

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Plowing for Christ!



Matt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Jesus gave us our commission for serving him and our time is getting shorter and shorter to get his work done. The fields are ripe for plowing right now! No matter where we are God planted us there and He expects a harvest. The first step is to plow the ground and get it ready to plant the seeds. Big groups --small groups-- one on one, all need the Lord and He will show us the best way. Our fields are here in the USA, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, India, Africa or anywhere in God's world. Come all ye saints and help us plow the ground for an abundant harvest before it is too late.



Is your day interrupted with a frequent need to use the restroom?

Bladder control issues are not a normal part of aging. Our specialists are here to help with treatment options to fit your needs.

Call today for an appointment.
(828) 670-5665 | wcwsc.com





Half of all women have fibroids by age 50.

Symptoms can include heavy or prolonged periods, frequent urination and pelvic pressure. Our specialists are here to help with treatment options to fit your needs.



To talk about your symptoms and treatment options, schedule an appointment with **Dr. Megan Daw** at Western Carolina Women's Specialty Center.

Call today for an appointment.
(828) 670-5665 | wcwsc.com



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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
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)
2nd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00pm

"A Christ-Centered,
Bible Believing Church"

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

A Bible-believing Fellowship
Loving God and Loving People

The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
TBCWNC.org

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

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

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

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

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

Pastor - Steve Williams

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

Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

First Advent Christian Church

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

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**

pbradshawfccmorganton@gmail.com

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

Preaching Christ Crucified, Risen
and Coming Again!

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
Transforming Lives Through
The Power of Jesus Christ!

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.

McDowell Cooperative Extension Center

By Adam Lawing
McDowell County

At the McDowell County Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting that was held at Glenwood United Methodist Church January 26th, two awards were given and a new Board of Directors was installed.

The two awards were for Cattlemen of the Year that goes to a producer, and a Service Award given to someone who has excelled in their commitment to the people and communities of McDowell County as well as their service to the McDowell County Cattlemen's Association.

Recently the McDowell County 4-H Livestock Judging team traveled to NC State University to compete at the Judging in January Contest.

McDowell County 4-H took 10 kids to compete in this competition. The kids hard work and determination paid off with all of the awards they won.



The Junior team was Molly Anderson, Jay English, Abigail Williams and Mattie Duckworth. Kylie Biddix competed as an individual.



The senior team was Hannah Ellis, Alyson Biddix, Colton Cox and Skyler Murray. John Eric Ellis competed as an Individual.



The nominated Board of Directors are listed from left to right: John Knighten, Dustin Laws, Boyce Pool, David Parker, Steve Cable, Charles Harris, and Robert Wilson

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, 6:30 pm

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

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.spfbc.blogspot.com

Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor

Sunday School - 9:45 am
Sunday Worship - 8:30 am 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

"Come grow with us"



You can let tourists, visitors and even neighbors know where your church is and when you meet by listing in the BRCN Church Directory. This visible and effective advertising is specially priced at \$300.00 per year for our churches - approximately \$5.75 a week!

Call us at 828-765-6800 to enroll in this important outreach effort.

McDowell Cooperative Extension Center

Plumtree Presbyterian Church



Charles Harris, Coy Fender and John Knighten. Coy Fender received the Cattle-men of the Year Award



The Service Award was given to Justin and Megan Jomigan with Foothills Mobile Veterinary Services

Special Meetings with Doug Johnson

By Ryan Bridgeo
Avery County



You are invited to Plumtree Presbyterian Church for special meetings with Doug Johnson on Saturday March 11th, 7 PM and again on Sunday, March 12th at 11:00 AM and 6:30 PM. Sunday nights service will be a healing service. We believe these are going to be powerful meetings that you won't want to miss. Doug Johnson was radically saved from drugs and alcohol in his early twenties; coming out of the hippie movement he became a passionate disciple of Jesus. After his conversion, he was filled with a fiery Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In his early years, Doug ministered as an evangelist in local jail /street ministries and also as a worship leader in the local church. At the Toronto Blessing he experienced a glorious baptism of the Fathers love through the ministry of John Arnott. Doug has since traveled the nations, having the privilege to minister and preach on teams with his heroes of the faith, Randy Clark, Surprise Sithole, Leif Hetland, Heidi Baker and other apostolic leaders. After ministering the Gospel through the ministry of deliverance and healing in the nations, Doug's heart is now focused on equipping spiritual sons and daughters in the local church to manifest those same Kingdom realities in the Power of the Spirit through the Fathers love. Doug is also involved in a regional ministry called the Baltimore Alliance, encouraging and equipping leaders of precious like faith to establish "Kingdom Outposts" to experience the Genuine Reality of His Kingdom coming to earth. Doug now resides in Manchester MD and is married to his best friend Betsy for 43 years, he has three wonderful children and four perfect grandchildren.

