

# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

## Marriage ...God's Foundation of Society



**Mack and Ann Peterson - Tipton Hill**  
Married 60 Years  
Upper Brummitts Fundamental Brethren



**Fritz and Sarah "Lib" Burnette**  
Married 74 years  
Hopewell Baptist Church in Morganton



**Hoyo and Betty Hyleman**  
Married 72 Years  
Shoal Creek Baptist Church



**Martin and Myrtle Braswell**  
Married 68 1/2 years  
Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church



*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother,  
and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one  
flesh. Genesis 2:24*



**Avery and Betty Carpenter**  
Married 70 years  
Berry Chapel Baptist Church



**Preston and Bea Denton**  
Married 71 years  
Mount Home Baptist Church



**Bill and Helen Weatherman**  
Married for 73 Years  
Walnut Grove Church



**Roy & Jan Walters**  
Married 65 Years  
Burkumont Baptist Church

### Marriage And Family, Our Foundation

By Doug Harrell

This past month has been lots of fun talking to older couples around the region of Western North Carolina that Blue Ridge Christian News is proud to serve. Speaking with couples that have been married for at least 60 years has been the focus of the February "LOVE" issue for Valentine's Day.

The most amazing thing has been the similarities between the many different couples I have talked to or gotten letters from. The conversations were usually started with the question, what do you give credit for the long marriage you and your mate have had? The most common thread was their combined faith in God and their involvement in their local churches. The phrase, evenly yoked, came up many times in the conversations. Comments like, we agreed at the beginning to not fuss and fight, not to go to bed angry, and being willing to talk things out. One couple said that going out to McDonald's at least once a week together for breakfast had been important. Several mentioned giving each other space to grow and mature over the years had been important to them. Another common thread was not talking negative to other people about each other and always supporting each other in public. Another common phase was: to be focused on a relationship with God and not just material things that did not last. Another thing that was mentioned, in just about all of the discussions, was being willing to tell each other daily that you loved them. It has been heartwarming to see the smiles and read the letters we have received from the ones featured on the front page this month. The rewards of years of hard work have shone through loud and clear. While Barbara and I have not made it to the 60 year mark yet, after 53 years we could really relate to the stories laid out in front of us. God's path is quite clear in his word, a couple is to leave their mother and father and become one in God's eyes, and their eyes, until death do they part. This act, this combining to become one, is, has been and always will be, the very foundation of society as God planned it. The rewards are unfathomable and to be treasured throughout all time.



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261 Oak Ave.  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Office - 828-765-6800  
Fax - 828-766-9157  
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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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# Church Directory

## 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  
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2nd & 4th Sunday  
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)  
Wednesday - 7:00pm

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## 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

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Loving God and Loving People

## 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

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## 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

## First Advent Christian Church

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

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw**  
Associate Pastor Javier  
Guzman

pbradshawfaccmorganton@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!

## 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!

## 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  
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## 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"

## 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

## Roan Mountain Missionary Baptist Church

37 Sandy Branch Road  
P.O. Box 668  
Bakersville NC 28705

**Pastor: Dr. C. Timothy Fowler**

Sunday School - 10:00  
Worship Service - 11:00  
Sunday Evening - 6:30  
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00

Please join us in worship.  
The Church where Christ is proclaimed  
and His Word is believed.

## Lana's Lines

### What Is This Thing Called Love?

By Lana Ellis  
Tennessee



Today we are in pursuit of an answer to the question "What is this thing called love?" It must be very important according to the title of a song written by Bob Merrill "Love makes the world go 'round.'" If you ever wonder where you can find love, John Paul Young says, "Love is in the air. Everywhere I look around. Love is in the air." In 1929 song writer Cole Porter was looking for an answer when he penned the words, "I was a humdrum person leading a life apart when love flew in through my window wide and quickened my humdrum heart. What is this thing called love?" For eons song writers and poets have capitalized on this thing called love. As we search for an answer to that question let's look further into Cole Porter's quest to find the answer. He says "What is this thing called love-this funny thing called love? Just who can solve its mystery? Why should it make a fool of me? I saw you there one wonderful day. You took my heart and threw it away. That's why I ask the Lord in heaven above, "What is thing called love?"

Aha! Now we're on the right track - The Lord in heaven has the answer. Since this month's issue of Blue Ridge Christian News is focusing on long term marriages let's look into God's Word and dig deeper into 1 Corinthians 13, "the love chapter". Not only will we learn what love is but also what keeps married couples together. First of all let's look at what love is not. She says to her friend, "I wish my husband looked more like that man." (Love is not envious.) He comes home with big news and says to his stay at home wife and mother of three preschoolers, "I made a million dollar sale today. What have you done?" (Love is not boastful). He says, "It amazes me that I have been so successful." (Love is not proud.) She says to him, "You're fat!" (Love is not rude). In conversations with others she emphasizes her accomplishments. (Love is not self-seeking.) Harsh words are

being spoken. (Love is not easily angered.) Here are some examples of what love is. The wife says to her husband, "When you can get around to it will you please fix the faucet that has been leaking all week." (Love is patient). He says to her, "I know you're not feeling well. I'll take care of our three preschoolers." (Love is kind.)

I'm a skeptic when I hear a couple say they have not had an argument in their 50 plus years of marriage. If that is really the case one or both of them has definitely been practicing

1 Corinthians 13! All jokes aside two people living under the same roof day in and day out will have challenges. According to 1 John 4:7 "The source of love is God." We must know the Source of Love before we can be expected to love another. If the two individuals vowing "till death do us part" have not placed his and her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior their marriage is on a rocky road from the beginning with little or no chance of survival.

The answer to longevity of a marriage is found in John 15 - Love is Sacrificial. The formula is based on one's priorities - God first, you second, me third. Chuck and I were married fifty-two years before the Lord took him home. You ask, "How did you do it?" My answer, "Chuck was a very patient man!!!"



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



# Church Directory

## 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, 7:30 pm  
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm  
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 8:30 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.

## 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

## 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

## First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

## Burnsville Seventh-day Adventist Church

283 Crest View Road  
Burnsville, NC  
828-682-7476

**Pastor Ed Couser**

Sabbath (Saturday)  
Pot Luck Lunch every Sabbath  
after the sermon for everyone  
Bible Study - 9:30 AM  
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 AM  
Tuesday Upper Room  
Fellowship (Prayer Meeting) Wed.-6pm

## Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.  
Micaville, NC 28755  
(828)-675-9284  
www.ficn.org  
www.ficnradio.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

## 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

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## Marlene's Meditations

### Marriage - A Priceless Painting

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County

Eyes staring at the rhythmic swirls and cadences of the artist's hand, I gazed with wonder as he sketched in the background. As the mysteries of his artwork unfolded, the slow unveiling mesmerized me. Although it took an hour for the black light chalk artist to finish his work, it was worth the wait. A tranquil rural scene cradled a rustic wooden fence, and the blue bird perched happily, singing with abandon. Strong branches swayed gently in the breeze. But a collective gasp rose from the audience when he turned on the black light. What had been a blank space in the painting was now filled with Jesus' face, and it shone in the clouds, plainly visible. When the special ultraviolet light revealed Him, it captured an astounding completion to the picture.



As the artist clicked on his black light, it dawned on me that marriage should be considered sacred because God chose its symbolism to represent a spiritual truth as indicated in Revelation 21:9. The church (people who have entered into a relationship with Jesus



Christ) is Jesus' (the Lamb) Bride. John 8:12 says, "And Jesus said, I am the light of the world." Just as the picture gained significance when the light shone, so, when Jesus lights our marriage, it shimmers with an ethereal beauty. Jesus is the Light of the world, and His covenant with the His Bride, the Church is reflected in the glow of an earthly godly marriage.

continued on page 16







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## Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church- Morganton

### Assurance For The Doubter

By Shawn Thomas  
Burke County



*"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us, for God is greater than our heart and knows all things." (1 John 3:18-20)*

People often say things like "trust your heart", or "follow your heart." But although that may sound good, it is not the best policy. The truth is, our own hearts often mislead us.

The Lord commands us here in 1 John 3:18 not to love others with word or tongue only, but in deed and truth. Then He says in 3:19 that if we DO this, then "We will know by this (these deeds of genuine love) that we are of the truth and will assure our hearts before Him (:20) in whatever our heart condemns us; FOR GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEART and knows all things."

So there is an objective truth with God that is "greater than our heart." There may be times when "our heart" doesn't "feel" like we are God's — so a Christian may have doubts about his salvation, even when he really does belong to the Lord. God's prescription for that person is to do the deeds of the Christian life: including demonstrating practical love for his brothers & sisters. He says this fruit should comfort you and give you assurance that you really are His.

So we find several important lessons in this passage:

Genuinely Christian people may have doubts about their standing with God. It is NOT true that if you have any doubts at all, that you are not saved. John specifically says here that there are times when the real Christian's heart will condemn him — but God knows better!

We also see here that WORKS have an important role in giving the Christian the assurance of salvation. Scripture makes it clear that we are not SAVED by our works (Eph. 2:8-9), but it is also evident from these verses that we may be ASSURED of our salvation by works ("you will know them by their fruits", Matt. 7:20).

And finally, we see that the way we "feel" is not a sure indicator of our salvation. Our hearts may "feel" one thing ("our heart condemns us") but "God is greater than our heart" and knows our true standing with Him. Thankfully our feelings are not the ultimate measure of our salvation — God's love and grace in Christ Jesus are!

*Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at [www.shawnethomas.com](http://www.shawnethomas.com)*



## Brian Center

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# Altapass Baptist Church

## Our Heritage

By Marcus Benfield  
Mitchell County

Psalm 16:5&6 *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

Hello everyone, I trust you have been blessed and are thankful for your blessings. By the time you read this I and around 15 others will be on a mission field in Jamaica where most there don't have the smallest comforts we take for granted. That being said I want to examine the latter part of verse 16 aforementioned, "yea, I have a goodly heritage." What is heritage? Webster's defines it as: the traditions, achievements, and beliefs that are part of the history of a certain group of people. Let me say all of us who are the children of God have a "goodly heritage."

Let's look at this together:

### 1. We all have a Heritage left to us.

I realize many of you like myself do not have a long history of family who served the Lord. Many of us are examples of God's Mercy and Grace from the lowest places in life. Again, I too identify with that. There are others who do have a rich family heritage of service in the Lord and for that they should be thankful. I want all of us to know however that we all have a wonderful heritage left to us by our Loving Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Psalm 61: 5 says *"For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."* Did you catch that precious truth from the Word of God? If we have been saved, we have been given the heritage of all who have ever trusted Him! What a concept. Psalm 119:111 says *"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever."* Every story from the Bible of God's great deliverance, protection, provision, power, and preservation is now part of our heritage. To put it as a young song writer from Wilkesboro NC. said it, "Our Saviour is Glorious, Magnificent, Marvelous is He! There is no other one that Can do what he has done for me. Wonderful, Incredible, He's able to meet my needs. That's just Jesus and what He is to me!" Praise His Holy Name! What a Truly Rich Heritage God has left for all of us. May He help us to truly guard and appreciate our heritage!

### 2. We all have a Heritage we are living.

We have been entrusted with this Rich Heritage and we need to strive to live it out to the best of our ability in a Godly fashion before others.

Matthew 5:16 teaches *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* We need to be aware that John and Jane Q. Public are watching our every action to see how we live out our heritage. Notice also I Timothy 4:12 *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."* As we live out our heritage we must keep this in mind. My friends we are in a very serious integrity crisis in the Christian faith like never before and the Lost World sees it! God help us to be an example of Christ Like believers. May our word be true and may it be our bond. May our lives reflect the heritage of our Saviour. May we love as Jesus loved. May each of us endeavor to walk in the spirit. May we live out our faith in the good times as well as the bad. (We have too many "Fair Weather Christians" now.) And finally, may we live out our heritage in the purity of the Teaching of the Word of God in all aspects of our Lives.

### 3. We all have a Heritage we are leaving.

Someone has well said "Just one short life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will Last." The longer I live the more I realize just how short life is. No wonder Moses said "Teach me to number my days." As I come to the close of these thoughts I feel this last point is most critical. We all know stories of people who started well in the faith and then somehow fell by the wayside. God help us to Leave a Rich Heritage of Faithfulness to the end so those coming behind us will have a clear path to follow. The Apostle Paul admonishes us in I Corinthians 9:27 *"I keep my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* What does it mean to become a castaway? Allow me to illustrate: my wife has a very pretty teapot that sits in our home. It is very special to her. To anyone else it would be useless because it has a crack in the bottom and it leaks terribly. She keeps it because of memories of days gone by in her childhood. It has no useful value anymore. It is precious to the owner, but only in regard to what used to be and what might have been. That is what Paul is conveying here. Many have served God well and are precious to Him. However, because of unrepented and unforsaken sin, these individuals are now placed on a shelf spiritually speaking and have become memories of what used to be and what might have been. They are no longer making an impact for the kingdom of our saviour. God help us and challenge us to never become a Castaway!

In closing, let me reference the Apostle Paul one more in II Timothy 4:6-9. *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."* What a tremendous challenge. As we leave our heritage for future generations may we leave such an impact on others that they will want what we had and may they want to go where we have gone in death. (After all we are receiving a great reward!) Dr. William Culbertson ended every prayer he prayed "Lord help us to end well." We certainly need to try our very best to leave a great and Godly Heritage for those who follow. I personally begin each day in prayer asking God to "Give me a clear mind and a clean heart that I may walk in His will today." Dr. James Lockee told me years ago, as a young preacher, that if I would begin each day with prayer and



Bible reading it would be awfully hard to walk away from God and my calling. I personally have tried for over 20 years to remember and practice that truth. I have found it to be true on many occasions of temptation. I realize we are all human and we all have our faults but, with the help of God, we can Live Out and Leave a "Godly Heritage."

Until next time, you keep looking up and keep your eyes on Him!

*Dr. Benfield is the Senior Pastor of Altapass Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He formerly pastored in Alexander County, NC for 20 years before coming to Altapass in October 2011.*

## Yancey County Hospice

### Grieving the Loss of a Spouse

By Jacob Willis  
Yancey County



More than your children, parents, or friends, your spouse knows you more intimately than anyone. You share in life's ups and downs, the ebb and flow of life takes you on a journey as one. That's why the Bible says, "The two shall become one flesh". It is a relationship like no other. When marriage is good there is nothing else like it. People who got married in High School and have lived together their whole lives should be thankful. People who are divorced and remarried know this is a second chance on what God established as the most holy of endeavors. Marriage is the first institution of God before the Nation of Israel, before the church, and before human government. God knew Mankind should not be alone. We need a partner, someone to navigate life with. So what is to be done when the love of your life passes away?

First of all it is of the utmost importance to work our way through it. You don't get over it, because unlike any other loss, a part of you has died. A part that this side of eternity you can never get back. *"Letting patience have its perfect work."* James 1:4 is the first step. You are not going to get over it, but you will get through it with God's help. You may find in the first few months that even normal everyday life is difficult to navigate. You have spent the majority of your life in many cases adjusting to and complimenting one another. You became dependent on each other for certain things. You consciously or subconsciously assigned certain household tasks to each other, and many tasks you did together. Therefore, folding laundry, cutting the grass, paying the bills, and other simple things bring memories, challenges, and grief. Be patient during these times. Understand that grief is a marathon, a process, and if you patiently grieve you will be comforted Matthew 5:4.

Secondly, clean out the closet. When you feel good and ready in a figurative sense begin to deal with your grief. I will never forget the finality of them cleaning out my grandfather's closet, gone were the things most associated with him. Many of his clothes we gave away, others I kept and wore, others still yet we left in the back of the closet. It is important that some painful memories we give away. We give them to God and no longer carry them, because they don't fit us or our loved one anymore. God is the only one Big enough to handle some hurts, so give them to Him. Some memories we need to share with others and give them away. Certain treasures about people in your family need to be shared so that others can remember them. Because, remember our loved one lives on through the positive ways they impact our lives. This is to be shared and celebrated. Then still there are other memories we keep to ourselves. Intimate things you shared together as lovers, friends, and partners. These are your treasures and no one else's. Unpacking all of this takes time, patience, and the Spirit of God to lead us to understanding and hope.

Finally, it is important for us to reinvent ourselves. So much of us died with our spouse and it can be hard to find ourselves during this time. However, it is of great importance to do so. We need to find out what life is now. It is important by the leadership of the Holy Spirit to set goals, to remember and find new positive activities that you look forward to participating in. Get involved in the lives of others, and this will help you positively progress through your grief.

God left you here for a purpose and remember in losing your best friend here on earth, God is here to be a friend that sticks closer than a brother. A friend who is acquainted with grief and sorrow. When you take this hurt to Jesus you are taking it to someone who understands and loves you.

*Jacob Willis is an ordained pastor and Bereavement Coordinator for Yancey County Hospice. You may contact him at [jacobw@hospiceofyancey.org](mailto:jacobw@hospiceofyancey.org).*





# Hope, Recovery

## It Happened Because of Prayer

Rick and Cindy Mercer  
Burke County



Don't you love it when you are dead set on "not" doing something? Well...that is exactly how we felt last month when the January Blue Ridge Christian News (BRCN) articles were due. We knew that the January issue would be highlighting addictions. And that topic has the tendency to strike a little chord within us. We knew we could submit an extremely personal article, but resolved to the fact that we wouldn't do that. So...we didn't. And now we are. Isn't that funny?

It seemed more appropriate to submit a good story that emphasized the importance of surrendering to Jesus no matter what issue or "addiction" one may be going through. The article about "Mountain Bob" was submitted and appeared in last month's BRCN issue. Now there, it was done and time to move on to February! That was until we had the pleasure of meeting and visiting with Doug Harrell, BRCN Publisher. Doug was invited to our church to interview a couple for the February issue that had been married for 68 years! We all sat together at our fellowship lunch and had a great time getting to know Mr. Harrell. I noticed my husband, Rick, who is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, having a rather in-depth conversation with Mr. Harrell. Now, that certainly isn't unusual for him so I didn't think anything of the interaction. That is, until my husband turned to me and said, "Looks like we are going to submit the article anyway." To which I replied, "Which article?" My husband replied, "You know, the one we were supposed to submit last month." (With a smile on his face) I replied back with, "Ohhhh...ok."

I knew exactly what article he meant. As my husband had visited with Mr. Harrell, our story of a strained marriage (to say the least), drug and lust addictions had piqued his interest. He wanted us to tell the story. And it seems that God would like it told in order for Him to receive glory of a marriage once destined for disaster that now has Victory in Jesus!

Our whirlwind romance began on March 20, 1997 with a blind date. I can only imagine as most people read this article that it could be concluded that the blind date should have been a warning sign. (Smile)

My husband was a Certified Public Accountant and poultry farmer for Tyson Foods at the time and I was a Registered Nurse working in the operating room. He was knee deep in tax season, but consented to having a "time-out" for a date with me. We had never met, and had only talked on the phone a few times. We didn't have Facebook, Instagram or FaceTime to "check each other out." What we did have was mutual trust worthy friends and family members who had insisted we were perfect for each other!

Honestly, neither one of us had intended on falling in love...at least not on the first date. But we did. We were very happy that our blind date was going so amazingly well. So well in fact that he asked me to marry him that night! Alright, I really know what you are thinking now. You will find it comforting to know that we did not marry right away...we waited until after tax season was over. That's right! We married on May 3, 1997.

We blended our families fairly seamlessly. Rick with two boys ages 6 & 7 and me with a 2 year old boy. Everyone seemed happy and I was sure I had found my Prince Charming. And he was charming. He said and did all of the right things, I didn't think things could possibly be any better.

As time went on, I realized that my "Prince Charming" had some problems to say the least. My husband was an alcoholic, and used drugs on a consistent basis. Lust had a hold on his life and it was tearing our family apart. Eventually, he began using crystal meth and that is a force to be reckoned with for sure! It is important to note, that when I married my husband that he didn't look like someone who was a drug user...in fact it was quite the opposite or I never would have married him. In the beginning he went to work at the office, always dressing nice. Later on, he moved the office to our home so he could be more involved with the farm. There were definitely good times, but for the majority of the first seven years of our marriage, I put up with some very difficult challenges. There were many mornings I would leave to go to work only to find him coming in the door as I left out. Suffice it to say, our home life was miserable. For many reasons, details cannot be shared in this article, but I am sure you can all use your imaginations. I had made up my mind that I would leave him because everyone said, "HE WILL NEVER CHANGE." And I believed that more than anyone.

And that is when it happened. Fervent prayer had been my comfort through all of this. I was a Christian, but honestly lacked the faith I needed. I was at a breaking point and knew our marriage was about to end. However, I couldn't bear the thought of our family splitting up as we now had a baby together which gave us four wonderful boys! I had been asking God for a miracle, but had resolved to the fact that I wasn't getting a miracle in my lifetime.

One morning as I was getting ready for work, I began to plead and pray as never before. I wanted released from this situation more than anything! It was then, that I heard God speak to my heart. It was as if I heard audibly, "Cindy, if you leave...you will not have a testimony." It seemed as if I argued with God for over 15 minutes. I gave up of course. I made the commitment that very day to pray and fast until my husband came to know the Lord as his personal Savior. I really did not know what the next day, let alone the next hour would bring. I only knew for certain that God was going to do something in my life if I would be obedient and follow His instructions. *Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.* Jeremiah 33:3 KJV.

