
 29 nor change it, a good for ____ (1,3) (Lev 27:10)
 30 She gave herself as a prostitute to all the ____ of the Assyrians (Ezek 23:7)
 33 The king got up in ____ (1,4) (Est 7:7)
 35 Share with God's people who are in ____ (Rom 12:13)
 36 You are my God; ____ your servant who trusts in you (Ps 86:2)
 37 Edom southward were Kabzeel, and ____, and Jagur (Jos 15:21)
 39 Do not ____ to go with them, for I have sent them (Acts 10:20)
 41 Where is the man who has ____ to do such a thing? (Est 7:5)
 44 In your majesty ____ forth victoriously (Ps 45:4)
 46 The Lord will ____ men for all such sins (1 Thess 4:6)
 49 The ____ who direct the affairs of the church (1 Tim 5:17)
 51 Lydia, a ____ in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14)
 52 they made an idol in the form of ____ (1,4) (Acts 7:41)



53 gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of ____ (2 Peter 2:15) KJV
 54 In that day will I ____ up the tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11)
 55 the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to ____ (Acts 17:10)
 57 your hands ____ out violence on the earth (Ps 58:2)
 58 he ____ his clothes and put on sackcloth (2 Kings 19:1)
 59 I have set before thee an ____ door, and no man can shut it (Rev 3:8)
 60 thou mayest give him ____ from the days of adversity (Ps 94:13)
 63 went to the wine ____ to draw fifty measures (Haggai 2:16)

Solution on page 14

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Mine Creek Baptist Church

Running the Race

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

Most folks probably wouldn't believe it by looking at me now, but back in the day I ran track. Matter of fact I was a sprinter! Hard to imagine I know, but it's the truth. After many years and pounds have passed, those days are over for sure! If you see me running, look behind me, because there must be something really big chasing me!

Being a good runner takes discipline and hard work. An athlete doesn't just decide one day that they are going to run a marathon. To build up to that kind of competition, will take months, if not years of training to achieve. Though competing as a sprinter sure takes a lot of training, deciding to run long distance is a "whole other animal"! Training for long distance running will take time. One will slowly work their way up to greater distances each time they run. Nutrition, hydration, consistent training, and mental preparation all factor in to being competitive in long distance events. It takes a big commitment to achieve this kind of goal.

The writer of the book of Hebrews (whom I believe is Paul) makes a comparison of the Christian life to a race. In chapter 12 verses 1-3, he gives some foundational truth of how we can run this race of faith and be successful and most importantly, faithful to the Lord in the process.

First of all, we are to learn from those who ran before us: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses..."* I believe he is referring to the ones he wrote about in chapter 11. Chapter 11 is what I call the Great Hall of Faith. He gives us a list of those who ran the race of faith before us. Ones such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, etc. etc. In other words, we can look to the example that has been set by those we read about in the scriptures. But I don't believe it just stops there. There are those in our families, our church families, among our friends and peers whom faithfully run the race of faith that we can learn from. They can teach us by being our example of what it takes to be in the race.

Secondly, we must rid ourselves of hindrances: *"let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us..."* One thing you will notice about runners is that for the most part they are skinny! Now you know why I walk! There are no excess pounds that they have to carry that would hinder their performance. Not only that but notice how their clothing is so lightweight. No big, bulky, or heavyweight uniforms are used. The less weight one has to carry the better they can compete. Essentially, Paul is telling us the same thing in our spiritual race. We must get rid of the excess baggage that weights us down spiritually. Repentance of sin in our lives should be obvious. Hard to run this race with Jesus when there is sin in our lives. Sin breaks our fellowship with our Savior and hinders His work in our lives. We must get rid of the extra weight spiritually that we shouldn't be carrying.

Next, we must recognize the kind of race we are in: *"and let us run with patience the race that is set before us..."* The word "patience" in this text means endurance. The race that you and I are in is not a short sprint and then we cross the finish line. This race of faith is a lifelong marathon. When training for long distance running an athlete must work over time to build endurance. Each day they push themselves a little more and work a little harder. This kind of endurance doesn't come in days or weeks, but over months and years. The reason many Christians struggle in this race of faith is they keep thinking they are sprinters instead of long distance runners!