"More of You in me, so I can be More for you Lord!"

Ryan Bridgeo can be reached at 828-765-6919. For more information you can visit the church website at www.plumtreechurch.com or email pastor@plumtreechurch.com

Avery Pregnancy and Resource Center

Using Our Resources

By Bob Brown
Avery County



In an effort to share the resources that God has given to us, we are opening our doors to all of Avery County. Our main mission for APRC will remain true to the mission upon which we were founded, providing resources and parenting classes for new mothers and mothers-to-be. APRC will still reserve Wednesdays and Thursdays for this important ministry.

However, our facility is not being used to its full potential. It is not used on Monday, Tuesday, or Friday. We desire to expand our ministry to all of Avery County, to all men and women of all ages. We are now forming classes in Finance, Technology, Cooking, and Sewing. These classes are being offered FREE to all who wish to participate. One of our banks in Newland, will graciously provide all the materials and a Financial Expert to teach the class. In addition, a class on the use of iPhones and Androids will also be taught. Our first class, will meet next week. There is still time for you to attend. No registration is needed.

If you are interested in joining us, please call Bob Brown at 828-467-9812 any day.

Last Thursday, six ladies from different churches met at APRC to make thirty aprons for kitchen personnel at an Evangelistic Sports Camp in Africa. The camp ministers to 650

young people at a time during a three-four-day period, providing for both their physical and spiritual needs. Over 2,000 young people accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior last year at the camp. Two guest speakers from the Sports Camp will be with us at the Family Life Center at Oak Grove Baptist Church at 6 P.M. on Tuesday, March 21st for a Ladies Night of Enrichment.

We do have a need that I must share with you. We still need two volunteers to teach our cooking and sewing class. Classes will be small, two to three people at a time. Please call for Bob Brown at 828-467-9812 for information.



Avery Pregnancy Center

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

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Rwanda Newsletter

By Rev. George Patton Jr.
Burke County and the World

As the sun begins to rise early on Mahama Camp in the eastern part of the country of Rwanda the day begins. Children come running out of their homes as announcements are made over the loud speakers encouraging them not to be late for school. Water stations begin to fill up with people going after water and smoke begins to rise in the sky from the communal kitchens placed throughout the camp. This is how the day begins in one of the largest refugee camps in the world. This is Mahama Camp. This camp was opened in April 2015 and now holds over 50,000 displaced refugees mostly from Burundi. These people have come by the thousands escaping the violence that erupted in Burundi after the last presidential elections. According to Burundi law a president can only hold 2, five year terms. In the last election, the current president Pierre Nkurunziza refused to step down after serving his 2 five year terms. This caused a great political upset in the country. Many of the refugees here are young people in their early 20's. So many of them have lost parents, friends, brothers and sister and escaped with what little they had on their back. Last year I had the privilege of meeting about 50 of these young people when I held a conference in the capital city of Kigali Rwanda. This year I told them I would come to them. It takes a lot of effort to get into an international refugee camp. We had to get special permission from the government of Rwanda. They did a thorough background check on us to make sure that we were not spies coming in to find out who is in the camp and who is not. I am told that many times governments will send spies into these camps. My heart was so saddened. Once we received our clearance we drove 270 kilometers east of the capital of Kigali. We checked in at our hotel and went to meet our friends outside the camp. They had given us 2 days in the camp, one evening and one day. We had such a great schedule planned. We met outside the camp at a restaurant. Once we finalized the plans we were escorted in. In these camps, someone is assigned to you to keep watch over you. Praise the Lord the lady assigned to us was a Christian. We drove through the security gate, had our ID's checked and proceeded on. One of the relief agencies had loaned them a tent for us to conduct our services. As soon as we arrived I found the young people already singing and praising God. Tears filled my eyes I as I saw many of them again. They had all dressed special for the event. They sang so many songs for us. All I could do was weep. I really thought I would never see many of these young people again. Now here we were, on top of a mountain, with the breeze blowing, in a revival tent with a youth choir made up of Burundi refugees. Brother Todd gave his testimony of how God had delivered him from the bondage of drugs and alcohol and how he was now teaching and preaching the Word of God around the world. It really spoke to the young people. When he had finished, I preached the message. At the end of the message I gave the invitation for whoever to come and commit your lives to Jesus. Nine people came to give their life to Christ. It was such a powerful service. Many others wanted to commit to serve Christ in ministry. After the



Youth singers Refugee Camp



Outside Refugee Camp



Children Mahama Refugees



Burundi Refugee Camp

preaching different people were given the opportunity to speak. Even the lady assigned to us gave testimony of how the Lord had touched her. As we left the young people began singing praise to God once again for sending us to them. Unfortunately, they would not let us come back the next day. They told us that they did not see any reason for us to come if we were not bringing anything such as rice, beans or something of the humanitarian sort. My heart was sad. I knew that the devil had tried to shut us down. I know what we have is more than humanitarian, it does more than satisfy the flesh, but instead satisfies the soul both now and for all eternity. I am in Uganda now and we are really seeing God move here as well. I love you folks so much. Thank you for all your prayers.