The journey was more than incredible. For so many years I had asked God to change my husband. And that was a "just" prayer...in my opinion. As I arose each morning to pray and study at 4 am, I did see some interesting changes in my husband over time. But the biggest change was the one I was seeing in my own life. There was no way I could see it then, but God was refining me for things in my life that would be revealed many years later. The Holy Spirit convicted me of some real life changing things that I could not understand at the time, but I knew there was a purpose in this plan.

I am sure it came as a relief to my husband that my nagging him had ceased. My spiritual journey had brought me to a place where I found forgiveness for my husband. I no longer held on to the past, I was only looking forward to the future. And it was looking much brighter! As God was changing me, it got the attention of my husband. He noticed I was a lot and I do mean a lot nicer to him. I no longer saw him as the enemy and actually was praying specifically for God to give me a new heart. I seriously asked God one day to give my husband a new wife...and to let it be me.

Our marriage took a turn...a turn toward God. There were no overnight success stories...only "one prayer at a time stories." As Rick filled his life with more and more of Jesus, all the other things were pushed out. The drugs, lust, alcohol and tobacco lost their hold on his life. I love the quote that my husband shares frequently. He says, "You can't stomp sin out of your life, but you can crowd it out with Jesus!"

Rick fully surrendered his life to the Lord and we began serving wherever we were needed. We made a decision to give the rest of our life to God. Whatever He asked, we did. We simply said, "Yes, Lord." *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* Hebrews 7:25-KJV.

Within a short period of time, we began to sense God leading us into ministry. But that seemed impossible. We lived in rural Southern Arkansas and raised close to a million chickens a year. Our farm would not be that simple to sell. Rick shared his desire to go into ministry with his mom one day. She said, "If God wants you in the ministry, He will send someone to buy your farm." That very night we received a call from a lady wanting to buy our farm! Only God can work that fast!

A promise that I claimed every day and still consider it my special verse is Ephesians 3:20 KJV. *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"* God's promises are sure. The journey in the beginning when our life took a new course was very surreal, and honestly still is at times. It all happened because of prayer!!

This coming May we will celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary! I marvel at the magnitude that the Lord has worked with us...very patiently I might add. Rick was called into pastoral ministerial work in 2006. We have never looked back or doubted God's hand. Currently, my husband serves as the pastor for the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church and I work part time as Prayer & Women's Ministry Director for the Carolina SDA Conference and per-diem for Morganton Eye Physicians.

A man one day came up to Dwight L. Moody and said, "I've yet to see what God can do with a man that gives his whole heart to God." To which Moody responded, "I WANT TO BE THAT MAN!" There are no limits to what God can do to a heart completely surrendered to Him. Trust Him with your life today. It will be the best decision you can ever make!

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

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### Celebrate Recovery Update

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

Mitchell County's Celebrate Recovery meets at Bear Creek Baptist Church, 327 Bear Creek Church Road, Bakersville, every Thursday evening at 7pm. Following a time of teaching and worship small groups for men, women and families meet for support, encouragement and prayer. Healing is taking place in the families and support is being given to those seeking to recover from drug and alcohol addiction.

Some of the families attending are unable to get the one struggling with addiction to attend but they come by themselves for encouragement, instruction, prayer and help.

**How families can help those struggling with addiction:**

- Try not to accuse or judge. Avoid name calling.
- Do not enable. Do not provide excuses. Do not live in denial of this problem.
- Do not shield the addicted from the consequences of their addiction. People are more likely to change if they have suffered enough negative consequences.
- Set boundaries that you all agree on.
- If you want to provide financial support, buy the goods and services they need instead of giving them money that they might use to buy alcohol or drugs.
- Recognize and acknowledge the potential the addicted one has and promote that.
- Behave exactly as you would if your loved one had a serious illness.

**How families can help themselves:**

- Take care of yourself. Living with this problem is exhausting. Families also need time and help to recover.
- Work on your relationship with Christ. You need Him now more than ever and He wants to help. Rest in Him.
- Avoid self-blame. You can't control another person's decisions, and you can't force them to change.
- Ask for help. Share with those you can trust so they will be praying for you and for the addicted one.
- Attend recovery meetings so you may hear how God is helping others who are going through the same thing.
- If at all possible, try not to be negative. That may only increase their feelings of guilt and push them further into using.

If this ministry can be of help to you please feel welcome to join us. More information may be obtained by calling Josh Wise at 828-385-0061 or Pastor Bruce Cannon at 910-876-2109.

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*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.*





The Love Story

Doug Harrell

This month we are focused on long term marriage relationships for Valentine's Day. This involves more than just marriage relationships, it involves the whole foundation of the family and the family structure. Matthew 19:4 *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made the male and female. Throughout the entire Bible this thought is conveyed. Noah took them in two by two, male and female, to provide for a continuation of the races.*

All of this is well and good, but how do we as humans keep this marriage alive and the family intact? A good marriage is never easy, but it is well worth the effort. In today's world, there is an epidemic of divorces and single parent homes. It seems that the common thread today is "if it is not working, we will just divorce and go our separate ways. My wife, Barbara, and I decided many years ago, that we would make it for better or worse, until death do us part! There have been times in the past 53 years that it was almost death prematurely, most of the time because of something I did or did not do.

As I see the stress put on lives because of the blending of families today, I am thankful for the fortitude that we, as a couple, have made to keep it together. One of the best cliques I have heard was "if the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, why don't you try fertilizing your side"! I have found that there were several things that have been basic to keeping the romance alive. We decided years ago, that we would never criticize each other in public or to someone else, that we would lift each other up rather than tear each other down, and that we would not walk out and go spend the night somewhere else if we were angry. There have been several nights that we spent all night talking, but going to bed angry was not an option.

It is important to constantly remind, or tell, your mate that you love them and to be flirting with them through the years. There is value in constantly reminding the other that you are sure glad you married them! There should not be a day that goes by without you praying for your mate and giving the Lord thanks for providing her or him for you.

One absolutely critical thing is that you be evenly yoked, 2 Corinthians 6:14 *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteous? And what communion hath light with darkness?"* A strong relationship with the Lord is the first building block of any marriage relationship. Attending worship together with the family is no guarantee that the family will not stray, but it is a starting point. You and your mate must always be true to God, yourselves and each other. If children are involved, you must nurture and guide them, firmly at times, and make sure that they have a deep appreciation for right and wrong. Keeping them involved in church related activities is a good start but you must be on constant guard, Satan never ceases to work. Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"*.

The best sermon that you will ever preach to your children is your life example for them. If you cheat, lie, steal, curse and do things that are not good, then you don't really have much you can say. Always be true to God's teaching, to the best of your ability, and set an example that you can be proud of. Let your wife and your children know that you love God, your mate and them, in that order. I pray for a happy Valentine's day for each of you.



By Billy and Franklin Graham

The United States has inaugurated a new president, but Americans everywhere are experiencing a serious lack of unity. Still, there is a possibility for healing. Billy Graham and Franklin Graham say that only can be achieved by seeking God.

*Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*  
Romans 14:19 (NKJV)



If there's anything Americans likely can agree upon, it's just how divided their United States has become. Anger, dissension and fear have become primary drivers as many people lean on their own understanding rather than seeking God during these times.

Billy and Franklin Graham know that these tumultuous waters can be navigated only through prayer. In a recent Facebook post, Franklin Graham urged Americans to pull together.

"We need to go beyond politics and come together in prayer," he wrote. "Democrats and Republicans have to work together and make choices for the good of the nation."

Unity is particularly critical for Christians; Billy Graham writes below in this My Answer column. Be encouraged as you read how you can be a difference-maker in a troubled world.

**Q:** Why can't Christians seem to get along with each other? We have a few people in our church who do nothing but criticize everything (including our pastor), and they just generally like to make trouble. Haven't they ever heard that Christians ought to love one other?

**A:** The Bible is clear: love for others should be the mark of anyone who claims to follow Christ. Jesus said, *"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* (John 13:35).

Over the years, I've talked with a number of pastors who had experienced some kind of trouble in their churches. Sometimes they admittedly were at fault, perhaps neglecting their pastoral duties or failing to prepare their sermons adequately. But sadly, in many cases they had become discouraged solely because a few disgruntled people opposed them—just as these people had opposed their predecessors.

Why did they oppose them? Perhaps they wanted to control everything, or always be the center of attention. Or perhaps they were driven by jealousy or anger or some other hidden motive. But whatever the reason, they were opposing God's servants and blocking His work—and that is always wrong. The Bible warns, *"Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged"* (James 5:9).

Don't let the sins of a few keep you from Christ, and don't let their negative attitudes poison you and your support for your church and its pastor. Instead, pray for them—and if God gives you an opportunity, confront them about their need to be filled with Christ's love. In addition, your church's elected leaders may need to intervene. The Bible says, *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace"* (Colossians 3:15).



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# My Valentine

By Allen Buchanan  
Mitchell County

June 1972 was my first summer living in the Lily Branch Community of Mitchell County. Eight months earlier my dad had accepted the call to Pastor Lily Branch Baptist Church. It was Saturday afternoon at the parsonage and I was in my bedroom after taking a bath.

This particular weekend was Decoration at Lily Branch. The cemetery across the road was filled with families placing flowers on grave sites as memorials. Old friends were reminiscing about days gone by. New friendships were forming.

Little did I know my life was about to change. The church music director, Margaret Murdock, decided to stop at the parsonage and introduce her nieces from Maryland. Susan 14, Sherri 12 and Teresa 10. Margaret's nephew, Tim, a good friend of mine was tagging along. As they entered the house I was trying to be very quiet since my room was so close to the living room. While everyone was talking, I accidentally knocked over a large glass container of marbles that I collected. Imagine the loud noise as everything hit the hardwood floors. No more hiding for me. Embarrassed, I joined them and was introduced to Margaret's nieces.

In nearby Burnsville a carnival was in town. Margaret asked if I'd like to go to this with them. On the way, I rode up front beside Susan yet I had my eye on Sherri in the back seat. Her smile and long hair got my attention. Later on, as we headed home, I rode in the back with her. The following week, Sherri came to Vacation Bible School and we became friends.

Long before the internet, email and cellphones, we wrote handwritten letters. For the next 10 years, Sherri and I would see each other the 3rd weekend of June and date for one week. The rest of the year we wrote letters. Every now and then we would talk on the phone. So exciting!

In March 1982, Sherri was living with Susan's family in Chattanooga, TN. Her brother-in-law was in college there. Sherri helped Susan with their children. We were living in Rutherfordton, NC and I was a student at McDowell Tech in Marion. I sent Sherri money for a bus ticket to come for a weekend visit. The excitement waiting for her at the bus station was so intense. In preparation of her visit, I remember telling my dad how much I loved her and if I didn't ask her to marry me soon, I would make a lifetime mistake.

That weekend we traveled to the mountains to visit with friends and discuss our future together. Cold weather, fog and rain did not dampen our time together. We decided that if I could get a job, even a part-time job, we would get engaged. Only a few days passed and I had a job as the evening receptionist at McDowell Tech. Guess what this meant? I asked my mom not to tell Sherri if she called. I wanted to tell her. Sherri did call and mom had to tell her. I should have never asked mom to lie, so that was okay.

At the end of March, our family moved back to the mountains. Soon I purchased an engagement ring and started counting down the days when I could give it to her. I was so afraid I would lose it. Sherri lived nearly 600 miles from Bakersville. Her sister, Teresa was getting married June 12th and I wanted to be there. Since I had never visited Sherri and wasn't going to travel alone, her cousin, Dale Murdock went with me. After visiting with her family, we drove to her uncle's house for the night. It was there that I proposed and Sherri said, "Yes!" I was so tired from traveling, yet too excited to sleep. We decided not to tell anyone until after the wedding, because it was Teresa's big day. While the ladies were getting ready, someone slipped and let Sherri's mother know. Her father was told in the receiving line after the wedding by Teresa's mother-in-law. Definitely not the way we planned it.

That summer was one of the best times we'd ever had together! We chose to get married November 26th during my Thanksgiving Holidays. After our honeymoon, we moved to Snow Creek and joined Bear Creek Baptist Church. In 1983, I applied for a full-time job at Mayland Community College and got it. Two years later, we moved to the Bear Creek Community and we've been together 34 years. God is good! The whole time I've known my sweetheart, we've worked to put God first in everything. Many years ago, my dad stated that "Sherri and I were foolish over each other". I like to think our foolishness has never stopped. I can't imagine life without her. Sherri, I love you and wish you a very Happy Valentine's Day!

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



# Grace Baptist Church-Morganton

## Love

By George Patton Jr  
Burke County



Well I had hoped this article I could write about the oldest couple still alive in Kenya, but they passed away last year after being married for 79 years. It really caused me to start thinking about my own wife. She has been in heaven now for 10 years this coming July. It was because of her that I am where I am now. We had worked together for 5 years before God saw fit to put us together. I was a manager in a factory and she was a foreman. After we went out to eat for the first time I knew it was love at first sight. However, she was a Christian and I was not. She married me anyhow. For 3 years, she prayed for me daily and invited me to church with her but I continued to refuse. I was a business man and all I was concerned with was money and power. Finally, one Sunday I went. It was the next day after the pastor visited our home that I gave my life to Christ. The following year I left the factory and all the money and we moved to the border of Mexico to be missionaries. She was taking cancer treatments at the time, but we were able to move her care to the Texas/ Mexico border. She was willing to leave her big house and cars and all just to take the Lord's message. We were only there about 9 months and the cancer grew worse, causing us to return home. We arrived back to Morganton in January. We were as poor as a church mouse. For Valentines that year we could not afford anything for one another so we went to Walmart and found each other a card and a gift. We met in the aisle and exchanged gifts and cards. I said sweetheart this is what I would have gotten you if I could, she said the same to me. It was a touching moment. We, after exchanging gifts and cards, put the things back and went home.

The next year I started Bible School and six months after that we got our first church. She was such a wonderful pastor's wife. The people loved her. However, in March of 2007 they told us that there was nothing else they could do the cancer had gotten too bad. Her goal was that she would be able to attend my graduation from Bible College which she did and her second goal was that our youngest Son who we had adopted would turn 18. She had gotten down to about 85 lbs. She still never missed a day of church. I would pick her up and put her in the wheel chair and wheel her in. She said never let me miss a day. She only missed one Sunday. The Sunday before she passed. I had planned a special service that last Sunday night she attended. I hid a dozen roses under the pulpit. After the praise and worship, I said I have something to say. I began to express to her my gratitude for being the wonderful wife she had been. I thanked her for bringing me to Christ and for being there for me and the children. I thanked her for loving me even when I was unlovable. I reached under the pulpit and took out the flowers while the sound people played Dolly Parton's song "I will always love you." I got down on one knee in front of her wheel chair and poured out my heart to her for all she had meant to me. The whole church was crying. That was her last Sunday. The following week our son turned 18.

The next day she started talking about angels. I told her everything was going to be ok. The following day she slipped into a coma. Then on July 4th I set by her bedside from 6am until 2pm. I knew the Lord was going to take her home but I promised her that I would not let go of her hand until Jesus took the other. At 2pm she lifted up her little hand towards heaven and smiled and took her last breath. She had finished her race. Dear friends please do not take for granted that one you love. Tell them every day just how special they are. I sure do miss my wife, but know someday soon we will be reunited again.

George Patton is an evangelist/missionary to the world from Grace Baptist Church in Morganton.



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# Snow Hill Baptist Church

## No Regrets Family-Kindle the Flame

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County

We have not experienced much winter yet, but I am sure we will feel the cold again before it's all over. Sometimes it gets really cold up here on Henson Creek. I have seen the creek freeze over and the wind blow snow sideways. And when it is really cold (I mean bone chilling cold) and we have to keep the water running to keep the pipes from freezing I keep a big fire in the stove going full blast all day. Pam does not like to get cold. If it is not above seventy in the house she is cold. Just before we go to bed I pack the stove full of wood, but that fire will not last all night. It has been burning hot, but it will die down. That is when I get up in the middle of the night and put more wood on the fire. This keeps the house warm and everybody happy.

Marriage is a lot like keeping a fire, you have to keep adding to it or the flame will die down, and if you do not kindle the flame the fire will go out. A lot of married couples get into trouble simply because they do not "kindle the flame." One thing I have learned after nearly twenty five years of marriage is that you cannot be selfish. I have to give of myself and Pam has to give of herself. Marriage is not about changing your mate-- it is about you becoming the right person for your mate, and that my friend takes work. Every time I do something that Pam does not expect me to do, for example wash a load of clothes, or load the dishwasher, it is like throwing a piece of wood on the fire. I do not know what I would do if I came home and saw Pam changing the oil in my truck, ha ha! Just teasing on that one, but when Pam does things for me-- just little acts of love it is like throwing a piece of wood on the fire. Little acts of kindness go a long way.

Romance is very important in a marriage and, like most men, I stink at this. But, for twenty-five years, Friday night is date night for Pam and me. This is something that has been a tremendous blessing to us. It has given us much needed time to talk and spend time together as a couple. We were encouraged to do this before we were married and it has proven to be great advice, and I would encourage every couple to do the same. Dating your spouse is like throwing another "log on the fire" --it will kindle the flame.

One evening during that first year of marriage Pam and I went out to eat. I wanted to take her somewhere nice because she is worth it. We went into a fancy restaurant and looked at the menu. I quickly realized that we could not afford to eat there and we ended up at a Long John Silvers. That was the first time Pam ever saw me cry because I was ashamed that I could not provide more for us. God taught me a very important lesson. If our marriage is based solely on what I can provide then it is doomed; however, if it is based on what God can do through us then it will be blessed. Money cannot buy happiness. I later learned, with the help of my dear wife, that where we ate was not nearly as important as the two of us just being together. I would like to encourage couples to spend time with each other. I am amazed at how many couples arrive at the same place, but in separate vehicles. Do not get so busy with work, hobbies or friends that you forget each other. Do not let facebook or finances come between you and your spouse. Husbands step up and rekindle that love that brought you and your wife together and never let that flame go out.

I would like to share with you some scripture from the book of Proverbs that has been a blessing to me and a place I go when thinking about that special relationship I have with my wife.

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.  
16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.  
17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.  
18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.  
19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.  
Prov 5:15-19 (KJV)

One more thing-- couples that pray together stay together. Pray with your spouse and men lead that prayer time together. God bless you and your marriage and remember live life with "no regrets" because we will stand before God one day.

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.



# The Rotary of Spruce Pine

## Staying Safe

By Doug Sudduth  
Mitchell County



Rotary President-elect George Nero presenting a locally handmade Rotary mug to Tina White

On January 12, at the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine, Rotarian Tina White did a short talk on Situational Awareness and how to be more aware of what is going on around you. She discussed with group how to be more aware of your surroundings in order to keep safe by referencing recent shootings but also basic every day awareness.



Doug Sudduth is the Public Relations Officer for the Spruce Pine Rotary Club.

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## A Valentine's Day Poem

### Butterfly

By Joyce Harwood

*There are few things more lovely  
Than a butterfly  
Yet a pair hold more beauty  
It seems this is why.*

*No matter how graceful  
That one may be  
What soul has the pleasure  
If no one can see.*

*Oh the sweetest nectar  
In the midst of a Rose  
Is by far more delicious  
As two share and grow.*

*In the grandest old palace  
One may sparingly live  
Tho real true existence  
Is when two love and give.*

*One spreads his wings  
As he flies so high  
Yet when two soar together  
They can touch the sky.*



Joy has lived in Madison County since 1976, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is a native of Buncombe County and the daughter of the late Clell and Edith Moss. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC with her husband. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, "home away from home".



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Sermon on the Mount  
Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.  
McDowell County

Hello friends and neighbors! Thanks for returning to read another publication of "The Blue Ridge Christian News" and our article "The Inspiring Word". We're going to pick back up on our study of the Sermon on the Mount. In this article, we're going to look at Matthew 7:1-6 where we read "Judge not, that ye be not judged. (2) For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (3) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? (4) Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? (5) Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (6) Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." In our passage the Lord referred to the Pharisees practice of judging others against themselves. Christ's command not to judge was not forbidding them from distinguishing between good and evil. Neither was it prohibiting them from discerning between truth and error in doctrine. Jesus was not so much dealing with conduct, but rather the motives behind one's conduct. Think about this. We know fornication, murder, covetousness and other similar behaviors are sin. There is no denying it. The conduct speaks for itself. Why the person engaged in it is another matter. Will it change the fact that sin was committed, no, but not knowing the motive should make us step back and really ask how the Lord wants us to move ahead with this. We do not want to be like the Pharisees. They felt they were qualified to determine a person's motive by their action, and they engaged in judging the motives of people. This was exactly what Christ forbid.

As an application of the fallacy of judging another's motives, the Lord illustrated with a speck of sawdust and a board. A speck of sawdust and a board are identical in nature, both are wood, yet they differ in size. The Lord tells us the one who judges is concerned more with the sawdust in someone else's eye than they are over the board in their own eye. Put another way Jesus was telling us that what one is quick to judge in another can be a major issue in their own life. Instead of dealing with the personal problem, it's easier to divert attention away from self to another person. We have no authority to judge another person's life or motives until our own life has been purified. The Lord gives us a very sobering thought in verse 6, He didn't expect the truth He taught to be received by the Pharisees. His sovereignty revealed the Pharisees would not accept the Lord's standard of righteousness over their own.