Like a seasoned runner that chooses to train every day, we have to wake up every day and choose Jesus. Being a Christian is a life-time commitment where we choose to run this race of faith every day, understanding that we are in this for the long haul!

Lastly, and most importantly, we must keep our eyes on the prize: *"looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* The goal of the athlete who competes is to win the prize. All the hard work, long hours of training, and discipline happen because they focus on what they want to achieve: The prize! Notice how proudly an Olympic competitor stands on the podium when they receive their medal. All the time and energy spent was to hopefully be on that podium to see all the hard work pay off and receive that medal. Tears often overwhelm them as they realize they have achieved their goal. As we run this race of faith my friends we must never take our eyes off the prize. Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, is the one who ran His race in obedience to the Father. He is our example, He is our Savior, He is the reason we entered this race to begin with. Never, ever, take your eyes off of Jesus. When we cross the finish line one day, it will be worth it all! Keep on running the race my friends and keep your eyes on Jesus!!!

P.S. Happy Thanksgiving!!!!

Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.



Snow Hill Baptist Church

No Regrets Family Ministry- A Dark Place

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

The Lord has blessed me tremendously and I just wanted to thank God for everything He has done for me. You know the Lord did not have to save me, but by His good graces He came to where I was at and rescued me.

The Bible teaches us that we were in the "power of darkness" before we got saved. Colossians 1:13 (KJV 1900)

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Therefore, I was in a dark place as an unsaved person. I did not realize where I was spiritually. Most people never consider their spiritual condition before God. We do not think of ourselves as being in the realm of darkness before we get saved. Could this be the reason many of us take our salvation for granted, because we do not consider where God has brought us from?

To even began to wrap our mind around what God has done for us is amazing. If it were possible to see ourselves in hell, then we could begin to understand the grace of God. We have an account of this in Luke 16 about a rich man in hell who lifted his eyes in torment and saw Lazarus comforted in Abraham's bosom. This rich man begged for a drop of water and for Lazarus to warn his five brothers of the horrible place he was in. It is obvious from this true account, had the rich man been aware of the horrible terrifying place of hell he would have done anything to avoid going to this place of torment.

Only through the light of the Gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit are we made aware of our need of salvation. We do not come to this place of awareness on our own. By the grace of God, we are made aware of our sinful condition but rarely are we convinced of how dreadfully sinful and in darkness we are. John 3:19 (KJV 1900)

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

So, God comes into our darkness and rescues sinners out of a place we cannot get out of on our own. How does one expose what is in the dark? You expose what is in the dark by shining light into darkness. Jesus Christ is the "light of the world" and it is His light and revelation and work of the Holy Ghost that exposes and draws our sinful nature to Himself for Salvation. 1 John 2:8 (KJV 1900)

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

Thank God Jesus came to where I was at in a dark place I could not get out of, and Jesus paid my sin debt on the cross of Calvary making it possible for me to be saved. God loves you so much even when we do not even consider what He has done for us. When Jesus died on the cross there was darkness all over the land, because He was paying the penalty for my sin. The wages of sin is death, but thank God, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? God can meet you where you are at today, pray to Him today confess your sin to God and ask Jesus to be the Lord of your Life. Romans 10:13 (KJV 1900)

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
Live life with "No Regrets"

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.



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Thankful, Grateful, Blessed

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County



These sentiments have been bubbling over from our hearts so much since moving to our new home. We truly are thankful, grateful and blessed. But, it was our friends who also moved within a short time and distance from us who kept saying this over and over, reflecting on God's goodness to them.

The more they said it, the more it rang true in our own circumstances. And it got me to thinking. Aren't the words thankful, grateful and blessed rather similar? But, as I prayed and considered these words, I realized something.

When we are thankful it is a welling up from within to God.

When something amazing occurs, from a place deep within we look up and say, "Thank You, Lord!" There's no considering how we might say it, when we should say it or whether tears will or won't accompany the phrase. Because this is not merely a phrase, it's praise. Praise to the only One who really deserves our devotion and thanksgiving.

When we are grateful we look around and are humbled by God's grace and goodness in a situation. We wonder if we really deserve His grace and mercy so personally given.