Burundian Refugees at Mahama

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

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RAM



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Bridge42 Church

Drug Epidemic

By Jason Koon
Burke County

On September 2nd, 2016, The Morganton News Herald reported that drug overdoses have now surpassed Automobile accidents as the leading cause of accidental death in Burke County. As I began to look deeper into this, however, it struck me that this statistic is by no means unique to Burke County or even Western North Carolina. In fact, as surprising as it sounds, this is becoming quite common in many areas around the country. I knew we had a drug problem in America and I knew that it has grown especially acute in many small towns and rural areas like Western North Carolina, but I was not prepared to realize how severe this problem had become.

Western North Carolina towns are some of the last places you'd think this would happen. Our communities are very religious, many of us are the Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren of some of the strongest and hardest working people to ever walk the earth. Even today, there are 66 Southern Baptist Churches in Burke County (that just happens to be the denomination I'm affiliated with), and literally thousands more Churches scattered all around these mountains. Yet, drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental death in many of these places.

I have become increasingly aware of a divide in our region and to some extent across the nation. There is an ever-deepening gulf between "Church People" and what I can only describe as "Non-Church" people. I hear it in my personal conversations all the time, "I don't think I'd fit in, Church really isn't for me." These are not necessarily people who don't believe in God, many of them are people who just don't see themselves fitting in to what many of us have defined as "Church." Honestly, it shouldn't be that much of a surprise; how many "Church People" reading this article have even one close relationship with someone outside the Community of Faith. I'm not talking about a cousin who only shows up a few Sundays a year or a neighbor who is in a different denomination; I'm talking different world-view, different socio-economic status, different side of town, maybe even different race.

I think these issues are related. I believe the message of the Church, the message of the Gospel and of Jesus is the one thing that can change individual people and the only way societies can truly see transformation and it's beginning to look like this message is increasingly becoming the intellectual property of certain groups. I believe that in America, our Government is one that is designed to work for everyone, but it seems that sometimes Governments are more concerned with the wants of some over the needs of all. I say all this not to point fingers. This is a friendly reminder and not just one for you who may be reading, but for myself as well. As a Believer, I don't exist for my wants and desires anymore. I exist to sacrifice myself in love; I exist to speak hope, to walk in the light of truth and help others learn to do the same. I say this as a reminder to our local governments; you have a responsibility to lead all of our citizens well, and I say this to those who feel like they're on the other side. You do belong, your vote does count, and honestly one reason society and Churches are in the shape we're in is that too many of you have checked out. So, if anyone looks at you like you don't belong in their Church, just sit back, smile, and know that you do.

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



By Barbara Harrell

Too often we go to the Lord with request after request and when He has answered we walk away until the next time. We need to use the Lord's Prayer as a Guide and make sure we are Praising Him for who He is first. "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." We have asked Him to inter-



Praise and Thanksgiving Service



Daniel Whetstine, Director of the Mitchell Co. Baptist Assoc.



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

vene in our country and many of us feel he is doing just that. Have we praised and thanked Him for that? A praise and thanksgiving time was held recently just for that purpose. Psalm 150:1-6 1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. 2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. We praise him for who He is and we thank him for all He has done for us. Thank you, Daniel Whetstine, for providing us a time to come back and Praise and Thank the Lord for what He has done for us and for our country.

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Learning to Plow

Doug Harrell

When I turned 12 years old Dad came to me and said, "Doug, you are big enough to learn to plow the fields with Jack and Jim." Jack and Jim were our mules that we used to do the farming which included plowing, disking, mowing, raking, cultivating and hauling. We had what is called a hillside plow, that is one that the actual plow part of the plow will swing from side to side. When you reach the end of the row you moved the plow to the other side so it would always throw the dirt the same way. Perhaps many of you old timers like me will remember this. It took a little training to get the swing down correctly and turn the plow, latch the blade and start back down the row. Learning to get that first row straight was a key element in the whole process. From a pride standpoint, you wanted to be able to brag about how straight your plowing was. The way you did this was to pick out a point at the other end of the field and keep your eye on that point making sure the mules kept going straight to that point.