Christ carefully documented His reasons for rejecting both the Pharisees interpretations and their practice of the law. Therefore, the Pharisees doctrine, traditions, and practice could not produce a righteousness that would make one worthy of God's kingdom.

We have spent some time on then and there, but what about here and now? Our culture and society seem to force us into a judgmental frame of mind. When we find ourselves caught up in the emotion or drama of an event or situation we need to back away and pray. If we don't we most certainly will become judgmental. We will focus so heavily on the speck of sawdust in someone's eye that we lose track of our own errant life. Remember the devil is the prince and the power of this world. Likewise, the old serpent is a master at creating drama. He is also subtle and crafty in his methods. Because of our sin nature we are vulnerable to his attacks and easily lead into a judgmental attitude. How do we overcome it? Simply put, we can't. The Lord has already gained the victory. If we submit to the Lord's authority and submit ourselves to Him, we allow Him to live through us. We can have a testimony that opens doors for others to hear the gospel, see folks saved and others return to a Christ centered worship. Isn't that a life worthy of God's Kingdom! Time and space have run out. Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.



New Van  
By Teresa Young (Daniel Honeycutt)  
Mitchell County

"My name is Daniel Honeycutt, and I am a fifth grader at Tri-County Christian School in Spruce Pine. In my English class, my assignment was to write a persuasive paper. I wanted to let you (our community) know that my school needs a better van, and to ask that you would pray about helping us to get it! We don't have the extra money in our regular school fund, and the van we have now is 17 years old and has lots of miles on it! We need a newer, safer van. We



use the van for our students to go many places, like to sing at the local nursing homes, volunteer at Samaritan's Purse, go on educational field trips, and for our dually enrolled students to go to Mayland Community College. I know it's a lot to ask, but I know God will bless you for helping and you will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Anything you can give will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!"

For more information, please contact Tri-County Christian School 207 Pinebridge Avenue Spruce Pine, NC 28777 (office phone) 828-765-2969 Electronic donations may be made at online at [www.tricountyschool.org](http://www.tricountyschool.org)

Teresa Young is the Principal At Tri-County Christian School in Spruce Pine.



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## Sudoku Solution

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

## The Origin of the Home

Dr. Tom Walker  
McDowell County



There are a couple of passages of Scripture that we need to consider in order to form a foundation for our study:

Gen 1:25-28 says, "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Genesis 2:22-24 declares, "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

The concept of the home did not originate with men, but rather with God Himself. Any concept that man might create could be faulty or defective in some way. But, if God originates it, the story is entirely different. What God ordains can and will work.

Let's briefly contemplate some thoughts about the home as the Lord set it up and ordained it in the beginning of the human race.

### The Place of Its Origin

It all began in a garden the Bible calls Eden. The word "Eden" means "delight." When man fell, it not only tainted man's soul, but it also affected Adam and Eve's environment. Briars and thorns began to come from the ground after the fall in the Garden of Eden. Man had to keep the ground after that time by performing hard work.

The garden was located in the area of Mesopotamia. It was a place where the head of four rivers divided from the river that flowed out of Eden (Gen.2:10-14).

However, before God's plan was unfolded on the earth, it was in the heart of Almighty God before the foundation of the world. God determined that He would not only create man, but that he would make a partner of the opposite sex for him called "woman."

### The People of Its Origin

The two people mentioned are male and female, Adam and Eve. When we consider their names, the name "Adam" means "red or ground." Adam's body came from the dust of the earth. The name "Eve" means "life-giving." God created the body of Eve from a rib in Adam's body that she might be a helpmeet to him. She was to give birth to a posterity made up of children. God knew it was not good that man be alone. I personally believe God knew that a man needed one to help him as he faced the daily trials, pressures and demands of life. It is not good for a man to be alone.

### The Purpose of Its Origin

God has a definite plan in marriage. The Lord began the human race with one man and one woman. As far as He was and is concerned, marriage consists of one naturally born man and one naturally born woman.

God told the first man and woman to "multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). That of course takes the union of a male and female. Two males or two females would not be able to multiply and replenish the earth and obey the command God gave to Adam and Eve.

God also originated marriage to fulfill the sexual desires that are built into man's make-up (1 Cor. 7:5). Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "It is better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor. 7:9) or burn with desire. The only honorable way to satisfy sexual desires is to do so in the bonds of marriage; that is the way God has ordained.

The Lord also designed marriage not only to bring children into the world, but to provide the proper atmosphere in which the children could be raised. As we all know there is quite a difference in a man and woman, not only in a biological, but also in an emotional sense.

continued on page 18

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# Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

## The Rest of the Story:

It was never a dull day around Clint, you never knew what to expect. I have never seen pigs with as much of a "sugar high" as those poor pigs had. They had cleaned up the entire 5 gallons of scum and just laid down. With Clint, you had to be very specific in the instructions, and I must admit that I did not always do that to perfection. The surprising thing was that Clint had actually gotten in the pen with the pigs and poured the five gallons in their trough. I was not there, but knowing pigs the way I do, I am sure that they were all over him trying to get to the molasses scum. I don't recall any dire tales of him being attacked or almost eaten alive, but I would not have been surprised if a few tales had derived from the feeding frenzy that I am sure took place!

Rest in peace my friend.

Farmer Doug

## Funny Farm

Dear friends,

When you're me it's hard to decide which story to share next with 50,000 of my closest friends @. Oftentimes people are perplexed as to why I am willing to relay tales of my incompetence month after month. I tell them that I am a proof-positive that there is a merciful God Who looks after the fools of this world...and I am chief among them @.

## The Farmer's Apprentice

It was early October, 2010, and time for the Family Fun Festival at Harrell Hill Farms. This annual harvest celebration is truly a wonderful event highlighted by Gospel music, face-painting for children, hay rides, excellent BBQ pork and other goodies, and the making of old timey sorghum molasses. If you've never attended this country festival you should make plans to come this year on Saturday, October 4th! Anyway, back to the story.

When I came to Harrell Hill Farms in the Spring of 2010, A.D. "Daddy D" Harrell kind of adopted me as somewhat of a "project." Day-to-day I was "in the custody" of Farmer Doug, as you know, but Daddy D. occasionally stepped-in when to provide me some special lessons. This was to be such a day as he pulled up to the barn and honked the horn of his Chevy pick-up truck. As always, I went running to see what was on his mind.

"Get in, I wanna show you something," he said with a wry smile. I was usually tentative when summoned this way but knew I was not to question his commands. I climbed into the passenger seat having no idea what would come next.

We meandered up Byrd Road, weaving slightly from left to right (Daddy D's eyesight wasn't what it once was!) until we arrived at Farmer Doug and Barbara's farmhouse and parked in the driveway. "Come on," was my only instruction, and I went.

Daddy D. carried an old, oil-stained brown bag which appeared heavy in one hand. As we approached the front porch he began digging in the bag, first tossing me a couple worm-riddled "sheep's nose" apples (I think that's what he called them), then he handed me some sticks and dried leaves, and finally unveiled a rusty contraption of some sort. I confess, I quickly identified the first three contents but couldn't imagine what we would do with the ancient, rusty, medieval torture device. Soon I would know.

## Setting The Steel Trap

Please understand, Daddy D's hands were pretty gnarly...I don't mind telling you the man didn't have a single straight digit. I can only imagine how his hands had become so - ummm, weathered would be a nice term but they were a mess. I once remember him threading his boots with a pair of pliers because his fingers couldn't do it! At any rate, he said "I'm going to tell you what to do, but you have to follow my instructions. I would do this myself but my fingers can't manipulate the trap like they used to. Now, don't do anything until I tell you." Always the eager learner, I agreed to the challenge.

"Now look," he began, "we've got a groundhog under the porch here and it's digging tunnels all the way under the house. We're going to set this trap to try and get rid of it." By this time I am getting pretty excited, just think - "Farmer Clint The Trapper" @. It just had a certain ring to it, don't you think?

Another thing you have to know about Daddy D, he was fun and mischievous much of the time I spent with him, BUT...he was VERY SERIOUS when teaching me things which might be considered dangerous..."Clint, don't ever go into the woods with a chainsaw by yourself, be sure you have a partner!" ... or, "Son, you've gotta watch where you're going with that tractor and hay rake, you're running people off the road down there!"... "Always check to make sure the power is off on the fence before you climb over!" The warnings were endless. Daddy D was a long time educator and was about to crank up his teaching voice. I'm not sure exactly what he planned to say but I have intimate recall of his next comment...to paraphrase, "DANG IT, BOY, YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF!" (Oops, I think I made him mad) @.

You see, in my mind I already had graduated to "Farmer Clint the Trapper" and had the jaws of that steel monster wide open. As I went to put it on the ground it snapped with the force of a 500 lb. gator, narrowly missing my right hand. And I thought to myself, "Oh yeah, Daddy D said 'you have to follow my instructions.' Guess I failed that test."

I wiped my brow and looked him in the eye as Daddy D "dressed me down" for a little while longer - a verbal whuppin' I'd earned; then we went about the business of resetting the trap. He, with his very bent fingers actually did the "setting";



I was allowed only to sprinkle a few leaves and twigs in the vicinity. Daddy D put those sheep's head apples nearby as bait. "That'll get the job done," he said. And he winked at me - you know, that 'wink' we get from a parent which actually means, 'its okay now, I still love you, let's move on.'

## Back At The Barn

While I was learning to be a groundhog trapper, Farmer Doug and Larry were busy boiling the juice from sorghum cane. This is a very tedious process which requires continuous skimming to remove the various impurities and proteins which rise to the surface. It forms greenish foam - similar to the slime used in Ghost Busters - and it must be scooped into buckets for disposal. Anyway, there were a couple 5 gallon buckets of what I call "molasses scum" beside the pan.

"Hey, Farmer Clint, why don't you take some of that up to the pigs? They will be your friends for life," Farmer Doug laughed. Now

that was rather funny since you may remember that I had some rather unpleasant encounters with these aggressive piggies earlier in my stay on the farm.

Obediently, dutifully, I grabbed a bucket of scum and walked to my truck. After having nearly chopped off my hand with a groundhog trap-thingamabob, I was "into" following directions to the letter. So, I left a 5 gallon bucket full of molasses drippings just inside the piggy fence. I looked forward to a new, improved relationship with the hogs after this little gift.

## Too Much Of A Good Thing?

It has been said that too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Apparently that is true of molasses and piggies.

The next morning, as we enjoyed Doug's patented buckwheat pancakes with molasses mixed with butter, it started:

Doug: "Hey, Clint...ummm, did you give molasses to the pigs?"  
Me: "Yeah, and they REALLY liked 'em."  
Doug: "Well thanks for that. I wonder, how much did you give 'em?"  
Me: "Just one of the 5 gallon buckets full."  
Doug: "Oh, a WHOLE 5 gallon bucket full?"  
Me: "Yeah, but it was a couple inches from the top 'cause the rest spilled out into the truck bed."  
Doug: "Hmmm..." - now that crooked, wily, half-cocked smile overtaking his face.  
Me: "Now what? You tell me to give the pigs some molasses, I give the pigs molasses. Didn't you want me to give them molasses?"  
Doug: "Yes, I did. I was thinking more like a cupful in their evening feed. But you gave them 5 gallons, right?"  
Me: "Yes I did. Are they okay?"  
Doug: "Hmmm, not sure yet. When I drove by all 5 of them were lying on their backs with their feet straight up in the air."  
Me: "Dead, are the pigs dead?"  
Doug: "Naw, they aren't dead. Not sure if they will be or not since I've never given 5 pigs a 5 gallon bucket of molasses."  
Me: "Damn it, Doug, I'm so sorry. I thought you meant...oh never mind @."  
Doug: "Once again, it's my fault Clint. I forget that you're still new to the farm, I need to communicate better, to let you know exactly what I'm saying."

You must know that by now I'm feeling pretty much like the village idiot. I'd disappointed Daddy D by nearly severing my arm; now I may have killed Doug's pigs. What next?

Doug: "There's one thing about it, Pollard."  
Me: "Yeah, what's that?"  
Doug: "If they don't die beforehand, that will be some mighty sweet-tasting BBQ next fall!"

I received that message...my second "wink" of the day. (And those pigs lived until the next October @).

Still humbled in the hills,

Farmer Clint





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The longer the marriage, the more detail that is added as the Master Artist, God Himself, overlays a glorious menagerie of brilliantly colorful life and muted shadows of grief. The final picture of an older couple holding hands, smiling at each other and walking into the sunset gives us hope that there is an eternal Light to sustain us, lavishing a richness and depth of detail to our marriages that is breathtaking.

The Bible elevates marriage as a symbol of the magnificent relationship between Christ and the Church in calling the body of believers His Bride. This is the reason that our marriages should reflect that relationship in the "holy state of matrimony." It is the reason that marriage is defined biblically as between a man and a woman. One of the most beautiful mirrors of marriage that reflect this symbolism are couples that have been married the longest. Their marriages offer an expansive and richly detailed landscape of the opulent grace and strength which Christ brings to a couple's sacred commitment.

Jack R. Taylor, in his book, *What Every Husband Should Know* (©1981 Broadman Press, Nashville, TN) offers an acrostic of marriage that provides the best path to that marital grace and strength mentioned above. When these facets of marriage shine, we can enjoy more fully the presence of His grace and strength in our marriages. Here it is:

Motivating one another to seek God, Accepting One Another, Respecting One Another, Responding to one another, Identifying with one another, Attentive to one another, Going in the same direction, Excited about one another

The Bible gently enfolds Jesus' love for His Bride and helps us to put into practice these ideas mentioned in the marriage acrostic. We are commanded to: Motivate-Hebrews 10:25, Accept-Galatians 6:10, Respect-Philippians 2:3, Respond-Galatians 6:2, Identify-Ephesians 2:19, Attentive-James 1:19, Going in same direction-Acts 9:31, Excited about one another-2 John 1:4

I spoke recently with a couple who have been married 71 years. Preston and Bea Denton were married on October 15, 1945 while he was home on furlough during World War II. He was in the navy and on board the ship LST700 in Japanese waters when a suicide bomber attacked the ship. Although soldiers behind him were killed, Preston made it home, met Bea, and was married a few weeks later. Even after they were married, they were separated as Denton was stationed in New York on Staten Island. Three children, six grandchildren, five great grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren later, I asked Bea several questions about their seven decades of marriage.

Question: What helped you and Preston to have a long marriage?

Answer: She replied in a sweet warm voice, "We didn't believe in separation or divorce. Preston was good to me, and we did things together with the children and also as a couple. When the children were young we enjoyed the beach (as a family) and also had caregivers when we spent time together."

Question: If you were to advise a new bride about marriage, what would you say?

Answer: She replied in a reflective and quiet voice. "Make sure you know the Lord and go to church. I was saved at eleven years old, but it wasn't until after we were married that I began to serve the Lord fully."

Question: How did you solve problems?

Answer: She replied in a practical and down-to-earth manner. "We did not stay mad at each other. We weren't too fussy with each other, and we prayed." We both knew the Lord and that worked."

Question: What is your favorite verse in the Bible that you've applied to marriage?

Answer: After a moment's thought Bea (who earned her GED high school equivalency diploma at the age of 64) acknowledged this powerful verse. It is that verse that includes "lean not unto thine own understanding." Proverbs 3:5

As the artist sketched in the last detail of the chalk drawing and turned on the ultraviolet light, the audience drew a collective breath at the powerful face that was revealed under the special light. It was Jesus, the strength, light, and beauty behind the enduring marriage of two people who reflected God's perfect illustration of Jesus' bridal relationship with His Church! They had lived their painting for 71 years, and the beauty of their portrait of marriage had been filled in over the years until it was rich in love with numerous details of joy, shadows of sorrow and a surreal overall luminescent glow of Jesus' presence!



Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to The Blue Ridge Christian News. She and Sid, her husband, attend Mount Home Baptist Church.



Life: We Should Choose It

By Dr. Mark Creech

Tom Carr, an educator from Hillsborough, North Carolina, who now serves on the Orange County Board of Education, wrote a little book published in 1998, titled, *Morning Messages: 36 Stories to Motivate and Inspire Young People*.

One story Carr records is about Shawn Hessee, a high school senior at the time of the book's writing. Carr says that he called upon Shawn to speak to a group of graduating fifth graders.

"Shawn Hessee is a remarkable young man who has won numerous awards and honors," wrote Carr. He always did well academically. He was very active, swim-



ming, skiing, and playing various sports. "He even traveled the states playing basketball, he wrestled for several years, and he was one of the privileged few who got to carry the Olympic Torch on its way to the Summer Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. In 1995, he won the Athlete of the Year Award at the North Carolina State Games. In wrestling, he lettered twice and won awards for 'Most Dedicated Wrestler,' and 'The Heart and Desire Award.' He has won several trophies in Taekwondo, and in his senior year of high school, he received the 'Most Outstanding Person Award,' by the North Carolina Student Government," added Carr.

Carr also said in his book that wrestling was Shawn's passion. He played a huge role in getting his 1996-1997 high school wrestling team to the state finals. He practiced hard each day and was always supportive of his teammates, constantly cheering them on. Carr said that Shawn's coach, Bobby Shriner, said he was one of the most inspirational persons he had ever known. "At the end of each match, he had given his all – and as we say in wrestling, he 'left it on the mat,' said Shriner.

When Shawn gave his speech to the more than 500 students in the school gymnasium at Carr's request in June of 1997, Carr said it was "fantastic, highly emotional." Shawn encouraged the middle-schoolers to never give up in the face hardships. Listen to your parents, he told them, set goals in life, and don't let other people's negative opinions of you determine your destiny. What really counts, Shawn said, is hard work and being a good citizen in life. At the end of his speech, Carr said, "many people had tears in their eyes, and the crowd gave him a standing ovation."

But here's the clincher. "There's more to this story," wrote Carr. "I need to tell you a few more things..." Shawn, he continued, "was born three months premature and weighed only two pounds. His lungs had not fully developed, which resulted in a lack of oxygen to that part of the brain which affects motor skills. Shawn has cerebral palsy. Throughout his life, he has been confined to wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches. In spite of this early setback in life, he has accomplished so much. One of his proudest feats centers around his wrestling career. Do you want to guess how many wrestling matches he lost? He lost every one!"

According to Carr, Coach Shriner added, "Shawn may not have won any matches during his career at Orange High School, but his inspiration for all would make him a world champion on anyone's team."

I've never met Shawn Hessee. I don't know anything about him, except for what Tom Carr wrote concerning him several years ago. I did find him, however, on Facebook and it appears from what I could read, as an adult Shawn is still motivating and enthusing innumerable people to embrace life to the fullest – even in the midst of seeming impossible odds.

One of his most recent Facebook posts reads, "I want everyone to try to be kind to one another. I realize we are living in a time of uncertainty and our reaction is to lash out, but it is very important that we stay positive. I am going to find a way to do good work for this country as somebody with a disability. I have to admit I have a lot of concern for our community - frankly all people. Disability is something that can touch everyone..."

Wow! Can you imagine how impoverished the world would be without people like Shawn Hessee? Look what he's done for others despite his disability.

Yet you might not be aware that many abortions are performed every day in this country because the doctor tells the parents that their child will likely suffer a severe handicap. Some physicians even suggest terminating a pregnancy if a couple's genetic history suggests a probable or possible abnormality.

This is tragic.

The late esteemed former Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. C. Everett Koop once wrote:

"I am frequently told by people who have never had the experience of working with children who are being rehabilitated into our society after the correction of a congenital defect that infants with such defects should be allowed to die, or even 'encouraged' to die, because their lives could obviously be nothing but unhappy and miserable. Yet it has been my constant experience that disability and unhappiness do not necessarily go together. Some of the most unhappy children whom I have known have all of the physical and mental faculties and on the other hand, some of the happiest youngsters have borne burdens which I myself would find very difficult to bear."

Moreover, we might add that many handicapped persons often end up contributing more to life than most people who are "normal."

In its most recent edition (January/February 2017), the *Saturday Evening Post* features a short interview with the incomparable and beloved comedian, Carol Burnett. In response to the question, "What fuels your terrific optimism?" Burnett shared the following:



"I lost my daughter Carrie 14 years ago to cancer. When she was in the hospital lying in pain, bald from the chemo, one of the nurses stopped me and said, 'I have to talk to you about your daughter. She is such an upper. We go in there in the morning, and if I have a long face, she cheers me up.' So I asked her, 'Carrie, how come you're always so up and cheerful despite all of this?' Carrie said, 'Every day I wake up and decide today I'm going to love my life.' The key word is decide. That was her mantra. When I wake up in the morning, I say that to myself. It doesn't always work, but for the most part I am one fortunate person and I am gonna love my life to the very end."



Yes! Life is precious – sacred at every stage – from conception all the way to the grave. Every life at every point in every circumstance is still a phenomenal gift. Except to allow it to pass naturally when there is no longer any hope for it, we should decide for life. We should embrace it. We should love it. We should choose it.

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



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The mother is known for the tender element she contributes to the lives of her children. Mothers are nurturers and custodians of their children. She is the closest and best of friends to her kids and does not try to deceive them like many other people attempt to do. Mother's heart is soft and patient and is like a rare jewel. She emphasizes sympathy, care and help.

The dad contributes strength. Dr. Kyle Pruett says a father has a distinct style of communication and interaction with his children. They should learn self control from their dad when he says, "Enough is enough." The dad stresses justice, fairness and duty.

Children need both of these character elements to become the kind of well balanced person that God wants them to be. It is so unfortunate today that many children are faced with broken homes and have to be raised by only one parent.