My picket fence fell around me in a failed marriage many years ago and self-pity wormed its way in for a bit. But, looking into the precious face of my infant son and recognizing that I was God's child...his daughter...I was infused with courage. My heart rejoiced with gratefulness that God would walk this road with me and fulfill Romans 8: 28, NKJV which says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

When we are blessed, we recognize that what is coming to us is not from our own hand, but from God's heart.

How precious it was when the Lord gave me a second chance. My marriage to my husband, Ken, and the addition of two more sons were blessings only He could provide. He knew my heart and His favor fell upon us all.

So, though the words are similar in nature, they hold different dimensions...like a diamond reflects light.

That is why when we saw a sofa pillow that said, "Thankful, Grateful, Blessed" we knew we had to get it for our friends as a house warming gift.

Their words had sparked the refreshment of our own thankfulness, gratefulness and blessedness warming our hearts and home. May they remind you of the same. Selah

FAMILY PORTRAIT

Buttercup feathers announce the growth of these new Sandhill Crane arrivals.

Mama and Papa set the example so their babies are well nourished and able to grow to maturity.

May our family portraits be legacies of biblical love and maturity.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children...in your house... walk by the way...lie down...rise up."

Deuteronomy 6: 7



Ken and Jan reside in Land Harbour in Avery County, where they have moved in retirement because they love our mountains. They have written for us in years past.



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Habitat Heroes

By Robin Warden
Mitchell Yancey Counties

Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit, locally managed, ecumenical Christian housing ministry working to partner with families in need of safe, affordable, and energy-efficient housing. Houses built by Habitat are sold to families who are able to pay a no-interest monthly mortgage, as well as, their land taxes and insurance. Each adult member of a family is required to provide 200+ hours of "sweat equity" helping to build their home. Habitat serves people in need of decent housing regardless of race or religion. Volunteers pictured here are some of the many Habitat Heroes providing most of the labor for our local affiliate, while individuals, corporations & businesses, government agencies, churches, and community organization provide grants, donations, and materials to help build Habitat homes. We welcome volunteers to join us in "building homes and changing lives". Become a Habitat Hero. Volunteers are welcome.

Contact - Steve Bruton
407-864-0699
Email: Stevehabitatvcl@yahoo.com



Habitat Volunteers enjoy their work on the foundation of new home in Ledger: Charlie Foust (Construction Supervisor), Tom Heimerl, Jack Sielaff, Rick Harkins, & David Bush.

Mitchell-Yancey Habitat is still seeking a parcel of land for a deserving Habitat partner family in Mitchell County, preferably in Ledger or the surrounding area. Please contact us if you have a 1/2 acre or larger parcel to sell or would be willing to donate for their new home site.

Contact: Misty Evans, Operations Manager
828-766-9000 or email: myhfvcl@yahoo.com

Robin Warden is the Board Vice-President and Development Chairperson of Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity.

Please Pass the Salt

By Lana Ellis
Kingsport, Tennessee



Salt. A Simple four letter word, but it packs a mighty big punch! I have read that there are over 1400 uses of salt. Most of us think of it as only the white substance that comes out of the little holes in a shaker or measured precisely for a recipe, but less than five percent of the salt produced is used in this way. Among the many other uses is processing of food, meat, leather, chemicals, glass, soap, paper and even rayon. Salt melts snow on cold winter days and aids in making ice cream on hot summer days. Salt comes from mines, the sea and wells. The country that produces the largest amount of salt is China followed by the United States of America. Another interesting tidbit I learned is that wages were once paid with salt. Thus came the term "not worth his salt" meaning one did not earn his wages.

This subject of salt came about a few months ago while I was on a road trip to a remote area in the mountains. Before I reached my destination I stopped at a roadside diner and ordered a hamburger and fries to go. Upon reaching my destination with mouth watering, I took a huge bite of the burger followed by one of the large fries that only a diner can produce. What? An unsalted French fry! I didn't know there was such a thing! Oh how I wish I could have said to someone "please pass the salt." Job asked the question, "Is tasteless food to be eaten without salt." My answer to Job is yes but it's not much good!