Philippians 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* This pressing toward the prize is keeping our focus on plowing the fields for Christ. Also when I was 12 years old I gave my life to the Lord at a



little church on the hill above our house, Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren. I would like to be able to say that from that day on I always worked at plowing the fields for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but that would be a definite stretch. There were certainly times that I fell far short of this commission and I give thanks to God each and every day for his saving grace. I can say that even when I did things that were not to God's liking, I was aware of it and knew in my heart that I was doing wrong.

Today, I feel that God has given our country another chance to turn back to his teachings, just this morning, I read that our current administration had reversed the federal mandate that bathrooms in schools must be transgender friendly! Praise the Lord! Hopefully the states will follow through on this as well. We do not need our wives, daughters and granddaughters having to go to bathrooms and showers with some male that thinks he feels like a female today or vice versa. We will have a window of opportunity here, but the battle will be fierce and the forces of evil will be loud and in our face. We must continue to keep our eye on the goal, continue to stand firm but not with malice. With love for our fellowman and a resolute determination to follow the teachings of our Lord and Savior. All the while we must continue to pray for those that spitefully use us and continue to pray for guidance from above for ourselves, our leaders and most of all our pastors. The teacher is held to a higher standard in God's eyes and we need to be aware of this daily. Continue to pray for a great revival in our nation. God Bless all of you.

Still Plowing, Farmer Doug

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.



Jesus separates Christianity from other religions

Q: I've been studying the major religions of the world, but I'm puzzled about Christianity. What makes it different from the other religions? It seems different to me, but I can't figure out why. — C.D.

A: The difference between the religions you've been studying and Christianity can be summarized in two words: Jesus Christ. He is the center and foundation of the Christian faith, and He also is the reason why Christianity is different from all the other religions that people follow.

Let me explain it this way. All the religions you've been studying have one thing in common: they all are searching for God (even if they don't call Him God, or they think there may be many gods and goddesses). They do this in a multitude of ways — but they're all trying to find God and gain His favor by their sacrifices and good deeds.

But Christianity is different. Instead of us searching for God — God is searching for us! Instead of us reaching up to God — God is reaching down to us! This is why Jesus is so important, because He came down from Heaven to do for us what we could never do for ourselves: bring us to God. God is perfect and holy, and we are separated from Him by our sins. No matter how hard we try, we cannot erase the stain of sin by ourselves. But by His death and resurrection Christ did this for us.

I sense that down inside you are searching for God. But God is also searching for you! By faith turn to Jesus Christ and receive Him into your life today. God's promise is for you: *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:12).



Harboring bad thoughts is always harmful

Q: I know we're not supposed to have bad thoughts about others, but to be honest, what difference does it make? As long as I keep my thoughts to myself, they don't really hurt anyone, do they? — Mrs. T.F.

A: Yes, harboring bad thoughts about other people always hurts someone — it hurts you. The reason is because they aren't just innocent thoughts. Behind them are other emotions, such as anger, jealousy, envy, or pride — any one of which will harm you.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about the danger of evil or prideful thoughts — and we should take its warnings very seriously. Even if we hide them from others, God knows what is going on in our minds, and He also knows the harm that comes because of them. The Bible says, *"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind"* (Jeremiah 17:10).

Why are bad thoughts about others so harmful? One reason is because they not only poison our souls and distort our personalities, but they also cut us off from others. Instead of loving them and seeking to help them, we turn our backs on them — which is wrong. The Bible says, *"This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another"* (1 John 3:11).

Commit your life — including your mind — to Jesus Christ. Remember: you may have bad thoughts about others — but He has no bad thoughts about you! He loves you with an everlasting love — a love so great that He was willing to give His life for your salvation. Open your heart and life to Him today. Then ask Him to cleanse your mind and heart of evil thoughts, and to help you love others the same way He loves you. And if bad thoughts arise, crowd them out with prayer.

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“Seeds Sown During Grief”

By Jacob Willis
Yancey County

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4” Can grief be a blessing? It is one of the most paradoxical sermons in all of the Bible, Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount”. Crying out in pain, agony, and despair, we are blessed? I don’t like pain, agony or despair. In fact I try to avoid mourning at all costs. It means that something awful has happened. It means a marriage has ended, a loved one has died, a child is sick, or we are in the throes of illness. It means we are desperate. What is there to be happy about? That is what that word “Blessed” means, to be happy. Happy are those who mourn? Happy are those who wail, and cry out to God. When we cry out to God we can be assured that God hears us, that God is molding us, and that God is in a supernatural way comforting us. When we sow in tears we reap a harvest of spiritual growth and dependence.