Since God originated and ordained marriage we should take our marital responsibilities seriously. Biblical marriage is a man and a woman coming to join together in order to love and be a help to one another. If God gives them a family, they should seek to raise their children to personally know the Lord's forgiveness and peace.

If a couple cannot have children due to physical problems of one of the marriage partners, there are always children to adopt that need a good home, who need someone to love and care for them.

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



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### Love Is In The Air, The Love Boat.

By Mike Stroud  
Burke County



You got to love those old 70's and 80's TV shows. So cheesy, but yet so satisfying. The plane, The plane from Fantasy Island. I still remember to this day, Ricardo Montalban, the star of Fantasy Island, being asked about love and marriage. His response was "anyone can be a midnight cowboy, but it takes a real man to be married to one woman and please her". I always admired that about him. How deep is your love the old Bee Gees song proclaims. In a world where we give up on love so quickly, where are the real men and Christians that stand for a love that never fails. Everyone gets caught up in the Valentine season.



Will you be my Valentine? That is the hottest question of the month. Buying boxes of candy, flowers, and notes abound of our affection to others. Love is a powerful force, and everyone needs love. I think our notion of love and its definition is watered down. We want love as long as it is fulfilling us and meeting our needs. When it is required beyond that we tend to give up. The American version of Love is different than the God kind of love. The meanings of love vary in the Bible. You have AGAPE, The God Kind of Love, and PHILEO, the brotherly kind of love. We just throw this all into one meaning. The God kind of Love sacrifices it all. EROS, is the sensual or desire kind of love in the Bible. This is the one most people get caught up in. Especially, in our physical relationships. We are looking for satisfaction that others can give us without commitment. This is dangerous and always destroys relationships. True Love and God's Love always build, it never destroys. It always gives and sacrifices for the other person. During this Love is in the air season, let's really love beyond ourselves and watch the true rewards of beautiful relationships flourish. No one can resist love and love never fails, so love like God loves and never fail in it.

Mike Stroud is a pastor at Horizon Church in Morganton, Music Director at [www.AmazingGraceRadio.com](http://www.AmazingGraceRadio.com), and owns Stroud Building Supply in Morganton.

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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.  
John 3:16

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Trust and Obey

By Timothy W. Tron  
Burke County

*"Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters, 'Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.'"*  
— Isaiah 43:16,18-19

"Trust and obey, there's no other way," goes the old hymn. The word "Trust," is something that is probably the more difficult of the two commands mentioned in the song. Its definition, *"reliance on the veracity, integrity, or other virtues of someone or something; religious faith,"* from Old Norse *traust* "help, confidence, protection, support." [1] Trust is a word that confides in our ability to depend upon something greater than ourselves, and as such, is often difficult to understand or appreciate when it comes to fruition.

In the last year, I have been witness to everything from loss of loved ones to the utterly inexplicable. I've felt the presence and heard the voice of heavenly beings, more than once. In that timeframe, the path upon which seemed to be my true calling suddenly took an unexpected turn, altering the course of everything I had come to know and trust, into a wilderness where only faith could sustain a being. Again and again, I sought protection and support from the only place I knew; the Word of God.

He never let me down.

Living between one's past and the future allows for reflection and projection, something else I experienced in the span of 2016. While still moving a farm from one place to another, we continued to settle into the life that was new, serving at the Trail of Faith. There at the Trail, I found more and more calling to help those in need, those seeking God, and guidance from a place that was so aptly named. There I learned how to pray over those making their pilgrimages to a place they had only read about. Some had studied up to the point they came wanting to gain a better perspective, to walk the literal trail of faith. Each time, each new visitor, I found God teaching and leading me in ways I had never thought possible. There were the discoveries of new friendships and with those, a new feeling of trust in knowing that serving Him was the right path.

Then in the midst of what seemed to be the perfect path, my father became gravely ill. Once again I was reminded of those Godly circumstances that provided me the ability to see him before he passed. There is no greater gift than knowing God had given you the chance to hug your mother one last time or to kiss your father goodbye, but each step of the way, that was my blessing. As I walked out of that hospital room, I knew we'd not see each other until we reach that Glory land above, and so it was. On our way home from the funeral, my sister and I received confirmation that all was right when we saw the most unbelievable, color-filled, double rainbow like none we had ever seen before in our lives.

Another blessing, another circumstance unexplained.

Even while those daily life lessons were being served, both good and sorrowful, He was at work on the next road into a wilderness not yet imagined. Every time my family would ask questions as to how, when, and where, I would ask them to be patient and wait, for in time, all of their concerns would be answered. It was in these moments, soon after their questions, I found myself alone with Him, praying and listening for more.

There were times of darkness that filled us with doubt. In the waiting, there was learning. It was all part of the path that was chosen; each subject to the other.

Yet, each time He spoke, I listened. Each time I asked, He answered.

There was the day we didn't have enough money to buy food until the next paycheck, and with only a half-a-gallon of milk left in the fridge at the house, I silently asked God for help as I went to the Trail to open up that morning. There was nobody else that knew our dire straits; nobody else had been told how close we were to going hungry; nobody. As I opened the door, there sitting on the podium as I walked in was a single white envelope with my name scratched on it, almost illegible. I picked it up, curiously and opened it. Tears filled my eyes as I dropped to my knees.

There inside was \$40 cash.

God once more answered prayer.

*"Knock, and the door will be opened, ask, and ye shall receive."*

This was just one of many Godsendings that we experienced as we learned to trust and obey. Brothers and sisters from all over came to our aid in our time of need, again and again. This in itself was difficult to understand and accept. We had to learn a whole new paradigm of life, how to receive.

Continually each day, prayers would be lifted up for guidance. One specific prayer that seemed to go unanswered was for Him to find someone to buy our old farmstead. But like all things asked for, one must consider God's time. For us, in what seemed an eternity but in reality was blinding speed, our home of over twenty years finally sold. It was a bittersweet memory, even now. Looking back, it was when things began to move faster than one could conceive; at God-speed.

In a blinding fury, we cleaned, mowed,



and moved the last vestiges of a lifetime in a matter of two weeks. We had moved from the reflection to the immediate. As things began to move along, we still didn't know where we would finally end up living.

Prayers continued to be lifted up, for we still were housed in a temporary shelter, we affectionately called, "The Shack."

Then one day we found ourselves driving toward the area of West Lenoir, I wondered why. Deep inside it felt right even though it didn't seem logical at the time. After all we had been through; I knew it was a God thing. Again, His will would be done in time. There, through one unbelievable circumstance after another, we found a new home that would soon be our next step in the journey. There too we found new friends that would someday become our neighbors, as well as a brother and sister in Christ.

Something else I learned through the course of the year, unbelievable circumstances are more easily called "Miracles." In all honesty, we are afraid to use the "M" word for fear of non-believers accusing us of believing in fantasy. "If they could only see what I've seen," I think to myself, "then it wouldn't be such a stretch of the imagination."

After the sale of our farm and the purchase of our new home, we had moved from the reflection into the projection of time.

Then came the closing of the door we never saw coming. The loss of funding for my position at the Trail, and then the search for the next "What." For nearly ten years of my last 23 years at Nortel/Genband, I had feared losing my job and to have to find a new one. We never thought it would happen after we had given everything up to live for our new life.

But alas, here we were.

Faith took on a whole new level of trust.

Once more, when it seemed like all would be lost, the unbelievable transpired. After three weeks of looking for jobs, filling out an untold number of applications, there had not been one phone call, not one interview. One morning I awoke to scripture that read, *"Today will be the end of your suffering, your trials will cease today."* That afternoon came the first phone call. Then in a matter of 24 hours, God speed once again took over. Before I knew it, I had two job offers and was quickly hired as a High School Math Teacher in Boone, NC. His plan had been fulfilled. The realization dawned on me that the move to our new home's location allowed for a commute to the new job that was manageable instead of inconceivable. God's hand was in it every step of the way.

In the beginning, the story seemed like I was moving to a place where I could share God's word from the mountain; the mountain being the Trail. Before I knew it, I was serving Him from the mountain top, but in a way, I had never imagined.

Every day, new doors open to places I never saw coming. Each day I pray for strength, guidance, and wisdom. Every day God answers prayer.

God will make rivers through the deserts and roads through the wilderness if only we trust in Him.

It has been a year of untold highs and lows, but in the end, it has been a year of serving our Lord, and for that, I couldn't ask for more.

Thanks be to God.

[1] "Online Etymology Dictionary - <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=trust>

Timothy W. Tron 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 and is Vice President of the Valdese Merchants Assoc. He has been Ordained to perform weddings at the Trail and attends several area churches seeking to serve the Lord every day.



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## Evergreen Church

### The Love of God

By Rev John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee



Our Scripture reading for this month is in Ephesians 3:17-18. As we observed Paul writing he "treats the love of God as a cube, having breadth and length, depth and height...a perfection of form. Every side of a cube is a perfect square, and from every angle it presents the same appearance." The Holy of Holies was cube-shaped, so is the New Jerusalem, and so is the love of God. 1. The Width of His Love. His outstretched arms encompass all humanity (John 3:16). His love removes our sins "as far as the east from the west" (Ps. 103:12). 2. The Length of His Love. Eternal, providing His children with everlasting life. 3. The Depth of His Love. Reaching down to the most horrid and hopeless sinner. 4. The Height of His Love. "As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward us" (Ps. 103:11). Let us ask the question "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach...." But only God loves us with infinite dimensions. He loves you to an endless degree. Paul encouraged the disciples of our Lord at Ephesus to walk in love. Jesus had commanded his disciples to live by the principle of love (John 13:34-35). Unselfish, sacrificial love was to be the badge of identification by which the world would recognize his disciples as his followers. Human beings need love more than anything else in the world. A famous physician has said, we must learn to practice love or we will perish. The human spirit was made for love. Without love a personality withers and dies like a water lily transplanted in a desert. In no relationship is the practice of Christ like love more necessary or more productive of happiness than in the marriage relationship. In Paul's great hymn of love recorded in 1 Corinthians 13, he declares that love is more important than any other gift or ability or activity. He sets forth some of the characteristics of Christian love. Christian love is very patient (v. 4). Christian love is very kind (v. 4). Christian love never boils with jealousy (v. 4). Christian love is never envious (v. 4). Christian love does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance (v. 4). Christian love is never rude, unmannerly, or indecent (v. 5). Christian love is never self-seeking, nor does it pursue selfish aims (v. 5). Christian love is never quick to take offense and keeps no score of wrongs (v. 5). Christian love is never glad when others go wrong (v. 6). Christian love always rejoices when truth prevails (v. 6). Christian love can overlook faults and is always hopeful for the best (v. 7). Christian love keeps on loving in spite of some things that are unlovable (v. 8); the nature of Christian love as set forth in 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

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



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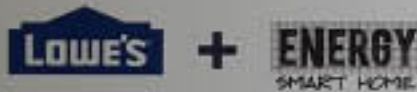
At Camp Erin, kids have an opportunity to be around other kids who have experienced similar losses. They participate in typical camp activities (arts, crafts, field games, and more), as well as activities designed to help them understand and process their grief.

This year's Camp Erin of the Carolinas will be held from Friday, November 13th through Sunday, November 15th at South Mountain Christian Camp in Bostic, NC. For more information, please contact Cy Miller at (828)245-0095 or [cymiller@hospiceofrutherford.org](mailto:cymiller@hospiceofrutherford.org)



Please note that space is limited, and campers are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Preference is given to campers who have not attended Camp Erin before.

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## Fill My Cup Conference

### Fill My Cup

By Sheila Blalock  
Mitchell County

*"Like the women at the well, I was seeking for things that could not satisfy. And then I heard my savior speaking- Draw from my well that never shall run dry."*

We were a different group of women sitting on a sunny deck, on a Tuesday evening. Some of us were strangers, some co-workers, some family. As I looked around, the thought came to me- "How did I get here? These ladies are mostly strangers. Where do they go to church? Do I believe the same way they do? Will they accept me? Will they judge me? Will I disagree with the little fiery redhead lady leading the group?" Then I listened. Weeks later I had the vision of the island of misfit toys in the Christmas movie Rudolph. This group of ladies was different. We were all a misfit in some way, but none in the same way. We all had a story to tell, some shared their story, some did not, but I came to see that was Okay. We were accepting each other for what we were, broken, scared, hurting, confused. Our pasts were different, our presents were different, our futures would hold differences, but we all had one thing in common, we were all going to be changed, changed for the better. Because a small group of ladies desired to pray together, learn about the Bible together, even though we all held a somewhat different version of that Bible, we all wanted the same thing. *"Fill my cup Lord; I lift it up Lord; Come and quench this thirsting of my soul."*

As we continued to meet we learned we all had one thing in common, Jesus. Jesus had brought this little island of misfits together. He was teaching some that they were loved, some his forgivingness, some to forgive others, some He was tenderly bringing back to the fold, some to pray, and some to trust him and to trust others. We were all learning different things at different times and yet we were all learning the same thing. Jesus was filling us up. *"Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more. Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole."*

We were all thirsty at the well. Some had brought cups from which to draw and some had vessels, but we were all coming, and all helping each other to quench their thirst. "And then I heard my Savior speaking- *"Draw from My well that never shall run dry"*"

Months and years have passed, we still meet, we still are misfits, we still are no denomination, we still have different versions of the Bible, but now we have one thing in common; We have each other and we have Jesus! We have prayer warriors! We have on our armor and we know that we are a united front that will stand together, shoulder to shoulder, shield held high and sword drawn. We are in battle with Satan and we know it! *"So, my brother if the things that this world gives you leave hungers that won't pass away, My blessed Lord will come and save you if you kneel to Him and humbly pray"*

One misfit tells the group; All because God brought a little group of misfit women together, something great is going to come. Because we prayed, or one of us prayed, one of us was filled, God has a plan. God is going to work in a life or lives, something is going to happen. *"Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up Lord."*

One evening the fiery redhead announces to the group; that the Lord has laid on her heart that we are to hold a retreat, a conference for local women and teens, local women ministering to local women. Around the room heads jerk, mouths drop open, hearts stop, fears creep in, doubts take flight. Then we listen, we pray, we plan and God works. *"There are millions in the world who are seeking for pleasures earthly goods afford. But none can match the wondrous treasure that I find in Jesus Christ my Lord."*

YOU ARE CORDUALLY INVITED TO THE FIRST ANNUAL, FILL MY CUP CONFERENCE, FEB. 25TH FROM 9:00 - 4:00, AT 31 CROSS STREET COMMERCE CENTER, SPRUCE PINE, NC 28777. This will be a time where local women will give their testimony of how God came to them at the well during times of abuse, death, temptation, loneliness. Local women will share their gifts of voice, music, and art. Nursery provided. The cost is free! All we ask is that you contact us before Feb. 15th, to receive your ticket. This is nondenominational, anyone is welcome! Call Sheila at 766-9712 or Sandra at 467-1563. You may also contact us on our Facebook page at Fill My Cup Women's Conference. You may also pick up tickets at Eben Concepts at 138 Highland Ave, Spruce Pine or Mitchell Transportation 73 Crimson Laurel Circle, Suite 7 in Bakersville. We don't know all the answers, we are not perfect, we still struggle, we are just sinners saved by grace, but together with God's help we can change the world one home at a time.

Misfit's Bible Study is group of ladies that meet every two weeks in each others homes. Nondenominational, Misfits is a group of ladies praying to change the world for Christ one home at a time, one woman at a time. Anyone wishing to join may call 766-9712 or email sbalockg@hotmail for the next scheduled meeting date.





# Walnut Grove Church

## Sanctity of Marriage

By Pastor Kurt Bomar

Gen 5:1 *In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.*



When God called Adam and Eve "Adam", He was making a profound statement. That statement was, "you are one". Right from the beginning He was teaching us that when we enter into the Covenant of Marriage we are to do it for life.

I've heard various versions of this complaint through the years: "I know God wants me to be happy and I'm just not happy with this guy/girl so I believe it's God's will that we get divorced." Another one is "I don't think it's healthy for our children to see us fighting all the time..."

Ironically there always seems to be someone waiting in the wings when these complaints come up. But regardless, know that under God's plan, there's no one down the line or around the corner who will give you a greater thrill. There's not another person on earth who will make you happier, more contented or more fulfilled. Such is the amazing mystery of matrimony.

There is no greater thrill than seeing your children grow and walk in the ways of the Lord. But all that is cast aside by the one who says, "if I have an affair, God will forgive me and they will too". I believe there is nothing worth losing my family over and I hope you do too.

The most talked about sin in the Bible isn't murder, theft or lying— it's adultery. I believe that's because of the long-term repercussions.

As we focus on marriages this month, please determine that no matter what you've been through, no matter where you've been, you will do whatever it takes to guard the sanctity of your family.

Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church.



**Bakersville Community Health Center**  
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On February 1, 2017, two long-established community health centers will join together to improve access to quality healthcare and increase services in Yancey and Mitchell Counties.

Retaining their names and locations, the partnership of Celo Health Center and Bakersville Community Health Center will ensure stable, consistent care for years to come while increasing the availability of care for patients across the two counties, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

As community-owned health centers they are proud of their 113 years of combined service to generations of families in the area and look forward to continuing the tradition of care for years to come.

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# Bear Creek Baptist Church

## The Month for Love

By Pastor Bruce Cannon

February is the month for love. Hopefully we men (and ladies) remember that the 14th of this month is Valentine's Day and an opportunity to be reminded to show love for our spouse, our significant other (if unmarried) and even our children. For children, too, are loves of our life.

We love because He, the Lord, first loved us. We love because He placed within our blueprint the need to love and be loved.

Yet, so much of the time we neglect those extremely special people in our life. I am reminded of the old joke told of a man who was questioned about showing affection, verbally and physically, to his wife. He was asked how long it had been since he told her that he loved her? He replied, "I told her when I married her twenty years ago, and I have not changed my mind. If I change my mind I will tell her."

How many wives, or significant others, would love to hear those wonderful words "I love you"? How many children would love to hear those words from a parent? How many relationships would blossom and thrive with simply saying those words and living them out daily?

A story aired in July, 2012 of children living in a very overcrowded orphanage in Romania. These children, because of serious overcrowding, were not held or shown love like children living in healthy environments. The effect of this was horrendous. The children were grossly emotionally and physically underdeveloped. Time spent in this environment even caused their brain cell bodies (grey matter) to shrink. The story stated:

"Infants and young children expect an environment in which they are going to interact and receive nurturance, not only food, but psychological nurturance, from adult caregivers." (<http://www.livescience.com/21778-early-neglect-alters-kids-brains.html>)

Protect, nurture and encourage the relationship you have with your spouse and others by:

- 1) Saying and meaning those wonderful words, "I love you!"
- 2) Spend quality time together. Go out on a date.
- 3) Find his or her love language and fill up their love tank.
- 4) Spend time before the Father asking Him to bless the love of your life.

This investment pays off with huge dividends! It is a very worthy undertaking of our time and will radically improve our relationships.

*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.*



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Thank You for considering this opportunity to make  
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**Brian Center**  
**Health & Rehabilitation / Spruce Pine**



Keys to Making a Long-Term Relationship

By Tracy Black  
Mitchell County

Often, we are asked, "Since ya'll deal with violent, bad relationships, what makes a good relationship?" Just as "bad" relationships are based on Power and Control, we believe that "good" relationships, whether they are friendships, business partnerships or romantic, are based on Equality.



Here are the 8 traits of an equal relationship:

- Non-Threatening Behavior - partners in a healthy relationship will strive to make their partner feel safe and comfortable in being who they are.
- Respect - partners will be respectful of their partner's opinions and understand that everyone has different opinions and that's okay.
- Trust and Support -partners will support each other's goals in life and trust their right to have their own feelings, friends and activities.
- Responsible Parenting - partners will share parental responsibilities and duties. They will be positive role models for the children.
- Shared Responsibility - partners will agree to a fair distribution of work and decision making.
- Economics -partners will make money decisions together and will make sure those decisions will benefit both partners.
- Negotiation and Fairness - partners will seek to find ways to resolve conflicts so both are satisfied. They will be willing to compromise, and willing to accept change.

If you are in a long-term marriage, I am sure you recognize many of these things as normal parts of how you do things. Be assured that modeling these qualities will not only lead to a more stable long term relationship, but will build a foundation that the generations to come can follow and learn.

Tracy Black is the Associate Director of Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or [tracyblack@bellsouth.net](mailto:tracyblack@bellsouth.net).



Spring Quarter Begins

By Tom Walker  
McDowell County



The Spring Quarter will begin on March 13th at Foothills Baptist Bible College. This is the 4th years of operation; the first graduating class was held last summer.



FBBC is a place where men and women can learn more about the truths of the Word of God. It is the belief of the school and its administration that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. The school rejects the idea that the Bible only contains or that it becomes the Word of the Lord. It is God's truth for every generation.

Both men and women alike are welcome to study at Foothills Baptist Bible College. The school is not only for preachers, teachers and missionaries, it is also a place where people can go and learn more about what God has to say to this generation.

The faculty has the proper educational qualifications and a heart for the students and their welfare and concerns. Every instructor has reached the Doctoral level in the educational process.

One can earn an Associate Degree, A Bachelor Degree, A Masters Degree, or a Doctoral degree in theology or Christian Education.

FBBC holds night classes. This is good for those who must work a daytime job. It gives them an opportunity to keep working their jobs and yet have a night to come to further their education.