As previously mentioned salt is derived from mines, the sea and wells but there is an even more important source of salt, Christianity. As I was reluctantly eating unsalted fries I was reminded that Jesus said that I, along with all believers, are the salt of the earth. Why would Jesus use the example of salt rather than a sweetener? Wonder why He didn't say give the world candy coated "feel good preaching"? Surely that would make it easier to grow a big crowd around us. Why salt? Salt is used for curing and preserving and I've never known it to draw ants, bugs and other pests as sugar does. In Mark 9:50 Jesus said "Salt is good...Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another." The first place we should be "passing the salt" is in our homes. What kind of example are we setting for our children and spouses? Are we caring for their spiritual and mental needs as well as their physical needs? Then step out of the house and look around at our neighbors. Are they seeing and hearing Christianity living out in our lives. It's easy to "look and act salty" while at church but can someone there see us as hypocritical?

Paul wrote "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt so that you know how you should respond to each person." (Colossians 4:5-6) We live in a tasteless world that is in need of a lot of "Jesus salt." So please pass the salt!



Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grandchildren. Church is West Colonial Hills Baptist Church.

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-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

"The Rivers We Cross"

By Timothy W. Iron
Burke County

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name;
You are Mine.

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.

3 For I am the Lord your God, ... " - Isaiah 48:1-3



Before me, the mountains lay shrouded in the mist. Grandfather remains hidden under dark skies. He doesn't want to be bothered today. The rain had cleared long enough for a short hike, so here I stand watching as clouds like waves on the ocean, crash against the shoreline. In calm, quiet, but formidable stealth, each one smashes against the bulwark of the peaks yet to be engulfed by the coming storms. Somewhere below the mist lay the sleepy little village of Collettsville. Along its main street lined with mill town houses the John's River flows, clear and cold. Part of my walk had already taken me past its banks confirming that the water was once more, clear of the day's rains. My mind thought of the recent journeys to church and how for three Sundays in a row I had crossed the river to reach the other side. It became part of my personal challenge. As I explained it to Pastor Joe, it made me appreciate being able to make it to church. In life, we often take for granted the ease with which we worship and all that has made that possible. This summer's journey had made me more aware of this fact than ever before. So, as part of my weekly walk to Sunday morning preaching, fording the John's River became my rite of passage, so to speak. Each time I encountered a new twist, a new challenge. Each time, there were the difficulties making it out of the river and up the steep bank on the town side of the water. It made me think of how we often cross our own rivers.

Both my mother and father have gone on. They have both crossed their River of Jordan to reach that far distant shore. Each passed in their own way, but it was my blessing to have had the opportunity to say goodbye to each of them before they stepped into the current and began their journey across; God made that possible. I was not there on the other side to welcome them home, but in some instance, I know they both had steep embankments up which they had to struggle; death did not come easy. So, it is for many who have died, and for those times we pray that the Lord give them comfort in their time of crossing. We would want the same. As Christ suffered on the cross for our sins, he too felt the painful anguish of death's sting, but he was not defeated by it. From life to death we all shall pass, but where we finish is up to us; a choice that must be made here on this side of that beautiful flowing strand.

"A decision many fail to make in time," I thought to myself, standing there admiring God's beauty even in the midst of an approaching storm.

The stillness was broken by a shrill snort. Behind me on a tree-covered peak beyond where I stood, a buck huffed irreverently at me; my presence had encroached upon his domain. One couldn't help to think that perhaps he was as enamored with the scene as was I. The crickets spoke of the coming darkness, so I made my way back down the slope to home leaving the deer to his peace. My thoughts meandered back to the clear flowing waters. Tomorrow I would try once more to find myself wading the waters to reach the sanctuary, challenged but not diminished by what it took to reach that distant shore. The first step is always the hardest.

Likewise, when we decide to take our leap of faith and commit our lives to serving the Lord, the first step is the most difficult. Stepping from the safety of the shore into the unknown can be enough to cause us to reconsider our decision. We think it is all our doing, that we'll have to make it on our own. What we often fail to realize is that once we begin our journey with Him, that is Him, God, that will be there to help make up the differences we cannot fathom. So, when we finally realize that we are not alone, we can make that first step.

The freezing water at first is like burning fire, but with time, we become numb to its pain. As we learn to trust in Him, we are able to carry on, pushing forward, becoming numb to our previous fears. The current is strong, and it takes every ounce of strength to take each new step, yet we are not deterred. In our weakness, we become strong in Him. The reward we seek is far greater than the obstacles that try to dissuade us from reaching that distant shore. The cold has lessened the pains; still, we continue on regardless of what others might say or think. Once we find ourselves committed, standing on the brink of the rushing waters, we still struggle to make the crossing. They never said it would be easy. Trial and tribulation buffet us like the coming storms before me this night. Below the surface, rocks make each step painful as our bare feet seek to guide our way. Meanwhile, we are burdened down by the past life; financially and emotionally. The anchor of our self-inflicted burdens become unwanted drag against the current. Breaking free is in some ways as difficult as dying. In essence, we must die to our former selves so that we may be made anew in Christ. As Paul said, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." We tend to try to bring the past with us, and the problems therein. With persistence, we push on. One by one, we set our burdens free, lightening our load. As we learn to walk in our faith, those restraints that kept us shackled to the past are broken away, and we are set free.

With each step, we find a rhythm to the river's bottom, and soon, we are beginning to find the nearing distant shore. We know we are on the right path for the current is against us, like those trials through which we persevere, they build our character, and with each one, we become stronger in our faith. Once we make landfall, we wearily climb up out of the river, careful not to slip and fall back in. Looking down from above, we can see from whence we came. There is peace in knowing that you have made it through the storm. There is peace in knowing that with Him, all things are possible, and because of Him, we have that distant shore for which we may strive.

The choice is ours.
Step into the water and begin your journey.
You'll not turn back, for if it is His will, then it shall be done.
Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Iron is the Executive Director of the Waldensian Trail of Faith. He lives in Valdese with his family. He is the author of, "Bruecke to Heaven," and an active blogger, artist and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, is an Eagle Scout. He is now teaching in Watauga County.



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Are You a Blessing or Are You Blessed?

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



Are you a Blessing or are you Blessed, that's the question? Do you realize that each day you and I have the chance to be a blessing to someone else? The reason is God has given us another day and another chance to be a blessing to the people He puts in our lives. Now the question is are you willing to be a blessing to someone else? I realize that if we choose to be a blessing to others we are going to have to make sacrifices during the day. You're going to have to take valuable time out of your busy day and be willing to offer that time to someone else. Now I want you to understand it doesn't take as long as you might think it will to be a blessing. Do you know a kind word and a smile will go a long ways and will be a blessing to those you share it with?

I remember one person who was a real blessing to me in my life, even though I never found out her name. She showed me the importance of trying to be a blessing each day of our life. I was a student at Fruitland Baptist College in Hendersonville NC. My car was giving me and my wife a lot of trouble and we were having a tough time making ends meet, if you know what I mean? I'm not a mechanic, so when I have trouble with my car I'm at the mercy of the garage or dealership I take it to. So I took our car to the dealership to see what was wrong. They told me that they had to put it on a machine to find the problem. So after the test was completed they came out and said, Mr. Williams it going to cost quite a bit to get it fixed, but if you don't get it fixed, you're going to wind up having even more problems. I had nowhere near the money, so I had to tell them I couldn't do it, I would just have to keep driving the car the way it was. A lady that was signing in cars at the dealership said Mr. Williams wait a minute and let me check on something. I waited and waited and then finally she came back and said, "Mr. Williams I've got you some good news, this is a warranty problem and we will be able to fix it for you at no cost. I began thanking her and thanked her again for all her help. I shared with her how we just didn't have any extra money because I was going to Fruitland Bible College. And Listen to what this lady told me. She said "Steve this time, each morning on my drive to work I ask God to allow me to be a blessing to someone, somehow during the day. Today God has allowed you to be that person. I never forget the importance of trying to be a blessing to someone during the day.

Remember each day God Gives us a blessing by allowing us to see another day. So use it as an opportunity for you to be a blessing to someone that day.

PS. I'd like to thank all the people, that God has put in my life who have blessed me, by showing me the importance of being a blessing. I can't call you all by name but you know who you are. I'm so thankful for all the cards, calls, and kind words y'all have shared with me for so many years. I have been so BLESSED.