The courses which will be taught in the Spring quarter are as follows:

- Period 1-The Book of Genesis- Dr. Gary Laney- 6:30-7:05 P.M.
- Period 2-The Book of Revelation II- Dr. Tom Walker- 7:10-7:45 P.M.
- Period 3-The Book of Isaiah- Dr. Eric Grindstaff- 7:55-8:30 P.M.
- Period 4-The Book of Acts- Dr. Tom Walker- 8:35-9:10 P.M.

Those courses can be taken for credit or they can be audited. A high school diploma or a GED is required to take courses for credit. They can be audited without having a high school diploma. Auditing means you can come to class, listen to the lectures and receive a syllabus, but do not have to do all the outside work that students studying for credit have to complete.

The first class begins on March 14th at 6:30 P.M. You can register for classes by calling 828-442-7015 for more information or to pre-register. If you can sign up early before the first day of classes, it would be helpful in pre-ordering materials. Prospective students can call for an appointment.

Visit the school web site at [www.FoothillsBBC.org](http://www.FoothillsBBC.org).

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



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## Avery County

**Avery County High School**- Up to this point in the school year, winter weather has not had a tremendous impact on our schedule but it always creates some challenges. As we meet those challenges, we express our sincere appreciation to everyone for their patience and support as we strive to make decisions that promote safety.

As of Friday, January 27, here is where we are with days missed due to inclement weather:

1. 3 days have been missed.
2. 7 hours missed for Delays/Early Dismissals.
3. The extended instructional time has allowed us to not make up the 3 days we have missed and if the additional time is continued until the end of the year there will be 8 or 9 more days that can be used to make-up time.

During the winter months when roads become hazardous due to snow and ice, our goal is to transport students to and from school in the safest manner possible. We realize that our buses carry your most treasured possession, and we commit to offer the best and safest travel possible. Our school bus drivers and transportation specialists are well trained, dedicated and committed to the safety of each child in the Avery County Schools. Our buses begin to leave as early as 5:20 a.m. each morning and do not complete their afternoon routes until 6 p.m. Our goal is to make a decision about the operation of school by 4:30 a.m. each morning after driving on roads around the county, reviewing local forecasts and talking with meteorologists, especially Ray's Weather.

## Burke County

**Burke County Chamber of Commerce** - Tux and Tails—to benefit A Better Life Animal Rescue Feb 11th at 7:00pm at Silver Fork Winery, The Pavilion. \$75.00 per person.

**Catawba River Baptist Association** - Ministers and Wives Fellowship Mon Feb 13th 6:30pm Walker Road Baptist Church \$10.00 per person call by Feb 5th for reservations at 828-437-0137.

Associational RA Racers Competition - Saturday March 4th Oak Ridge Baptist Church Registration: 9:00 to 10:00am Cost \$5.00 per car Lunch will be served to everyone

For more info [www.baptistsonmission.org/Church-Programs/Royal-Ambassadors](http://www.baptistsonmission.org/Church-Programs/Royal-Ambassadors)

**Christian Business Men's Connection (Morganton)** - We are a movement of Men to Experience the Power of One God, the Value of One Man and the Leverage of One Team, resulting in the Spiritual Reproduction among Businessmen. Please join us for lunch at one of our weekly Bible study meetings: Tuesday, 12:00 noon at the Community House, Morganton. Contact: Wayne Giese, 828-413-5819.

**Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County** - "Funniest Home Videos" Fundraiser Dinner and Show! Saturday, February 25th., at 6:30 p.m., at the Silver Creek Adventist School, 2195 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. 28655.

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

## McDowell County

**Clinchfield Baptist Church (Marion)** - We are accepting resumes for Minister of Music. Current worship style is blended, using both traditional hymns, choral, and contemporary arrangements with soloist and choir. The position is a paid part-time position and involves organizing and leading the church's music ministries both adult and children. Baptist background preferred. Send resumes with references to [Clinchfieldbaptistchurch@frontier.com](mailto:Clinchfieldbaptistchurch@frontier.com) or to address 1150 East Court Street, Marion, NC 28752 Attn: Personnel Committee.

**First Baptist Church of Marion** - Belize Medical Mission Registration is now complete for the 2017 Belize Medical Mission Trip. 14 are onboard and preparing to provide free clinics in 5 underserved villages in the northern Corozal District of the country. The team is currently raising funds for medical supplies and medicines. Contributions are greatly appreciated. Please make your donations to FBC for the Belize Medical Fund. For more info., please contact Scott Hagaman.

**New HOPE of McDowell (Marion)** - New HOPE of McDowell is seeking a full-time Associate Director - Shelter Manager. New HOPE of McDowell is a non-profit domestic violence and sexual assault agency located in McDowell County, NC. This position includes benefits such as employee health insurance and paid vacation, personal, and sick time. The primary purpose of this position is to provide direct client services and advocacy to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children as well as assisting with carrying out the strategic goals and objectives of the organization, providing direct leadership and supervision to all Client Services Advocates, and operating under the direction and expectations of the Executive Director/Court Advocate and Board of Directors.

## Mitchell County

**Bear Creek Baptist Church-Ledger** - Associational Bible Drills will be held at Bear Creek Baptist Church on March 25th at 10:00am.

The Primitive Quartet will be at Bear Creek on March 19th at 6:00pm.

Women's Prayer Breakfast at Helen's Restaurant on Friday February 10, 2017 at Helen 8:00am. Ordering from menu. All women are invited.

**Celebrate Recovery** - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any question 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. (Estatote area—off Brushy Creek Rd). We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

**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](mailto:jnutozts@yahoo.com).

**First Baptist Church Spruce Pine** - First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine is seeking a part-time childcare provider for their toddler nursery. The position will require approximately eight hours per week consisting of 4.5 hours on Sunday morning, 1.5 hours on Sunday nights, and 2 hours on Wednesday nights plus other hours during special events as needed. The position will require a spirit-filled caring and responsible childcare provider who will focus on providing a safe environment for toddlers. Qualifications include experience in caring for young children, and the physical ability to meet their active needs; 2-3 references; and willingness to submit to a background check. CPR is required and First Aid is recommended and can be completed once employed. The hourly pay is \$15-\$20 per hour and is negotiable based on experience and qualifications. Applicants should contact First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan Street, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Phone # 828-765-9411 Ext. 301.

**Mitchell Baptist Association-Spruce Pine** - A Praise and Thanksgiving service has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 7, 7:00 p.m., at Berry Chapel Baptist Church, in Spruce Pine. If you remember, and I'm sure you do, hundreds of us gathered at the Tri-County Tabernacle in Spruce Pine, and prayed for divine intervention in the past election. God answered our prayers and we owe it to Him to give thanks. Hopefully, we can have as many or more than we had at that time.

This will be a time of prayer and praise only. No preaching. We simply want to acknowledge the goodness of God and to recognize Him for His many blessings. We prayed about the election and he answered. We prayed for rain and He answered.

I am reminded often of the words of our Lord after he had healed the ten lepers. Only one came back to thank Him and His words were "where are the nine". I never want to be one of "the nine".

We owe the Lord so much for what he has done. We encourage everyone to come. All churches, all denominations, all Christians and all people regardless of political or religious affiliation, are invited to come out on February 7th and let's just praise God. Please share this with your church family and plan to bring a bus load.

Berry Chapel Baptist Church is located on Altapass Road about one tenth mile past the Spruce Pine Hospital, on the right. This event is sponsored by Mitchell Baptist Association.

**Spruce Pine Farmer's Market Moves Indoors!** - We will have baked goods, fresh eggs, pork, grass fed beef, and more. The market is inside the Pizza Shop and Dry County Brewing Company from 12-4pm. The indoor markets will be once a month the 1st Saturday of the month from December through April. Come shop local with us.

**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/> volunteer or contact Kimberly Brewster, Volunteer Services Specialist supporting the Mitchell and Yancey area blood drives at [kimberly.brewster@redcross.org](mailto:kimberly.brewster@redcross.org) or 828-333-9809.

**Summer 2017 Workshops at Penland** - Say hello to Penland's Summer 2017 workshop catalog, now online in full as a PDF! We're beyond excited to have 97



great workshops on offer this year. Take a look and come join us in the studios to build bikes or books or bowls or brooches or ...? All applications received by February 11 will be entered into the early registration lottery. Scholarships are available for all workshops; apply by February 17.

**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.

The Foundation is happy to announce the Lending Library is now open at the Tipton Hill Community Center. The Lending Library loans books to individuals at no cost. Housed in the gray outdoor building to the left of the front steps of the Community Center, the Lending Library has appropriate books for all ages except for preschoolers: books for that age are still needed. Books have been donated by private citizens, Bowman Middle School Library, and the AMY regional library Bookmobile. Categories of books currently include fiction, history, biographies, religion, and miscellaneous. The Lending Library operates on the honor system: take a book, keep it as long as you want, and return the book. The Foundation asks that each person not take more than five books at one time so your neighbors may participate. Donations would be appreciated. The Library is open 24/7 and is unlocked at all time.

Tipton Hill Community Foundation and Center for Rural Health Innovations wishes to invite everyone to an Open House at the Tipton Hill Community Foundation in Tipton Hill on Saturday, February 18th from 2-4 PM. Refreshments will be served and you will have an opportunity to look at the new equipment and talk with the providers of the new medical service being provided to the community. A fantastic new service for the area.

This service is now open Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:00 - 12:00 AM

**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 Helen's Restaurant in Bakersville on Feb 10th at 8:00am. 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](mailto:barbarah@brcnews.com).

## Yancey County

**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). We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

**Higgins Memorial United Methodist Church** - Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) Men's Class meeting in Burnsville announces that its new study year will begin September 13th at 6:55 pm and the class is being hosted by Higgins Methodist - 101 N. Main Street, Burnsville. This year's study will focus on the Gospel of John.

Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) is an international and interdenominational Bible class for men of all ages, denominations, geographic locations and backgrounds - all men living in Western North Carolina are encouraged to join the study. The group, for beginner or advanced Bible students, will meet from 6:55 to 8:55 pm each Tuesday evening through May - just show up any Tuesday evening beginning September 13th to join the group and the study.

For more local information, call Mike Lawrence - 904-254-6303 ([jamesmichaellawrence@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmichaellawrence@gmail.com)) or Harvey Schestag - 828-284-0707 ([harveyschestag@gmail.com](mailto:harveyschestag@gmail.com)) or go to [www.bsfiinternational.org](http://www.bsfiinternational.org) for comprehensive information about BSF.

**Laurel Branch Baptist Church (Burnsville)** - Seeking bi-vocational pastor, please email resume to [fioreecapps@frontier.com](mailto:fioreecapps@frontier.com).

**Shoals Creek Baptist Church** - Next month on Wednesday evening, February 15, 2017 @ 6:00 pm as part of our Fellowship meal, we will have Rev. Patrick Ballard of Hendersonville, NC providing music and a presentation of Mountain-er Ministries (this is a nursing home ministry that he does through Henderson County). Patrick is a multi-talented blue grass/ gospel musician who plays many instruments proficiently. We will take up a love offering in support of what he does.

**South Estatoe Baptist Church-Burnsville** - On March 12-15 South Estatoe will be holding Revival Meetings at 7:00pm. Guest speaker will be Nicky Waters from the Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church in Hudson, NC. For more info call 828-675-4351 (church office) 675-1814 (Parsonage) or 208-4347 (cell).

**Trac Announces 2016/17 Grant Recipients** - The Toe River Arts Council, Asheville Area Arts Council, and the Madison County Arts Council are pleased to announce the 2016/2017 Regional Artist Project Grant recipients.

The Regional Artist Project Grant (RAPG) is an annual grant program that provides financial support to developing professionals by funding a project pivotal to the advancement of their careers as artists. The selection criteria include artistic merit, the potential of the project to contribute to the artist's professional growth, and the feasibility of the project itself.

This year's grant cycle received 50 applicants, with over \$54,000 in requests from all art disciplines. A total of \$11,500 was awarded. The Regional Artist Program Grant is sponsored by the Toe River Arts Council (Mitchell and Yancey Counties); Madison Arts Council; Asheville Area Arts Council (Buncombe County) with support from Avery County, and the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, a state agency.

**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** - Small Business Center- Allen Cook, Director, E-Mail: [tcocok@mayland.edu](mailto:tcocok@mayland.edu). Address: 200 Mayland Ln, Spruce Pine, NC 28777, Telephone Number: 828-766-1295

To register for free classes, call Alan Cook at 828-766-1295 or email [tcocok@mayland.edu](mailto:tcocok@mayland.edu)

## FREE ONLINE SMALL BUSINESS SEMINARS

Introducing Small BizU! We know you are busy so the Mayland Small Business Center is offering free online business classes to fit your lifestyle.

How to register for a Free Online Class: Go to [www.ncsbc.net/events.aspx](http://www.ncsbc.net/events.aspx) and click the "Location" drop down menu to select "At Center." From the "Center" drop down box select "Mayland Community College Small Business Center." Once the location and center are entered click "search" to view the online seminars below. Click the register button to sign up and receive a link to view the online class.

**Creating a Loan Package** -This course details the exact set of steps necessary in preparing a comprehensive loan package request. Typical loan forms and requirements are explained and included. This course lays it on the line concerning what a lender is really looking for and how they evaluate loan requests. Simply understanding the way a lender thinks can more than double your effectiveness in raising money for your business.

**Finding Money to Start a Business** -A comprehensive ten-part course on the tactics of how money is really raised for small business formation. The course examines the sources of available capital and an overview concerning the difference between debt and equity. The course walks you through the maze of financial terms and tactics necessary to successfully identify and secure money for a new business venture.

**Finding and Attracting an Investor** -Finding and Attracting an Investor examines the peculiar nature of investment capital. The course presents practical tactics on how to identify and secure different types of capital including seed capital, angel capital, and venture capital. The process used by different kinds of investors is presented and the tools for completing the fund-raising process are presented. Special focus is given to the federal and state laws that govern the capital and securities process.

**Creating Financial Projections** -Financial projections are a collection of statements that present a numerical model of your business. Learn how to create a projected income statement, cash flow statement, balance sheet, and breakeven point analysis. Understand what financial projections are and what comprises a good set of projections.

**Accounting 101: The Basics of Bookkeeping** -Take command of a bookstore and coffee bar and see how money moves in and out of a business while learning the fundamentals of accounting at the same time. This course provides an in-depth look at each of the primary accounting transactions used in a business. Without using any accounting jargon to begin with, the course demonstrates how to keep score in a business through a simple scorecard approach.

**Creating Buzz: Marketing on Small Budget** -Creating Buzz is one of the most comprehensive courses on how marketing is actually executed in a small business. Creating Buzz is packed-full of hundreds of strategies, checklists, and tips across the realms of network theory, positioning, advertising media, word-of-mouth campaigns, publicity, and public relations. From informal, easy-to-do tactics to full-fledged formal marketing plans, the lessons taught in this course are paramount to anyone growing an organization.

**Pricing Strategy and Tactics** -Pricing is the moment of truth-all of marketing comes to focus in the pricing decision. And yet, pricing is one of the least understood of all the activities in marketing. From the fundamentals of pricing to advanced discussions on psychological theories focused on pricing formulation, this course is essential to anyone responsible for making the price decision.

**Market Insight: Conducting Market Research** -Any entrepreneur should want to know as much as possible about their market. This course provides the guidance and resources necessary to develop a working knowledge.

**Understanding Advertising and Promotions** -This course presents a media-by-media discussion of the tips and tricks used by marketing professionals when advertising a product or service. Learn how to set an advertising budget, learn why it's better to run two smaller ads than one larger one, learn how to correctly position your product and how to best design an effective marketing message, and learn what you need to know about selecting media for an ad campaign. This course also presents an overview of public relations tactics and internet marketing practices.

**Marketing 101: The Fundamentals** -This course describes the fundamentals of the most important aspect of any business: marketing. Learn the concepts taught in college-level courses in just a few hours including the "5Ps"-Product, Promotion, Price, Place, and Positioning. At the end of this course, you will be able to create a comprehensive marketing plan for business that encompasses a creative plan, a positioning plan, and a media marketing calendar.

**How to Write a Business Plan** -This ten-part course walks you through the details

*continued on page 31*



Mitchell County Extension Office

New Mitchell County  
4-H Extension Agent  
By Kim Slotnick  
Mitchell County



The Mitchell County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension would like to welcome Kaley Brown to the extension staff as the new Mitchell County 4-H Extension Agent. Kaley recently graduated from N.C. State University with a degree in Animal Science. Kaley will be responsible for providing leadership for the development, implementation, evaluation, and marketing of an effective educational program in 4-H and youth development. You can contact Kaley at the Mitchell County Extension Center, 828-688-4811.



Kim Slotnick is 4-H Program Assistant for the NC Cooperative Extension-Mitchell County Center, you may contact her at kim\_slotnick@ncsu.edu.



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“Serving the Community”  
No Trips Scheduled for  
February  
Happy Valentine

# Valentine SPECIALS

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Wed: 11:00am-2:00pm  
Thurs: 11:00am-8:00pm  
Fri: 11:00am-8:00pm  
Sat: 8:00am-8:00pm



A new commandment I give unto you,  
That ye love one another; as I have loved  
you, that ye also love one another. John  
13:34-35

Morganton Seventh-day  
Adventist Church

Unexplainable Love  
By Cindy Mercer  
Burke County



When some people say they are excited, you know it without a doubt! You may hear squeals of jubilation and quotes like, “This is so amazing!! Nothing like this has ever happened to me before!” Or you may see people doing somersaults, jumping up and down or clicking their heels in the air. You are probably thinking all of the above would be the expression of someone who is in love for the first time...and while this may be true, I am actually describing the scene of what one would expect from someone who won the lottery. Now before you get any ideas, stay tuned. This ends up being a good love story. And who doesn't like that? Follow me as I share the story of Kim and Steve. Kim was excited! Maybe excited is too mild a word. She was euphoric! She was wild with delight. Her husband, Steve, had just won the Ohio state lottery of several million dollars—\$107,000 per year for 20 years. To top it off, he won the lottery a second time to the tune of \$100,000. This Dayton couple could live the life of their dreams. Incredible pleasures lay at their fingertips.

There was only one problem. Kim was having an extramarital affair and she knew the win would cause only greater problems. She didn't want to walk away from millions, but certainly didn't want to end the affair either. She wanted Steve's money, but had no interest in his love. The lottery winnings dominated Kim's mind. She plotted to get the money and finally came up with a plan to hire a hit man to kill her husband. While she discussed her plan on the phone with her lover, her 21-year-old son listened to the entire conversation. Soon police arrested Kim for plotting her husband's death—for a mere \$500. She had put \$25 down, with the balance to be paid when the job was done. Surprisingly enough, Steve repeatedly visited Kim in prison. “You don't wash 22 years under the bridge,” he explained. Their relationship grew. He diligently fought to have her sentence reduced. He dropped all his charges against her. His love broke her heart. His loving initiative touched something deep inside. Kim saw her affair for what it was—a cheap imitation of the real thing. How could she resist the real, genuine, authentic love of one who would not let her go? How could she be unfaithful to somebody so faithful to her? How could she turn her back on one who embraced her with his love? She couldn't. She wouldn't. When she finally got out of prison, she threw her arms around him, sobbing, “Please, never, never, never let me go!” Their friends of course called them crazy and Steve and Kim didn't disagree. “Love is a state of insanity anyway... You just cannot explain it,” Steve said. God's unconditional love is certainly unexplainable. Unconditional love is a love that perseveres no matter what. It is a love that is not dependent on the one being loved. Here is an almost unbelievable thought. There is nothing you can do to get God to love you any less. Our actions do not determine His love—His heart does. When we turn our backs on Him, He loves us still. When we reject His invitation to follow Him, He loves us still. When we violate His will, He loves us still. Our actions may bring Him pain. Our wrong choices may break His heart. Our bad decisions may give Him deep grief, but nothing we do can change His steadfast love. I can't turn away from that love. All I can do is fall at his feet and thank Him forever for loving me so. Now...don't you love a good “love story?”

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 cjmrcer@tds.net. Check out www.morgantonsda.org. Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.

**Jamie Miller, CPA**  
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And The Rains Came...  
By Preacher Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County

The dry season that happened last year seems to be a distant memory. Hardly anyone brings it up in a conversation. Often during the summer of 2016 people would say things like, "We need rain badly!" Others would talk about how dry their gardens and yards were getting. I saw several church signs that were instructing everyone to "Pray for rain!" We made rain a special object of prayer during our Wednesday night prayer meeting many times. Almost every time I watched the news for the weather the shortfall of rain was always mentioned. The weatherman (or woman) would talk about how many inches we were behind for a certain month.

In the middle of all that came along the climate change gurus. There were special interviews with different people talking about how the climate change problem was causing the shortfall in rain. Just a few years back it was called global warming. When that didn't work out they changed it to climate change. If you think about it they've been telling us for years that if it's too cold, too hot, too warm, too wet, too dry, too snowy, too icy, too cloudy, too sunny, too windy, too still, too whatever, it's because of climate change.

Although there were some dry places a few times, I continued to mow my yard. All during the summer people were mowing, trimming grass, and tending their gardens. For sure the grass slowed in its growing, but it grew nonetheless. A few times I hooked up my sprinklers to water the garden. Some of the local streams here got low. A fellow I know said he caught a trout and it had a tick on its back! Just kidding! If you went into one of the local gas stations often you could over hear people talking and the dry weather was the topic of conversations.

Some time in late November or early December the weatherman said that the weather pattern was going to change because of the change in what they call the jet stream. Sure enough it must have changed. Rain began to come every few days. Everyone was excited and thankful. I even posted a video of it raining on my Facebook page! The conversations began to change from how dry it has been to the good rain we were getting. We were all very thankful to say the least.

During all the dry weather we experienced the Lord kept reminding me of this thought, "It will rain." So whenever someone would bring it up I would tell them that the rain will come. I kept telling folks that God would send the rain we needed. Now I'm not in any way saying that the dry weather wasn't a serious situation. Crops were affected, wildfires burned (many if not most started by arson), and people lost their lives, homes, and businesses in some places. We prayed and will continue to pray for those affected. Some folks had their wells and springs dry up also. Certainly it caused some major problems. But in the midst of it all, God kept reminding me that the rains would come and they did.

Every since I was a boy I remember times when the weather was what we would call odd. There are late snowstorms in the spring. Sometimes in January and February there were days the temperatures would be in the 70s. There were summers when it was dry and hot and summers when it was wet and cool. Winter sometimes brought lots of snow and some years we could hardly get a snow day from school. Every since I can remember the climate has changed! Now all of a sudden many are freaking out by something that has been going on since the beginning!

You might be asking, "Preacher, what's the point in all this?" Well the point is this; I believe many have listened too much to the doctrines of the world and have forgotten the promise of God. God has made mankind a promise about the climate in His Word. The problem has been that man has abandoned God's word. Many Christians themselves have apparently forgotten the promise God made to Noah and all of mankind. Genesis 8:20-22 *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

Now if you don't believe in the promises and truth of God's word, this won't mean anything to you. But, as believers in God and His Word, this truth should surely change our perspective on things. This earth and the universe are in the care and control of their Creator. We are certainly to be good stewards of the resources God has given to us, that is just common sense. God promises us that as long as this earth remains the seasons will come and go. This earth will remain until the day God himself judges it. Rest in His promises and use some wisdom when it comes to being a steward of His creation.

This morning I'm looking out the windows of my home and watching the rain fall into the large puddles. Last night we could hear the rain falling outside the church during the evening service. I believe in the promise that God has given about this earth! Why? Because once again, just as He said it would...the rains came.

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



and tactics of creating a comprehensive business plan while helping you avoid the critical planning mistakes that plague most business plans. As an added bonus, this course comes with Active plans Business Planning Software which helps you create a plan narrative and financial projections through a simple step-by-step approach.

**How to Start a Business** -This course provides the advice and strategies of the some of the leading entrepreneurs concerning what it really takes to start a new venture. "Starting a New Business" moves you through the important tasks of building a strong foundation for a business to the more tactical aspects concerning marketing, managing, and money. This course will also show you how to protect your ideas, how to hire employees, how to find out what licenses and regulations may apply, as well as, provide more than 50 resources of free information that are available in making your new business a reality.

**Choosing a Legal Structure for a Business** -Every new venture has to work the complex decision of what legal structure to choose for the business. This course breaks down this decision into its essential characteristics simplifying the decision making process. An in-depth discussion is presented about the pros and cons of structures such as the sole proprietorship, partnership, "c" or "s" corporation, and the limited liability company (LLC).

**Buying a Business**  
Buying a Business is a comprehensive course on how to buy the right business at the right price. Developed by entrepreneurs who buy businesses for a living, this course offers advice and wisdom in such areas as: the key questions to ask of any seller, the due diligence process, valuing a business and determining the offer, negotiation steps and tactics, and sample legal agreements.

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# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## NC Senate District 47



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

Opening day of the new session for the 2017-2018 biennium of the North Carolina General Assembly convened on January 11th in Raleigh. I was honored to be sworn in for my fourth term as Senator of the 47th District. I am proud of the legislative accomplishments of the North Carolina Senate over the past six years, as well grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the citizens in Mitchell, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Yancey counties for another term.

Following are my top legislative priorities for this session:

- Keeping House Bill 2 to ensure safety and privacy for women and girls in restrooms, changing rooms, and shower facilities. It is unconscionable for a city, town, or municipality to create an ordinance which would force businesses and public buildings to allow men into women's restrooms.
- Limiting state spending to no more than inflation plus population growth. Our Republican-led legislature has raised revenues while lowering taxes and keeping spending under control, allowing us to shore up the rainy day fund to nearly \$1.4 billion, and appropriate over \$200 million to assist hurricane and wildfire victims. I am in favor of an amendment to the North Carolina Constitution that would prevent a future legislature from overspending and placing our state in financial jeopardy.
- Structuring of pension and retiree benefits. Currently, our state's pension system is funded at less than 94 percent, while healthcare is an unfunded liability, which we cannot continue to ignore.
- Continuing our economic growth by putting the Department of Commerce under the office of the Lieutenant Governor.
- Following Congressional direction on the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and developing a Medicaid system that is a stepping stone for serving the state's medically needy citizens while putting people back to work.
- Restructuring the small school and low wealth funding formulas to increase the benefit to rural areas by eliminating the bias toward urban areas and large counties.

For this legislative session, I have been appointed to co-chair both the Health Care and Appropriations on Health and Human Services committees. I also have been appointed as a member of the following other standing committees: Finance; Commerce and Insurance; and Rules and Operations of the Senate.

I look forward to continued work on keeping our state a great place to live, work, and raise a family. As always, please share your thoughts with me on these or other issues related to state government by emailing me at [ralph.hise@ncleg.net](mailto: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

It is an honor to once again represent you in the North Carolina Senate for the 2017-18 long session. On January 11, I was privileged to stand with the forty-nine other senators and take the oath of office administered by North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Martin. I am also thankful that my wife, Lydia, daughters Brenna & Julia, and my parents, Steve & Sharon Daniel, were able to share this special day with me.

The actual start date of the 2017-18 long session of the General Assembly commences on Wednesday, January 25th. In preparation for that, last week Sen. Phil Berger, President Pro-Tem of the Senate, announced the chairs and members of Senate standing committees for 2017-18. I am honored to have been selected to serve as the Co-Chair of two committees, the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety. In addition, I will also serve as a member of the Finance, Transportation, and Rules committees. I appreciate the confidence that my colleagues have placed in me to work on these important committees, and I look forward to continuing to work on legislation that will make North Carolina a better and safer place to live, work and raise a family.

Although my committee assignments and my office location have changed, my commitment to constituent service remains a top priority. If you or a family member has an issue with a state government agency, please call my Raleigh office. Sometimes we also receive calls that deal with federal issues, such as VA concerns. In those cases, we will help connect you with the appropriate Congressional office to ensure that your concerns are addressed. For state agency related concerns, call my Raleigh office at 919-715-7823 and we will contact the appropriate agency on your behalf.

If you or your family members are ever traveling to Raleigh, please come by the office, Room 627 in the Legislative Office Building. I would love to meet you and arrange a tour of the Legislative Building.

I am excited about starting a new session in the NC Senate and honored to continue serving the people of Burke and Cleveland Counties.

## NC House District 86



Rep. Hugh Blackwell  
919-733-5805  
[Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net](mailto:Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net)

As the North Carolina General Assembly begins its full, long-session agenda on January 25, 2017, once again we can expect concerns of families for their rights and freedoms to rise to the forefront, at least from time to time. I say this in large part because I believe there is an ongoing culture war being waged in our country, with North Carolina being a focal point more often than not- largely because of our size as a state (more than 10 million people) and because of our critical role in the outcome of the last several presidential and U. S. Senate elections. As a result, I fully expect the battle to be continued by those who seek to redefine family roles and to undermine the beliefs that many Christians have long held regarding family. Hopefully, this session of the legislature will continue to support the important concepts of family, responsibility and personal liberties on which our nation and state were each founded.

While being fully committed to support for our families as those issues may arise, I expect personally to focus my efforts on at least three important educational issues that, in my opinion, bear heavily on our state's ability to wisely resist the culture war on families. I believe, too, these can be especially critical in resisting the radicals and anarchists who riot, engage in vulgar displays and language, foment violent acts and loudly spew threats against those who fail to yield to their intimidation. Resisting requires an educated citizenry. To that end, I am convinced we need first to redouble efforts to identify and best train principals who lead our K-12 schools. Secondly, we absolutely must insist that, to the maximum extent possible, students graduating from our state's high schools be able to read at a level that equips them for good careers and that they not require remediation in reading if they choose to pursue a college degree. Third and last, we must significantly raise the percentage of students attending college who actually complete, within four years, a credential of significant value. If we can do these three things well, we will, I hope, equip those students to better choose leaders (including judges) and policies for the future who will respect our personal rights guaranteed by the national and state constitutions.





# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## US House of Representatives NC District 11



Congressman  
Mark Meadows  
202-225-6401  
www.meadows.house.gov

On January 27th, 2017, I had the honor to march with hundreds of thousands of Americans, from all different backgrounds on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade for the 44th annual March for Life. Vice President Mike Pence became the first White House representative to speak at the March for Life, speaking boldly and clearly about the right to life. In his remarks, he reiterated President Donald Trump's commitment to be a pro-life President and appoint a pro-life Supreme Court Justice. What a privilege to take part and stand for protecting the unborn.

It is an historic time in America; I believe we are witnessing a renewal of sorts where a culture of life in America is being brought to the forefront, hearts and minds are changing on the subject of abortion. For too long we have been the torchbearer for abortion all over the world, but now is the time that we become the torchbearer for life for all nations, that we would be the City on a hill that all would see.

America is at a crossroads. We have a new Administration in the White House that celebrates life and is committed to defending it. Last week, I was proud to support H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which I'm hopeful will soon go to President Trump's desk to be signed into law. In the coming weeks, Congress will also have the opportunity to take another important step in the fight to defend life: defunding abortion giant Planned Parenthood.

I am encouraging my Republican colleagues to hold to the commitment we made to the American people and include language to strip federal funding from Planned Parenthood – the largest abortion provider in the country – and demonstrate a clear, firm commitment to the idea of the sanctity of life. Thank you to the so many who continue to speak out for the unborn. May we never forget that life is precious.



*Honored to stand for life today at the March for Life with so many friends and colleagues. Mia Love, Sen. Joni Ernst, Author Eric Metaxas, Rep Robert Aderholt, my wife Debbie, and Caroline Aderholt. May we never forget that life is precious.*

## NC House District 118

Members of the 2017-18 session of the North Carolina General Assembly were sworn in Jan. 11.

Of the nearly 10 million people in our great state, 170 are chosen by voters between the House and Senate to pass laws that affect our everyday lives. The magnitude of that responsibility was reflected on the opening day of session as family members and state leaders joined members in the House and Senate chambers for the swearing-in ceremony.

Decisions my fellow members and I make over the next biennium will have a lasting impact on the course of our state. It is truly an honor to have been chosen by voters in my district to be a part of that decision making – it is a responsibility I don't take lightly.

Members returned to the General Assembly on Jan. 25 to take action on legislation. When Bill filing is open, and my work on developing legislation that positively impacts my constituents will continue throughout the 2017 legislative Long Session.

Please always feel free to contact my office or me. I look forward to serving you and your interests over the next two years.



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

## NC House District 85



Representative  
Josh Dobson  
Josh.Dobson@ncleg.net  
919-733-5862

The General Assembly reconvened on January 11, 2017 for the 2017-2018 Session. Once again I am honored to represent the people of Mitchell, Avery, and McDowell counties. This will be my third term and I am ready to get started. Speaker of the House Tim Moore recently appointed me as Chairman of the Department of Health and Human Services Appropriations committee and also as Chair of the Health Policy Committee. These two committees will be responsible for all legislation and spending concerning healthcare in the state of North Carolina.

I am eager to get to work to improve healthcare for the people of North Carolina. As is well known, healthcare can be a very divisive issue. It is already being hotly debated at the federal level. I don't pretend to have all the answers to solve our state and nation's healthcare issues. However, I do believe there are some things we can do at the state level to make healthcare more affordable, efficient, and accessible for more North Carolinians. Instead of playing politics and bickering, I plan to work to put specific policies in place that will improve our healthcare.

First, I know that Medicaid expansion is a divisive issue and I will save that debate for another day. However, we do have many North Carolinians in rural areas across this state that are uninsured and/or do not have adequate healthcare. There are things that can be done to alleviate this problem. I believe we should increase funding for our rural health clinics, our free health clinics, federally qualified health centers, and public health departments in North Carolina. All of these entities provide a valuable service in our state. I believe we need to do all we can to strengthen, empower, and encourage these local agencies. I plan to do just that in this long session.

Second, it is no secret that our rural areas do not have an adequate number of physicians. I plan to file a bill on day one that will allow physician assistants, family nurse practitioners, and certified registered nurse anesthetist to practice at a higher level without jeopardizing safety. This will bring more healthcare providers to rural areas of this state.

Third, there will be much debate over Medicaid reform in this long session. Medicaid represents close to one fourth of the entire state budget. The General Assembly will work to make sure that our Medicaid program is efficient, effective, and at the same time not compromising care for the least among us.

Access to healthcare is a vital part of who we are as a state. I look forward to working once again to do my part to make sure North Carolina has the best health care in the nation. As always, thanks to the people of the 85th District for allowing me this opportunity to serve.





## Local Business Partners with Hospice of McDowell

By Doug Harrell  
McDowell County



In the summer of 2009 Tony Panou, the owner of Bantam Chef restaurant in Marion, was looking for a way to return to his town and county. After meeting with his employees and discussing options they decided that Hospice was the place that they would like to work with. After meeting with Hospice and agreeing to work as a partner with them, Tony formulated a plan to raise funds to donate. He and the employees decided they would use the profits from the bubble gum machines, ads that they would sell on

the napkin holders, sale of buckets and jugs that they bought their oil in, funds from recycled frying oil, recycled drink cans, even money from a "cuss jar". Every cuss word spoken by any employee cost .25 cents. Tony laughed when he told me this and said sometimes it was a fairly good amount!

Tony and the employees put all the money into a Hershey can piggy bank, and every six months they would have a company get together and celebrate, count the money and take a check to Hospice. The check that was written for this past six months was for \$2247.00, the largest check for six months to date. With this check the total contributed to Hospice added up to \$21,074.00.

Tony states that it was such an honor to be able to contribute back to the community and that it has been and continues to be a team effort for his entire staff. "As long as I own and run this restaurant, we will continue to do this" Tony says. He feels that the blessing he and the staff receive from giving is amazing and wants to say a big THANK YOU to the community for helping with the project.



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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- You want care that is available at home
- You need additional support for managing symptoms

**What can Palliative Care do for you?**

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Expanding Service

By Bob Brown  
Avery County

We here, at APRC, have been blessed by being able to serve the women of Avery County through your support. In addition to providing baby clothes, diapers, toys, high chairs, strollers, and car seats, we also provide a baby centered educational program for the moms.

We have a beautiful two story house that serves as a lighthouse on a hill for everyone in our community. We are open two days a week but that is about to change.

Scripture states that "Where there is no vision the people perish." APRC has a new and greater vision than when we opened the doors five years ago. We are in the process of expanding our services, keeping APRC open as many days as needed, (prayerfully five) to provide additional services, not only to new moms or mothers to be, but to the entire community, both male or female. We will still remain Avery Pregnancy and Resource Center, doing what we do best, providing for our Family Members (Clients).

You can help us plan for an expansion of services by calling me, Bob Brown, at either of the numbers listed above. In order to provide these new services, we need to know, from our community, if there is a need to provide these services. The following services are being considered free of charge.

1. Finances: which will include financial planning, budgeting, checking and savings accounts, and much more. This service will be taught by a financial expert from Wells Fargo.
2. Technology: learn how to use your new Android, iPhone and/or tablets/taught by Carolina West Wireless.
3. Cooking Classes
4. Sewing Classes
5. Beginners Bible Study

We have not decided on a time or day that these services will be offered. If you will please call me for more information I will try to arrange a time and day that is convenient for all to attend.

Blessings,

Bob Brown is the Executive Director of the Avery Pregnancy & Resource Center.



Welding Class Sparks Interest At FHS

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

If high school students know anything at all about welding these days, it's usually limited to the fact that if you look at the welding arc it will burn your eyes. Students in the welding class at Freedom High School are learning so much more than just basic safety related to the skill. They are learning different cutting systems and different cutting maneuvers and fillers, as well as welding, brazing and soldering processes.

"I didn't know any of the details," said junior Madison DeVinney recalling her first days in the class in early August, "just that there are a bunch of sparks, and it's bright."

Madison is the only female in the welding class, which is new to Freedom this year and taught by Western Piedmont Community College instructors Max Jordan Jr. and Bryan Deal as part of the Career and College Promise curriculum that offers high school and college credit.

Freedom High School Principal Mike Swan encouraged Madison to take the welding course. While she is pursuing a CNA license through nursing classes at Freedom and is considering a career in criminal justice, Madison said she wanted to stretch her comfort zone with the welding class.

"We're going off to college soon," Madison said, "and we need to be able to adapt to different situations and be open to trying new things."

Freedom senior Gavin Riddle said he wanted to take the class to learn a new skill. He said, "I don't want to have to rely on someone else to do something for me. I want to know how to do it myself. This is not a typical class setting. It's refreshing. I learn a lot more by working with my hands and this is a hands-on class."

Freedom senior Ron Michaux may consider welding as a career. The class has discussed the salary welders make (nation-wide average is \$38,150 a year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor) and the job outlook (welding jobs are expected to grow by 4 percent by 2024, also according to the U.S. Department of Labor.)

Ron, who worked with Oak Hill Iron Works on his graduation project, said he started getting serious about learning a new skill the summer before his senior year. He plans to continue the welding



continued on page 41



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What is the difference between Hospice and Palliative Care?

Hospice Services

Hospice and Palliative of the Blue Ridge provides care to patients with a life limiting illness

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Life limiting illness of 6 months or less  
Physician who is willing to work with the hospice team

Settings

Hospice can visit patients in home, long term care center and hospitals

Services Offered

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Grief Support	Registered Nurse
Volunteers	Counseling Service
Chaplain Services	Physician/FNP Services
Certified Nursing Assistants	Family/Patient Education

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Services Provided Regardless of Ability to pay

Additional Services and Benefits Available

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Pathways Palliative Care Program

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Admissions Criteria

Serious illness  
Seeking Curative Treatment  
Physician willing to work with the Palliative Care Team

Settings

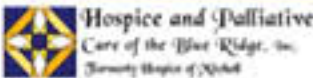
Home  
Long Term Care Facilities  
Hospital

Services

Registered Nurse	Nurse Practitioner
Physician	Chaplain, as needed
Medical Social Worker, as needed	

Payment

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Most Private Insurance  
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## Impacting Lives in McDowell County

By Philip Long  
McDowell County



Imagine not being able to get to your follow-up doctor's appointment or get much needed medication. Or even worse, going through life alone, especially during an illness. FaithHealthNC was launched in McDowell County a little over three years ago and is now seeing the fruits of its work.

FaithHealth's main focus is helping people. Carolyn Fender and Ann Young, McDowell County's two FaithHealth Connectors, are at the forefront of seeing lives changed. "We've been able to help people by providing transportation to doctors' offices, helping get medications, providing food for families, running errands for and with people, and even visiting our clients in their homes," says Fender.

Who is a FaithHealth client? Referrals are made from McDowell/Mission Health physician practices, McDowell Hospital, McDowell Community Care Paramedics, and other agencies. "Because of our limited number of volunteers, we are not able to help everyone. But we do our best to take all referrals," says Young.

How has FaithHealth impacted the lives of its clients? Here's a good example: Brenda Hall became a client of FaithHealth in September 2016. On their initial visit, Carolyn and Ann learned that Brenda had 3 strokes in 2013 and had severe asthma and allergy problems. She was also in need of food and transportation. In the last 5 months, FaithHealth volunteers have provided her with several trips to the doctor, the pharmacy, and even to run errands such as paying bills, getting groceries and supplies, and trips to DSS. Brenda has since been able to continue her allergy shots once a week and has only been in the hospital with asthma related symptoms one time since September, a result of the heavy smoke from the wildfires in McDowell County. FaithHealth volunteers have learned that when Brenda has an attack she needs immediate medication and transportation to the doctor that day. That's where FaithHealth Volunteers step in, making a huge impact on her life and her ability to stay well.

Since the beginning of the program in McDowell County, FaithHealth has touched the lives of many people such as Brenda. From April of 2015 (the first official month) through December of 2016, FaithHealth has met a total number of 1261 needs. Just last month (December 2016) the two FaithHealth Connectors and five volunteers made 76 trips for 24 clients. Of all the needs, transportation is still the number one request.

How can you help? FaithHealth is in need of volunteers. For people of faith, this is a great opportunity to put your faith into action. We need folks who can help once a month, twice a month, once a week ... whatever time you can give. It is truly a ministry of love, compassion, and servanthood. You will be blessed even more than our clients!

The next FaithHealth Training will be held Tuesday, February 21 at 5:30 pm. We will meet at McDowell Hospital and a free meal will be provided. If you would like to become a volunteer and attend training (or have questions), please contact Ann Young at 828-724-9383 / ayoung.faithhealthnc@yahoo.com, Carolyn Fender at 828-668-7508 / cfender.faithhealthnc@yahoo.com, or Philip Long at 828-659-5434 / philip.long@msj.org.