Words of Wisdom

- The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author; salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure. John Locke
- If you expect the blessings of God, be kind to His people. N/A
- I give all the glory to God. It's kind of a win-win situation. The glory goes up to Him and the blessings fall down on me. N/A
- We are all different, but when we ask for the Lord's blessings, we must not forget that God created us equal. N/A
- Each time we cooperate with God, we take one more giant step forward. Because when God asks us to change, it means that He always has something better to give us - more freedom, greater joy, and greater blessings. N/A

A Little Laughter for the Heart

An elderly woman was a faithful church goer and an avid reader of the Bible. In fact, the Bible is all she read. A friend asked, "Why don't you read anything other than the bible?" "I can't the woman replied, "I'm cramming for my finals."

Something to Think About

Seek not to understand that thou mayest believe, but believe that thou mayest understand. Augustine

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.

and include the games "Fraction City," "Piece of Cake" and "Xtreme Math Basketball." While Poole teaches reading and science for her homeroom, she teaches math to all fifth graders at Hildebran and was looking for a way to engage her students in a fun way. Poole said math can be a tough concept for her students, but is a vital part of the curriculum. To engage her students more, Poole uses games to help them grasp the concepts of math, which she hopes will get her students more excited about math, especially during the end-of-the-year review. She said the games will come in handy during the review.

Poole said of Donors Choose, "This is such an easy way to get stuff for your classrooms. I recommend it to everyone that I can. I think the kids are going to love it who need to get more excited about math." She hopes this will inspire other teachers to do something similar for their students' futures.

The principal of Hildebran, Randy Sain, said, "I thought it was great that Mrs. Poole was awarded the grant. The math games she got are very useful in keeping the kids engaged, on task and learning." Sain hopes the games will find a way to reach the kids through hands-on learning.

Glenn Eckard with Horace Mann was among the donors to Poole "Donors Choose" request. "Donors Choose" is a free, nonprofit website where teachers can receive funding for student resources.

Cheryl Shuffler is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.

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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

7				9	1			
		2						
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	7						8	
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Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

Humility

By Brent Price, Outreach Chaplain
Mitchell County

Have you ever known someone who always finds a way to make sure everyone notices them? You know, the one who enters a room exclaiming in one way or another, "Here I am!" Always center-stage, managing to push their way to the front of every parade, each moment of their life makes it clear that no matter what it is—it's always about them. Humility is definitely over-rated.

Given many of the ways I hear the word used, humility doesn't sound like a quality I'm ready to embrace either. Think about it. Poor people, the mentally challenged and the under-privileged are frequently labeled "humble." Persons who are inappropriately modest or demonstrate a low estimate of their importance are humble. When someone is "humbled" we generally think of someone who has been brought down a notch or two. Meek and lowly all too often means weak and powerless. Not sure it's for me.

However, genuine humility is a beautiful quality in any person. You know who these people are. They touch our lives in often simple yet profound ways. They enter a room in a manner that says, "Well, there you are!" They would rather see than be seen, listen rather than be heard. At times you know there is somewhere else they need to be, but they have chosen to be with you instead. In their presence you can sense a power that is never overwhelming or abusive.

Here we experience humility rooted in love. Inspiring and encouraging it creates opportunities for others to see in themselves that which was hidden. It takes a back seat, but couldn't imagine missing the ride. It works backstage so the show can be a success in spite of the fact that it will never be invited to take a bow.

Don't be fooled by fake modesty and watch out for the person who is secretly dying to get noticed because they are so "humble." It doesn't take long to figure out, but they can get you if you don't watch out.

True humility lies at the heart of the choice to set ourselves aside for a moment, or a week or more for the sake of another. It doesn't discount the worth of its words or deeds, nor does it advertise them for all to see. Rooted in a servant's heart, humility quietly goes about the work of love. It speaks for itself.

Thank God for all those who continue to see others first, going about the work of love, making this spinning ball we call home a better place for us all.

Reverend Brent Price is a chaplain at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.



Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

Bridges the Gap

By Daniel Barron
Mitchell County

The Fund for Mitchell County in collaboration with the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina awarded a 2016-2017 People in Need grant of \$15,000 to Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge for a project called Bridging the Gap. HPCBR, formerly Hospice of Mitchell County, is a nonprofit 501 C 3 organization that serves individuals and families who are faced with a life-limiting illness.