So consider this: What could be greater than helping others, especially those in need? This ministry has the potential of impacting our community in a mighty way, but we need help. If you are able to drive someone to the doctor's office, the pharmacy, or the grocery store, could run errands for those in need, could make a visit, or could make a phone call to someone lonely, then you're a perfect fit for this ministry. Thanks for considering becoming a part of McDowell FaithHealth.

*Phillip Long is Manager of FaithHealth Fellow, McDowell County, Volunteer Services and Pastoral Care, McDowell Hospital.*

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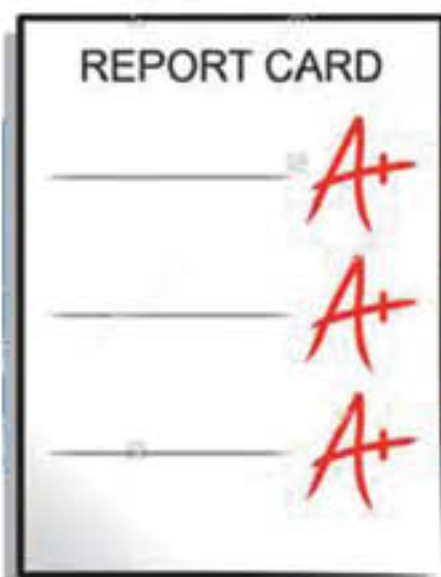






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# Crossword

## ACROSS

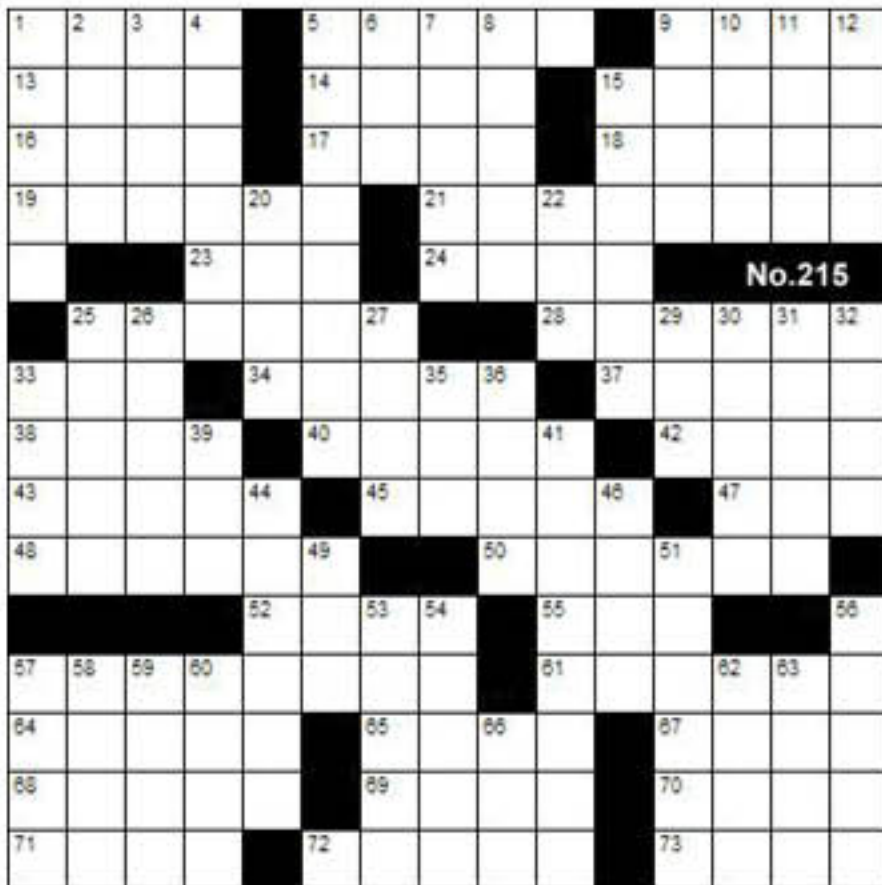
1. an idol \_\_\_\_ in the shape of a calf (Exod 32:8)
5. unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is \_\_\_\_ (1,4) (Heb 5:13) KJV
9. we do not \_\_\_\_ war as the world does (2 Cor 10:3-4)
13. John to the seven churches which are in \_\_\_\_ (Rev 1:4)
14. Nebuchadnezzar made an image, and set it up on the plain of \_\_\_\_ (Dan 3:1)
15. bread from heaven (John 6:58)
16. temporary dwelling (Ex 33:7)
17. dead man, "by this time there is a bad \_\_\_\_ (John 11:39)
18. \_\_\_\_ the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John (Acts 4:6)
19. with the figurehead of the twin gods \_\_\_\_ and Pollux (Acts 28:11)
21. for I \_\_\_\_ on your statutes (Ps 119:99)
23. So God created man in his \_\_\_\_ image (Gen 1:27)
24. gardener of Eden
25. because you \_\_\_\_ like a heifer threshing grain (Jer 50:11)
28. now is our salvation \_\_\_\_ than when we believed (Romans 13:11)
33. \_\_\_\_ king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire (2 Sam 8:9)
34. When it \_\_\_\_, she has no fear for her household (Prov 31:21)
37. Jesus entered the temple area and \_\_\_\_ out all who were (Matt 21:12)
38. burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and \_\_\_\_ (Hos 4:13) KJV
40. Do not \_\_\_\_ over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen (Mic 7:8)
42. The great temptations which thine \_\_\_\_ saw, and the signs (Deut 7:19) KJV
43. he gave \_\_\_\_ of bread, and a cake of raisins (1,4) (2 Sam 6:19)
45. two days, or five, \_\_\_\_ twenty days (3,2) (Num 11:19)
47. How \_\_\_\_ thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12) KJV
48. the cedar and the acacia, the \_\_\_\_ and the olive (Isa 41:19)
50. when her father saw him, he \_\_\_\_ welcomed him (Judg 19:3)
52. I charge you under \_\_\_\_ by the living God (Matt 26:63)
55. 8th letter of Greek alphabet
57. a place called \_\_\_\_ (which means The Place of the Skull) (Matt 27:34)
61. God, whom I praise, do not \_\_\_\_ silent (Ps 109:1)
64. But \_\_\_\_ foolish controversies and genealogies (Titus 3:9)
65. Nehemiah the governor, \_\_\_\_ the priest and scribe (Neh 8:9)
67. standing at the right \_\_\_\_ of the altar (Luke 1:11)
68. or who \_\_\_\_ on a crutch or who falls by the sword (2 Sam 3:29)
69. my ears have heard the \_\_\_\_ of my wicked foes (Ps 92:11)
70. garden of God
71. she came from the \_\_\_\_ of the earth to listen to Solomon's (Luke 11:31)
72. He came to \_\_\_\_ and then to Lystra

(Acts 16:1)

73. \_\_\_\_ me, O LORD, in thy righteousness (Ps 5:8) KJV

## DOWN

1. Does a trap spring up from the earth when there is nothing to \_\_\_\_? (Amos 3:5)
2. looked like \_\_\_\_ of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
3. to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your \_\_\_\_ are forgiven" (Matt 9:2)
4. or put \_\_\_\_ marks on yourselves (Lev 19:28)
5. let it not be that outward \_\_\_\_ of plaiting the hair (1 Peter 3:3) KJV
6. Israel will \_\_\_\_ and blossom and fill all the world with fruit (Isa 27:6)
7. As an \_\_\_\_ pleasing to the LORD (Num 29:2)
8. the siege of Jerusalem and with \_\_\_\_ arm prophesy against her (Ezek 4:7)
9. I do not \_\_\_\_ to do so with pen and ink (John 13:14)
10. a prophetess, \_\_\_\_, the daughter of Phamuel (Luke 2:36)
11. You strain out a \_\_\_\_ but swallow a camel (Matt 23:24)
12. now therefore \_\_\_\_ thou somewhat the grievous servitude (2 Chr 10:4) KJV
15. the injured or the \_\_\_\_, or anything with warts or festering (Lev 22:22)
20. \_\_\_\_ shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there (Isa 13:21) (KJV)
22. one of the twelve tribes of Israel (1 Chron 2:2)
25. For the fool speaks \_\_\_\_, his mind is busy with evil (Isa 32:6)
26. Because of this, the \_\_\_\_ spread among the brothers (John 21:23)
27. brought the ass, and the \_\_\_\_, and put on them (Matt 21:7) (KJV)
29. Blessed \_\_\_\_ the pure in heart, for they will see God (Matt 5:8)
30. you are a chosen people, a \_\_\_\_ priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9)
31. and the hold of \_\_\_\_ fowl spirit (Rev 18:2) (KJV)
32. I will give him \_\_\_\_ from all his enemies (1 Chr 22:9)
33. group of people working together
35. \_\_\_\_ to them! They have taken the way of Cain (Jude 11)
36. they believed his promises and \_\_\_\_ his praise (Ps 106:12)
39. She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she \_\_\_\_ up (Acts 9:40-41)
41. I know that you cannot \_\_\_\_ wicked men (Rev 2:2)
44. I have come into the deep waters; the \_\_\_\_ engulf me (Ps 69:2)
46. the people shall go out and gather a certain \_\_\_\_ every day (Exodus 16:4)
49. gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and \_\_\_\_; this is my body (Matt 26:26)
51. a \_\_\_\_ came to hearken, named



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Rhoda (Acts 12:13) KJV

53. Neither is \_\_\_\_ any creature that is not manifest (Heb 4:13)

54. Joshua turned back and captured \_\_\_\_ (Josh 1:10)

56. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to \_\_\_\_ (2,3) (Dan 2:44)

57. the wind will pick them up, and a \_\_\_\_ will blow them away (Isa 41:16)

58. Every grain offering baked in an

\_\_\_\_ or cooked (Lev 7:9)

59. Men cry out under a \_\_\_\_ of oppression (Job 35:9)

60. a net by the wayside; they have set \_\_\_\_ for me (Ps 140:5) KJV

62. Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' \_\_\_\_ (Num 11:28)

63. The man who was healed had no \_\_\_\_ who it was (John 5:13)

66. pick some heads of grain, \_\_\_\_ them in their hands and eat (Luke 6:1)

Solution on page 14

## THE DUCK COMMANDER

### ALL-TERRAIN HAS LANDED

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# The Crossnore School

## The Crossnore School And The Children's Home Complete Merger

By Holly Barrett  
Avery County



The merger of these two 100-year old agencies into one organization was completed on January 1, 2017.

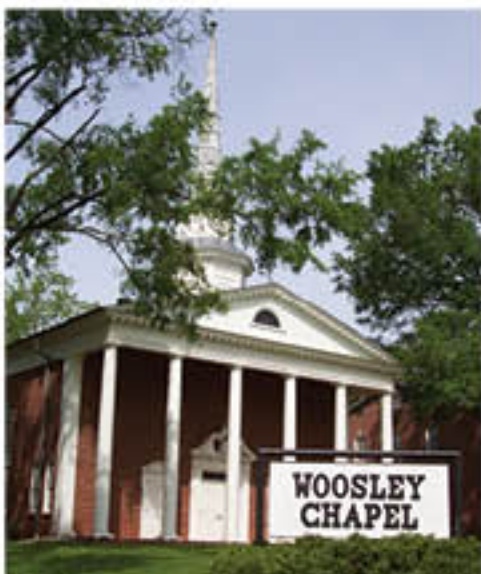
CROSSNORE, N.C. (January 9, 2016) — The Boards of Trustees for The Crossnore School and The Children's Home are pleased to announce the completion of their merger into one organization. The new organization will be known as Crossnore School & Children's Home.



Brett A. Loftis, JD, remains Chief Executive Officer of the new organization and leads an executive team of six, including in Crossnore, NC, Caroline Hart, Chief Advancement Officer, Teresa Huffman, Chief Financial Officer, and Angelina Spencer, Chief Program Officer. The remaining three officers are located in Winston-Salem, NC, and include Anthony Cortes, PhD, Chief Operating Officer, Jenny Taylor, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Meribeth Robinson, Chief Clinical Officer. Since September 2016, when the merger was approved by both Boards, staff-led integration teams have been working to integrate programs, policies, and procedures to ensure no disruption of services across both campuses.

"For more than a century, both organizations have worked to transform the lives of thousands of children," said Brett Loftis. "We are excited about continuing to care for children in our residential group foster care, single-family foster care, outpatient therapy, and educational settings. Providing this full continuum of care for children positions us to become the premier provider of services for children and families in western North Carolina."

For more information about the merger, please contact Holly Barrett, Director of Communications at (828) 733-4305 or hbarrett@crossnoreschool.org. About Crossnore School & Children's Home: With two campuses in western North Carolina, Crossnore School & Children's Home grows healthy futures for children and families by providing a Christian sanctuary of hope and healing. For more information about Crossnore School & Children's Home, please visit [www.crossnore.org](http://www.crossnore.org).



Holly Barrett is Director of Communications for The Crossnore School. She blogs several times a week at [www.hollybarrett.org](http://www.hollybarrett.org), and is host and producer of "Living a Redeemed Life," a bi-weekly podcast.



*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18*

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By Jan Merop  
Avery County

When I think of "amazing love," I immediately think of God's love.

It is deeper than the ocean, higher than the heavens, wider than the ends of the earth and unfailing. Because of who he is, his love is matchless, sacrificial, protective, unending and beyond our human comprehension.

His love is painted across the heavens in each morning sunrise. He repeats this majesty in a new way in the evening sunset. Then he hangs the curtain of stars and the extraordinary light of the moon to brighten the darkest sky. All of creation beckons us to receive his loving care.

He continuously expresses himself through the love of spouses and children, parents and other extended families and friends. Even a simple smile from a stranger hugs us on a dreary day.

And because of who God is, we can become all that he has created us to be. That is why though my parents are not well known, they were loved and respected by all whom they met along their journey in life. With God's love in their hearts, they became who God intended for them to be. Their story is simple, yet filled with the drama of the history they lived.

The war was over! Pfc Ceasar Turchiarelli could at last look to the future. Having been a Pearl Harbor survivor and enduring the hardships of war, the hopes for a wife, home and family were palpable.

So when his brother said he had met Ceasar's wife, my father's ears perked up. And sure enough upon meeting one another, Teresa Caimano became Ceasar's wife just nine months later. Teresa had known what it was to live through having all of her brothers deployed to various theaters in the war, as well as the rationing of goods at home.

Now she and her new husband would have a new beginning together building their marriage on the foundation of love and trust. But, while enduring a risky pregnancy with me, her mother died, further compromising the pregnancy and leaving her in bed till I was born. Her patient and loving husband endured with her through it all.

God blessed them with daughter, Janet Claire, and son, Daniel five years later. As the years marched on they became grandparents to five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

They had celebrated 69 years of marriage before God called each of their names to come Home and be with Him. In 1946, two vibrant and loving people promised to love and cherish one another in sickness and in health till death would part them. Through their example, my brother and I saw love, devotion, trust and consideration lived out daily.

Theirs is a 1 Corinthians 13 love.

Does that mean they were always patient and kind; never envious; always humble; never proud or rude; unselfish at all times; etc.? No. They weren't

perfect. But, most importantly, they walked hand in hand with the Lord seeking to emulate 1 Corinthians love.

For that to happen, tests entered their lives as it does to each one of us. But, we saw them turn together to God and seek his direction.

For approximately 7 - 8 years, the most severe tests came as

Dad developed dementia and Mom determined to care for him at home. At first it was a slow onset...but the older he got, the more pronounced it became.

His steps faltered and his mind and speech became slower. Mom, in turn, had issues with her eyes and partially lost sight in one eye. Yet her spirited approach to life kept Dad cared for and content while she continued to keep their home and prepare their meals into her 93rd year.

Faithfully she would pray, "Lord, please keep me well and strong. I have to take care of my husband." And God granted that request.

They were an incredible duo to watch...to emulate.

"Love bears all things," says 1 Corinthians 13: 7, NKJV. "Believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

God's amazing love infused their marriage for those 69 years with keeping power, belief, hope, trust and endurance. And, so, we can agree with verse 8, "Love never fails."

On August 23, 2015, Dad entered his heavenly rest at age 96. We thought Mom would rally and be with us for a good while, but being such an intense care giver took its toll. After repeated heart attacks, she joined Dad only five months later on January 12, 2016 at 93.

Thinking back, I am so blessed to have been born to these two wonderful parents and to have seen with my own eyes how God's amazing love can be demonstrated in marriage.



## Lead Me, Please

The first time I heard Ken pray, I sensed the deepening awareness in my soul that this was the man for me. Until that point, as a single mom for some time, I don't think I realized how much I was starving for male, spiritual leadership. But, God knew that my heart was crying out for this type of partnership.

He felt my need for tenderness, kindness, a happy disposition and an affectionate loving spouse to encourage me. But, most of all, the Lord knew I needed a man who loved him above all else and would lead me and our family in faith.

Some time ago, I heard a radio interview with a song writer/singer regarding a song he had written for his wife about their relationship. In the song he realizes she is crying out to be led by him spiritually.

The song touched me as I had been there. But, the beauty of the lyrics led to a deeper realization on the part of the song writer. If he indeed was to fulfill his God-given role as the spiritual leader of the family, then he, too, had to cry out, "Lead me, Lord." For without the Lord guiding his thoughts, decisions and actions, how could he ever lead his wife and family?

We have recently celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary.

It seems we just were enfolding our family yesterday and here we are with three married sons and five grandchildren ages 8 - 19. Through the ups and downs of family life, one constant has remained. Prayer.

I have watched my husband continue to be consistent in prayer; in seeking the Lord through his Word, the Bible; and, in growing with me as we study together and let God work through us in various ministry opportunities.

We are two very different personalities. Ken is laid back and I am an idea/solution person. So it can be a challenge for me to say, "Lead me." But, it's not a contradiction; rather, it has been the way God has chosen to refine us both.

Our life verse as seen in 1 Corinthians 2: 9, NKJV, still reverberates in our hearts when we repeat it from memory, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

love hearing Ken's voice lifted in prayer knowing that he takes seriously his role to lead me. Selah

## Blushing Promise

*Like the bride who has saved her first kiss for her groom,  
These petite, finely etched roses seem to be blushing with promise.  
Each exquisite, perfectly painted flower  
is a classic work of art whispering pledges of hope.*

*"Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases."  
Song of Solomon 2: 7b*



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.

# Happy Valentine's Day!



certificate program by completing classes on the Western Piedmont Community College campus and wants to own his own shop one day.

Freedom student Jonny Benfield said, "Max Jordan is one of the best teachers I've ever had. He's taught me a trade that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. This class was a great learning experience, and I would definitely recommend this class to others."

The welding students designed and cut a metal sculptor of a welder and the schools initials - FHS - to hang outside the shop area.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Just like the other new programs - agriculture, firefighting and mechatronics - we have introduced over the last few years, welding provides yet another option for our high school students in course selection. Through our partnership with Western Piedmont Community College and the Career and College Promise Program, these students are receiving free college credits for the course as well as real world skills they can take into our local workforce and valuable insight into career paths that may be of interest to them."

In preparation for the course, Freedom and WPCC installed over the summer welding equipment and booths in the high school's carpentry area. WPCC instructors Deal and Jordan travel to Freedom to teach the courses - Welding 110 - Cutting Process and Welding 112 Basic Welding Process.

The courses are 75 percent hands-on and 25 percent lecture, Jordan explained. He said, "Students are given safety quiz's, tests, midterms and finals with both written and hands-on proficiency activities; there is some homework that is also assigned. We also use rubrics on some of our tasks to help track student proficiency within our program."

WPCC offers two certificate options -- a diploma and a two-year associate's degree in welding.

Jordan, who has been a welding instructor for 19 years, said students with welding experience make themselves more marketable to employers. He said, "What I see most of our students doing is using welding to find employment in industries that need welding as a secondary skill-set or to enhance other skill sets in finding jobs, such as industrial technicians, power plant mechanics, fabricators or opening their own welding related businesses. Also it's a skill that can be used around the home or farm, which attracts some students."

Jordan looks forward to helping build the welding program at Freedom. He said, "The response so far from students and Mr. Swan has been very positive. This type of program is a life-changing experience for our students as it builds self-confidence and helps them work as team players; it's truly a win-win. I have seen the benefits of this type of instruction/environment in the hundreds of students I have taught over the years of both high school and adult students, there are plenty of success stories to go around."

Brandon Hensley, WPCC Department Head of Engineering, said, "WPCC is excited to offer courses tuition free for all high school students. In addition to the welding courses at

Freedom, WPCC plans to offer Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering and CNC Machining at both Patton and East Burke high schools for spring of 2017, with intention of increased future courses offerings at other high schools as well."



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

Strengthening Nonprofits to Serve the Community

By Susan Larson



WNC Nonprofit Pathways will present three low-cost workshops for board, staff, and volunteers of nonprofits in Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey counties over the next three months. The goal is to strengthen nonprofit organizations so that they can better serve the community.

The February workshop will focus on nonprofit boards and will call on the expertise of a teacher who is very familiar with the area. Leslie Anderson, who has counseled over 100 nonprofit organizations across the country, will lead the workshop from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7 at the



Leslie Anderson

Artist Resource Center above the TRAC Gallery in Spruce Pine. The topic is "Building Better Boards," and it is intended to help board members, chairs, and staff members of nonprofits understand their roles and responsibilities. WNC Nonprofit Pathways, the sponsor, has kept the costs low so that multiple members from the same organization can attend and learn together. The first participant is \$15 and up to three more can attend at \$10 each, with lunch provided for all.

Nonprofit organizations are under increased expectations for accountability and effectiveness and boards play an essential part in determining whether groups succeed or fail. The ultimate goal for this workshop is to strengthen the group's infrastructure and service to the community. Anderson will cover topics such as planning, leadership development, fund development, communication, finance, legal issues and evaluation. Nonprofits that attend will be eligible for up to three hours of additional coaching by Anderson at no charge.

For the past 20 years Leslie Anderson Consulting, Inc. has provided organizational development services (strategic planning, board development, community collaboration, research, etc.), guidance on crisis management, advocacy and community change, as well as technical assistance to nonprofits, coalitions, foundations and government units across the United States. She led the planning process for the Golden Leaf Foundation's Community Assistance Grant Programs in both Mitchell and Yancey counties. Leslie is one of five core consultants who help organizations improve their performance through Western North Carolina Nonprofit Pathways. In addition to her busy consulting practice, Leslie volunteers extensively and has been recognized by the region and state with several awards, the most recent being "Women Making History," by Asheville Citizen-Times in 2016.

Advance registration is required by February 3. To request a link for registration send an email to sjanelarson@gmail.com or call Avery-Mitchell-Yancey WNC Nonprofit Pathways coordinator Susan Larson at 828-765-2652. WNC Nonprofit Pathways is an Asheville-based organization serving the western counties of the state with the goal of assessing nonprofits' needs and providing services to build skills and strengthen organizations.

The March workshop will be "Financial Reporting for Nonprofits: Making Sense of Nonprofit Finances" and will take place on March 7 at the Yancey County Public Library from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It will be taught by CPA Wade Rogers.

Sally Loftis will lead the April workshop, "Coach, Supervisor or Boss: Leadership Skills for the Nonprofit Supervisor" on Friday, April 28, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It will be held at the Banner Elk School, a MCC campus in Avery County. Registration for the March and April workshops will open three weeks prior to each event.

Susan Larson is Director of WNC Non-Profit Pathway.



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## Annual Student Art Showcases Shine Through Winter Fog

By Kate Groff

On Saturday, February 11, the Toe River Arts Council (TRAC) will open the first of two highly anticipated exhibits of the year in the Burnsville Gallery with their Annual Student Showcase of work from Yancey County students. One week later, the Spruce Pine Gallery begins an exhibition of Mitchell County student work. These two displays from all students in all school settings—from public to private to those schooled at home—cover the walls and pedestals, floor to ceiling with color and imagination. Over the past school year, students have let their creativity flow into works on paper and canvas, in clay and in fiber, with stones and sequins, beads and baubles, and they present it all to the community in two dazzling exhibitions. Student art is all about splash- es of color and intriguing ways of capturing percep- tions in artistic forms. The shows promise to delight the senses. Keenly aware of the great role art plays in forming awareness and skills in our youth, TRAC views arts education as one of the basics of its mission. Involvement in the arts results in gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills. Experiencing the arts first hand improves moti- vation, concentration, confidence, and promotes a teamwork mentality. Merely opening young eyes to new ways of seeing creates the foundation to forge social bonds and community.

Students look forward to these exhibits. They can bring moms and dads, grand- parents, nieces, nephews, even the neighbor across the street to see their work. This is the art of future Toe River Valley artists, and we are so proud of them.

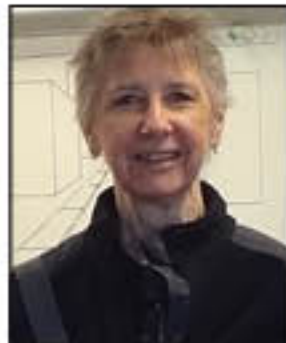
And each year, mixed media artist True Kelly festoons a corner of the Spruce Pine Gallery and the windows in the Burnsville Gallery with photographs from students past having fun with art.

We celebrate the work of the hardworking art teachers in both counties. In Mitchell, Amy Master- man at Greenlee primary, Leslie Dickerson on the elementary level, Olivia Ellis in the middle schools, and Melisa Caddell at Mitchell High. Yancey County has mirrored teachers with Marcia Huskins for grades K-5, Keli Miller at the mid- dle schools, and Christy Edwards at Mountain Heritage High. These individuals spend the entire year developing curriculum-based proj- ects and teaching arts to over 3,000 students. These exhibits continue to confirm their dedication to their students and their support of arts in education. And we can't forget the teachers in the private and home school settings. They never neglect the arts when working with young minds and hands.

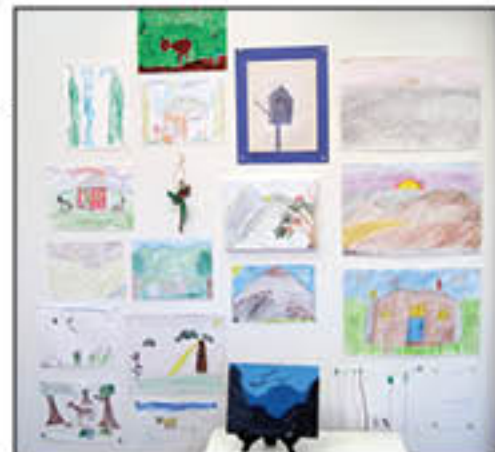
Get out of the misty cold. Step into a cacaphony of warm color at both the Arts Council galleries. The Arts Showcase at the Spruce Pine Gallery, located at 269 Oak Avenue, will run from February 18-March 18. On March 3 (with a snow day on the 10th), Arts Matter, a consortium of arts professions in Mitchell County, will host a free and open to the public reception at the Spruce Pine Gallery from 4 to 6pm. Yancey's Showcase starts February 11 and will run an additional week—un- til March 25 with an all day Open House on March 25. Gallery hours are 10:30am to 5:00pm, Tuesday-Saturday in. For more information about the exhibitions, please call 828.765.0520.

TRAC is a non-profit organization founded in 1976 to promote the arts in Mitchell and Yancey Counties and funded in part by a Grassroots Art Grant, through the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, a state agency, and both Mitchell and Yancey County Schools. For more information about the Arts Council's educational arts pro- grams, visit the website, [www.toeriverarts.org](http://www.toeriverarts.org) or call 828.682.7215.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.



Mitchell County Student Showcase



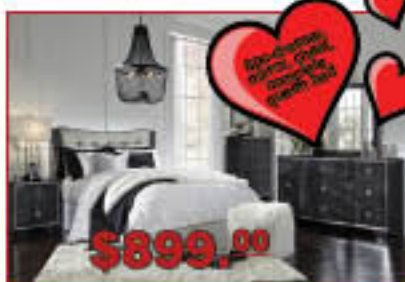
Yancey County Student Showcase

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First Aid Kit  
By Nancy Yantchook

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and for each car. Store-bought first aid kits are good for one emergency, but do not usually contain enough supplies for serious injuries or for several people. A good First Aid Kit should include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in various sizes (Band-aids)
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap (Betadine, PhisoHex)
- Latex gloves (2 pair)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3) (slings)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller gauze (3 rolls)
- Adhesive tape –non-allergic, paper, etc.
- Medicine dropper
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle and thread
- Moistened towelettes (Wipes)
- Disinfectant hand soap (Lever 2000 or hand sanitizers)
- Antiseptic (70% isopropyl alcohol in bottle or individual pads) (Bacitracin or Triple Antibiotic Ointment)
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades
- Petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or other lubricant
- Non-prescription drugs
- Aspirin or Tylenol
- Anti-diarrheal medication (Kaopectate, Pepto-Bismol. Etc.)
- Antacid for stomach upset (Tums, Mylanta, etc.)
- Syrup of Ipecac (used to induce vomiting if advised by Poison Control Center or Dr.)
- Laxative (Mineral Oil, etc.)
- Prescription Medicines –at least a 7-10-day supply of your regularly used medicine. The pharmacy and insurance companies will not allow individuals to hoard medicines. Keep everyone in your family in mind when gathering medicines. Special formula, bottles, diapers and medicine for babies should be included. Special medicine for the elderly should be included. Diabetics should have a supply of their insulin or other medicine.
- Extra eyeglasses should be included.
- Extra hearing aid or batteries for hearing aids should be included.
- Contact lenses and supplies should be included.
- Denture needs should be considered.

Name brands listed above are only suggestions to give you an idea of what the listed items are or are used for. Use your own favorite brand.  
This might be a good time to take that Red Cross First Aid and CPR course that you have been putting off.  
Next week: Tools and Sanitation supplies.

Paul and Nancy Yantchook moved to NC in 1996 and are very happy in Red Hill with their dog. She served as the Chairperson for the MCHP for nearly 12 years. She focused on the emergency readiness programs as that is a real concern in these rural areas.



Valentine's Day  
By Pastor Steve Williams  
Mitchell County

Howdy Friends,  
February, the second and shortest month of the year derives its name from the Latin word which means "to purify." It was in this month that the Romans were purified for the religious festivals of the months to follow. It has the amethyst for its gem and the primrose for its special flower.

The 14th of February is Valentine's Day. This day combines something of Cupid and the Cross. The name of this day comes from one of two men, both of whose names were Valentine, and both were martyrs for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. One was a priest and doctor who was beheaded on February 14th in 269 A.D. The other a bishop who was beheaded on February 14th in 273 A.D. According to the old story, the blind daughter of the jailer was kind to one of these men. Just before he met his death because of the Lord whom he loved, he sent a farewell message, and signed it, "From your Valentine." As we think of Cupid on this Valentine's Day let us not forget the Cross.

The cross shows us the greatest love of all. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ loved us so much that He died on an old rugged cross to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Through His death and resurrection we can all receive salvation. And the way you receive salvations is by asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart and to forgive you of all your sins. When you do this you enter into a personal relationship with Him forever more. When you have a personal relationship with God you will experience a love that is greater than you could ever imagine.

The Bible Tells us in John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Jesus Christ gave His Life that we may all have eternal life and spend eternity with Him— now that's LOVE. May we in return show the Love of Christ to our fellow man that they may know how much Jesus Christ Loves them. This Valentine's be sure to tell Jesus how much you love Him and also Thank Him for the Love He extends to you daily.

- Words of Wisdom:
- It is the inconsistent Christian who helps the devil most. N/A
  - A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds. N/A
  - Life is like a game of tennis- the one who serves seldom loses. N/A
  - Don't forget that God is between you & your enemy. N/A
  - Well Done is better than Well Said. Benjamin Franklin

Question of the Month  
Why don't you jump to opportunities like you jump to conclusions?  
Money Matters  
It's not a question of how much of MY money I give God, but how much of GOD'S money do I keep for myself.  
A PARTING PLEA  
Living without God means dying without HOPE.

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



Sudoku

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

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Solution on page 14



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# Avery County Schools

## Calendars

By David Burleson  
Avery County

January is School Board Appreciation Month, and Avery County Schools want to say "thank you" to all our board members who do so much for our school system. Avery County is represented by five dedicated board members who devote countless hours to make sure our students are served in the best way possible. Chair John Greene, Vice-Chair Kathy Aldridge, Dr. Bob Clark, Steve Smith and Keith Tutterow are true advocates for the children of Avery County, developing policies and make decisions that help shape the future of our educational system. Our school board oversees more than 2,000 students, 460 employees, and an annual budget of \$25,000,000. I am proud to work with our board, and I congratulate them on their excellent leadership and vision for the students of Avery County.

On another topic, winter weather always poses a problem because of the impact it has on school schedules. I think it is fair to say that most all of us enjoy a snow day, but none of us really enjoy making them up.

As we prepare the 2017-2018 school calendar, I would like to explain some of the calendar issues that we are required to deal with. One of the first issues to understand is that ten-month employees are required to work 215 days. Those 215 days are broken up as follows: 185 instructional days; eleven days as holidays; ten annual leave (vacation) days; and nine workdays. Of those nine workdays, at least two must be optional workdays.

This year, in order to get our first semester in and finish high school exams before Christmas, we continued to add an additional twenty minutes to each school day for students. This additional time not only allowed us to finish the first semester before Christmas, it also provided us with extra time in case of inclement weather.

The current calendar legislation allows a school year to be defined as a minimum 185 instructional days or 1,025 instructional hours. Adding additional time to the school day does allow us the opportunity to use the 1,025 hours as a minimal school year and not be required to make-up some of the instructional time we miss. Choosing the 1,025 instructional hours' minimum, requires us to subtract any instructional hours missed (i.e. delays or early dismissals) from the total hours.

At this point, we have missed three days of school. For those days, we already had the time made up. Based on the additional time we have added, we will have approximately 9 instructional days' worth of time banked by the end of the school year. These days will be used to make-up the instructional time for the next nine days we miss.

Nine-month employees (bus drivers and cafeteria staff) are paid only when students are in school. This factors in to our decision about the number of instructional days that we don't make up.

We do appreciate everyone's suggestions on our calendar as we strive to do everything possible to keep our students and staff safe during this inclement weather. I do encourage you to talk with us about any questions or suggestions you may have about our current calendar or next year's calendar. We will be deciding about the appropriate time to cease the additional twenty minutes per day after the winter season.

I wish for you a wonderful rest of the winter, and let's hope that spring comes soon. Thanks again for all you do for our school system. The following is the most current calendar rules for your consideration.

### CALENDAR LAW SUMMARY EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2013

2012 Senate Bill 187 (Session Law 2012-145), applies beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, rewrites a portion of the calendar law (General Statute 115C-84.2).

School Calendars must meet the following requirements:

1. Start date no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and end date no later than the Friday closest to June 11 (unless a weather-related calendar waiver has been approved, year-round school, charter school or cooperative innovative high school.) If waiver is approved the start date can be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19. (Avery County Schools have filed a waiver)
2. There are no educational purpose waivers for exemption of the opening and/or closing dates.
3. All schools within the district must be closed all day for purposes of determining eligibility for a weather-related waiver (delayed starts or early dismissals of two or more hours no longer apply).
4. Covers at least nine calendar months.
5. Must have a minimum of 185 days OR 1,025 hours of instruction.
6. Must have at least nine teacher workdays.
7. Local Boards shall designate two (2) workdays on which teachers may take accumulated vacation leave. Local Boards may designate the remaining workdays as days teachers may take accumulated vacation leave. Two days must be scheduled Optional Annual Leave days.
8. Have a minimum of 10 annual vacation leave days.
9. Have the same or an equivalent number of legal holidays occurring within the school calendar as those designated by the State Personnel Commission for State employees. (Currently 11)
10. School shall not be held on Sunday.
11. Veterans Day shall be a holiday for all public school personnel and for all students enrolled in the public schools.

David Burleson is Superintendent of the Avery County Schools



# Yancey Alliance for Young Children

## Early Education Investments Prepare Children for Later Learning Milestones

By Gregory Stella  
Yancey County



Did you know that by the time a child reaches kindergarten, children who are developmentally behind their peers are likely to remain so for the rest of their educational careers and beyond? Achievement gaps created in a child's earliest years are notoriously difficult to close, and the aftermath of these gaps is hugely expensive for our society to address.

Research has clearly documented that reading proficiency in the early grades is a key indicator of future high school and employment success. Children lagging in their reading scores by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. At this stage of their educational careers, children go from learning to read, to reading to learn. In fact, a child not reading at grade level by the end of first grade has about a ten percent chance of reaching grade level by the end of their fourth.

The good news is, approximately one-third of that achievement gap can be eliminated with high-quality early education programs. We've seen the benefits first-hand in North Carolina. Duke University researchers found that third graders have higher reading and math scores and experienced fewer special education placements in counties that spent more money on early childhood programs such as Smart Start and More at Four—now NC PreK. What's really significant about the study is their finding of a spillover effect. All children in the community were impacted, regardless of whether or not they were enrolled in a Smart Start or More at Four program.

North Carolina's First 2000 Days initiative (<http://first2000days.org/>) reminds us that

there are only 2,000 days between the time a baby is born and when he or she will begin kindergarten. During that time, a child's brain architecture is forming, creating the foundation for all future learning. Now is the time for us to come together to build a stronger foundation for our children.

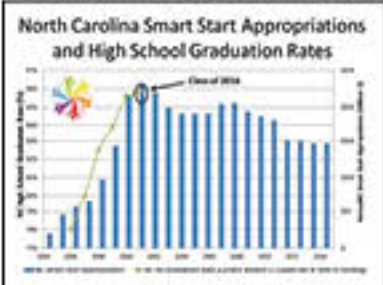
In 2016, North Carolina posted a record-high graduation rate, its 10th consecutive year to do so. A recently released study indicates SAT scores are on the rise, and it's no coincidence that these score-makers were infants in 1999 - when our state significantly increased its investment in early childhood programs, and young children in 2001 - when full school-day public PreK programs began. In fact, overlaying data of graduation rates and SAT improvement over North Carolina Smart Start appropriations and early childhood investments shows a clear correlation.

And while Smart Start appropriations were reduced by the NC Legislature in 2002 and have continued to experience cuts in subsequent years, a recent study showed that North Carolina voters were supportive of these investments in our young children. In fact, seventy-four percent, almost three-quarters of the state's voters, support expanding access to the NC Pre-K and Smart Start programs so that more children can experience their benefits.

We are fortunate that our forward thinking Yancey County School Board and administration are boosting our children's opportunities for success by recently investing in two new early childhood Pre-K programs - one located at Bald Creek Elementary and the other at Burnsville Elementary - to go along with the existing Pre-K classroom at Mountain Heritage High School. And should these three programs continue to maintain enrollment capacity, there likely could be another site opening in the eastern area of the county. In combination with our other private and public child care providers, we're giving our children the head start they need to succeed in school and in life.

To increase the availability and affordability of services in our early childhood system, the Yancey Alliance for Young Children (YAY Children) is working across community sectors to form the partnerships necessary for our children to enter school ready to learn. The collaborations we are facilitating between parents, providers, schools, government, and other community members will reduce the bumps in the road families of young children sometimes experience when reaching out for the services they need. By working together, we will ensure that Yancey County's children receive the high-quality early experiences they deserve, and go on to become productive and successful contributors to our region.

When you invest in the beginning, everyone wins in the end. To receive more information on YAY Children and how you can help, contact Katherine Savage, Program Manager of YAY Children, at [katherine@bpartnershipforchildren.org](mailto:katherine@bpartnershipforchildren.org), or by calling 828-682-0047. You can also find us on the web at <http://www.yaychildren.org/>, on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/YAYChildren/>, or follow us on Twitter at @YAYChildren.



Gregory Stella has been an advocate for children in Yancey County since moving to the South Toe valley in 2001. He is a Community Champion with the First 2000 Days Initiative and the current chair of the Yancey Alliance for Young Children.



Uncomfortable Truth

By Jason Koon  
Burke County



All of us have conceptions in our minds of what our faith is about; of who Jesus is and what He has done and taught. Many of these conceptions are solidly based on Scripture while some are based on ideas that aren't exactly biblical, but don't exactly oppose biblical truth either. Still others are based on cultural or personal misunderstandings of Christianity. Below are what I believe to be two of the most important misunderstandings that some of us have about our faith.

**Our Faith is much older than Most of us realize**  
On the Surface this sounds ridiculous. Jesus lived 2000 years ago...there...problem solved, right? Not quite. The problem is not that we don't know the facts and dates of Christian history, the problem is that we struggle to understand how long this time period actually is. The time since the last Cubs world series win in 1908...that's a little over 5% of the History of Christianity. America has been around for 11.8% of the time since Jesus, the Roman Empire was around for twice as long. Our faith truly is much older than we realize.

So why is this important? It means that these generational rifts that we often experience - divides over what we call traditional and modern - probably aren't as earthshaking as they sometimes feel. Consider the modern altar call which dates back to around 1850, or Sunday School which gets us back into the late 1700's. Even things that seem to be immovable pillars of the Christian experience - Steeples on Churches and congregational singing - these things are only about 500 years old. So don't get too fearful of the prospect of a late-21st Century Church that has forgotten about Amazing Grace, the church was just fine for almost 1800 years without it. Besides Amazing Grace is not going anywhere any time soon.

Also to those who think that a song from 1992 is considered old. It's not. Godly men and women have been writing songs, prayers, sermons, commentaries, and all kinds of great works for two millennia (longer if you include our faith's ancient Hebrew roots). There is plenty of stuff that pre-dates Michael W. Smith that is worth using even in the most modern of worship services. In fact, I think our service, both traditional and modern, are missing out on something if we never engage our faith's ancient roots.

**Our Faith is more than just knowing Truth**  
Our faith is about knowing, believing and doing truth. Jesus said this over and over again in the Gospels. "He who hears these words of mine, and does them," (Matthew 7:24), "teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded," (Matthew 28:20) are just a few. Now before you accuse me of promoting works based theology, I'm not. I'm not really promoting anything at all yet, so far I'm just reading Scripture. I think Jesus is saying that we are saved by Grace through faith; but I think they are also saying that faith always impacts daily life.

Too often, we are satisfied to learn truth simply to gain more knowledge about biblical facts, but I don't know of any place in Scripture where we are commanded simply to amass knowledge. What I see in Scripture is that I am commanded to know and to believe; and that as my heart becomes increasingly given over to faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to work in me, producing Godly fruit. Yes, we are to study deep truth, but we study deep truth so that we can learn how to live deep lives.

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

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