In a recent interview the staff pointed out that when an individual is accepted into their care, that individual receives total care for the remainder of his or her life. Unlike some for-profit organizations HPCBR accepts financial responsibility for all hospice related needs even when Medicaid or Medicare benefits have been exhausted. Anyone or any family facing the many difficult issues that are eased as fully as possible by the HPCBR staff regardless of income level are encouraged to take advantage of their care and support. Those who do come from lower income situations are assured of the same loving care for as long as they require it. The purpose of Bridging the Gap is to establish a sustainable program that will finance many of the daily needs faced by clients which are not covered by traditional funding sources. These include transportation, fire extinguishers, nutritional supplements, clothing, household supplies, personal care items, utility bills including heating and cooling, and other often relatively low cost items that many of us take for granted but are beyond the meager budgets of some individuals and families.

The program is not a one-time project, rather it will be combined with existing fund raising efforts including the in-house staff supported, Radford Fund; the Hospice Thrift Store in Ledger, Annual Golf Tournament at Grassy Creek; and the colorful Cruz-In Car Show in Bakersville. Go to their website for details and to support their work with donations and/or volunteer opportunities: <https://www.hospiceandpalliativecareoftheblueridge.org/>.

"The Fund for Mitchell County Advisory Board continues to be impressed with the many services that nonprofits offer Mitchell County residents," said Board Chair, Dr. Dan Barron. "This year we had some very difficult decisions to make, but the proposal submitted by Hospice stood out first because the staff were able to show the tremendous need out there. Second, how the project could be sustainable for years to come. Finally, during our interviews with the staff, it was obvious that they have a deep personal as well as professional caring for each person and family they work with and we wanted to support that level of care and commitment."

The Fund for Mitchell County was able to award \$50,000 in grants to Mitchell County nonprofits during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The Fund for Mitchell County is a totally volunteer organization and an affiliate of The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. Tax deductible contributions which will remain in Mitchell County forever are welcome (<https://www.cfwnc.org/AffiliateFunds/TheFundforMitchellCounty.aspx>). For more information contact Dr. Daniel Barron: 828-284-1914 or drdanbarron@gmail.com.

Dr. Daniel Barron was a distinguished Professor Emeritus at University of South Carolina. He was the former director of AMYS Regional Library. Dan is now retired.



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We Give Thanks

Our Father in Heaven,
We give thanks for the pleasure
Of gathering together for this occasion.
We give thanks for this food
Prepared by loving hands.
We give thanks for life,
The freedom to enjoy it all
And all other blessings.
As we partake of this food,
We pray for health and strength
To carry on and try to live as You would have us.
This we ask in the name of Christ,
Our Heavenly Father.

Concerned Citizens of Yancey and Mitchell County

Vigil Held for Closing of Labor & Delivery at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital

By Mike Lamm
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

On September 30 the Labor and Delivery department at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital was officially closed. Despite concern expressed by local residents about the increased risk in childbirth that would result from pregnant mothers having to travel much further to Marion or Asheville while in labor, Mission Health refused to reconsider their decision. Consequently, over a hundred people gathered on the night of September 30 for a candlelight vigil for healthcare in Yancey and Mitchell counties.

Pastor Tommy James (First Baptist, Burnsville) began the service by praying, "We gather here at this place and at this time to grieve together as a community. We grieve because of the injustices of corrupt systems that place profit above people. We gather to grieve because of even greater hardships that will be placed on poor families who are already struggling. We pray for little babies and mothers who lives might be in danger. We pray for health care workers who will lose their jobs and whose families have been disrupted by the closing of labor and deliver at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. We turn to you because so many politicians don't care - we turn to you because of the pain inflicted by corrupt systems that exploit the vulnerable among us."

Pastor Bill Whiteside (Vian's Valley Presbyterian) gave a moving reading from Psalm 38 including "My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. O LORD, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior."

Pastor Jeremy Troxler (Spruce Pine Methodist) recalled the story of children being brought to Jesus (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). He said, "We stand here tonight keeping vigil to mark the end of Labor and Delivery services at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. As a Christian pastor, I am here because I take Jesus at his word: that the degree to which a person or a community is willing to welcome children is the degree to which it is willing to welcome God. I am here because of my concern that the closing of local Labor and Delivery hurts the well-being of vulnerable children in our community: and because I want to be part of a community that does everything it can to provide blessing and healing for every child born into this world."

We give thanks for holy moments in which parents and grandparents laid eyes on the face of their infant for the first time. We express our gratitude for all of those doctors, and nurses, and staff who have served in the history of Labor and Delivery. We have gathered to lament. We grieve that our mothers will not be able to give birth locally under a doctor's care. We lament staff members who have lost jobs or who have been forced to relocate. We mourn that our community feels less strong and self-sufficient than it was before.

Our presence here registers our concern for our unborn children, and for expectant families who now have to travel longer distances to receive the care they feel they need. We are concerned about a trend in which decisions profoundly affecting our community are being made by people far away, people whose own families do not experience themselves the consequences of those decisions. We are concerned . . . about the direction of an impersonal health system that sometimes seem to care more about PR than about the ER, more about dollar signs than vital signs.

The word "vigil" refers to watchfulness, to being awake, to paying attention. In response to the closing of Labor and Delivery many of us are being more watchful, paying greater attention to the state of health care close to home. But as we light candles tonight, we do so in part to express a hope: the hope that this vigil is not merely a wake - but that . . . we might one day be a community again that does everything in its power to take Jesus at his word, and to welcome the little children."

Pastor Whiteside read about Jesus healing a leper (Mark 1:40-44), a woman who had been unable to straighten her back for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-13), and Jesus healing crowds of sick people (Matthew 9:35-36).

Pastor Mike Lamm (retired Presbyterian minister) spoke about the miracles of Jesus, noting that three-fourths of the individual miracles cured illness or disability. In addition, there are sixteen passages that tell of crowds of people coming to Jesus to be healed. When those are taken into account, we realize that all but a tiny fraction of the miracles of Jesus were healthcare miracles. None of his miracles were enormous spectacular events like the nation-wide plagues that Moses delivered to Egypt. In fact, we are told of times when Jesus purposely healed in private and when he told those he cured to not tell anybody. We only know of two times that Jesus knew the person He healed and there are many times when there is no mention that anyone had faith. Jesus was indiscriminate in who He healed: young and old, rich and poor, male and female, Israelite and foreigner. People weren't required to prove that they were worthy.

While people were impressed by the ability of Jesus to heal, Jesus was less motivated by wanting to impress people than He was by compassion for their



suffering (Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13; Matthew 9:35-36 and others). He recognized that all people are precious in God's sight (Matthew 6:26). And Jesus taught that we are to treat other people in the way that we hope they will treat us (the "golden rule," (Luke 6:31). "If we claim to have faith then there are moral issues that must be addressed if we are to be found faithful. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus made it clear that the extent to which we overlook the illness of others is a moral issue. Healthcare is a moral issue. And if you consider yourself to be a person of faith, it is a faith issue."

As everyone's candles were being lit, Pastor Travis Wynkoop (Griffith Chapel) read the words to the song, "Light One Candle" followed by Galatians 5:14; Matthew 25:34-40; James 2:15-17 and Matthew 7:12. Then he spoke eloquently about having been born at the hospital in Spruce Pine and closed the service with a powerful prayer. The crowd sat in candlelit prayerful silence for several minutes.

The Vigil for Healthcare was co-sponsored by SEARCH (www.searchwnc.org) and by the Yancey-Mitchell branch of the NAACP. SEARCH (Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare) is a recently formed organization of concerned citizens that seeks to "empower greater involvement in decisions affecting the healthcare of our residents" and "to preserve, strengthen and expand access to essential medical services in our area." The Yancey-Mitchell NAACP mission "is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons."

Michael Lamm was pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Thomasville, NC until he retired to Burnsville in 2015. He does pulpit supply and a bit of writing. Before entering the ministry he was a construction worker and an audio engineer.



Thanksgiving Blessings To You and Yours

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Recent spikes in the number of children in foster care in North Carolina have created an urgent need for families who are willing to open their hearts and homes to children in need. **Crossnore School & Children's Home** offers the necessary training and supervision required to become a licensed foster parent.

For more information, contact Gretchen Goers, Foster Care Supervisor and Licensing Specialist, at (828) 733-4305 or ggoers@crossnore.org.



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