The McKameys’ hit song, “God on the Mountain” goes like this, “Life is easy when you’re up on the mountain, but it’s down in the valley of trials and temptation, that’s when faith is really put to the test. Because the God on the Mountain is still God in the valley.” Trials and temptations prove to us the all-powerful wonder of our heavenly Father. Some people have the mistaken belief that God is a God of the mountain top experience, but is not the God of the valley experience. Israel’s enemy found out the hard way in 1 Kings 20:28 “The man of God came up and told the king of Israel,” This is what the LORD says: “Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.” God not only shows up in our time of deepest despair, but he shows off in our time of deepest despair. He gives us supernatural strength during the valley experiences. It is during our times of grief and despair that our heavenly Father shows up and fights for us. We can be blessed in the valley because we know God is fighting for us.

Sowing tears in the valley, reaps character on the mountain. In the valley we learn lessons about compassion, humility, and forgiveness. In the valley of trials and temptation God allows the pain to mold us into his likeness. This excerpt from the hymn “How Firm a Foundation” explains what God’s plan is with grief.

*“When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace all-sufficient shall be your supply;
the flame shall not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume and your gold to refine.
5 “The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no never forsake!”*

God has a plan for your grief, to use your troubles, trials, and heartaches to mold you into His image. Our transformation during these times is a blessing that we reap from suffering.

Finally, the greatest blessing we receive from grief is God’s grace. God is most real to us during times of great suffering. God leads His dear children along. Some through the fire, Some through the flood, but all through the blood. Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song. In the night season and all the day long.

God’s presence is sweetest, strongest, and most real during grief. We reap a knowledge of the character and love of God that sustains us even in the worst of times.

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



1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 Repetition and Analogy

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



It was a wild spinning whirlwind of thrumming beats, rippling notes and a mesmerizing collision of sounds that somehow blended and meshed together, creating a memory of music that will echo within me for a long time. Three hours later, although it seemed only five minutes, we drifted with the crowd toward exits that would carry us back to the mundane world and the lifeless parking garage.

Not a sheet of music, not an iPad full of notes and nary a single metronome was present. How did the four musicians perform so flawlessly and with such delightful abandon? The answer lies within the fibers of our muscles. It is called Muscle Memory. And the miracle of muscle memory exhibited its strength mightily during that magnificent menagerie of melodies that offered such pleasure during the concert.

Muscle memory is the treadmill of musical miracles. According to the Oxford English Living Dictionary, it is defined as:

The ability to reproduce a particular movement without conscious thought, acquired as a result of frequent repetition of that movement.

The key is repetition. Those musicians hopped on that treadmill again and again until they could play, write and arrange their music with its unique style and not have to think about each note because their actions did not require conscious thought.

Typing, riding a bike, and playing a musical instrument also relies heavily on muscle memory. But without repetition, muscle memory would just be flabby, powerless to perform and lacking the fibers to be proficient. God has masterfully designed us to need and to desire repetition because it brings us a great sense of fulfillment and purpose when we accomplish our goals. And repetition aids us abundantly in serving the Lord.

To emphasize the importance of repetition, God has placed this pattern in the Bible. Repetition is like a beacon from a lighthouse, piercing the darkness of the lack of knowledge and pointing us to great truths found in the Scriptures.

In His divinely designed Bible, God has many examples of repetition. One of the most fascinating is the repetition of barrenness in the stories of Bible women. In seven specific stories filled with the tragedy of barren women, God strengthens the beam of light directed toward our souls as He reiterates barrenness again and again.

In his book, You Are What You Love, James K. A. Smith talks about the way our hearts are formed: “There is no formation without repetition. Virtue formation takes practice, and there is no practice that isn’t repetitive. We willingly embrace repetition as a good in all kinds of other sectors of our life—to hone our golf swing, our piano prowess, and our mathematical abilities, for example. If the sovereign Lord has created us as creatures of habit, why should we think repetition is inimical to our spiritual growth?”

One might question why, in a God-breathed book with over 783,000 words and intended to nurture and teach Christians for thousands of years, does God repeat Himself? But as we follow the beam of light in the stories of barren women, we discover a method that God uses to help us discover truth. The method is simply using analogies that link emotion-packed word pictures with spiritual parallels that enable us to never forget the truths contained within.

Analogies clarify and streamline learning. For example, when learning a musical instrument the teacher can give the student an analogy. And even though the student may not know what to do with their instrument, they understand what to do through the use of analogy. And it helps them play the instrument correctly.

When my daughter was about 12, her flute teacher was trying to explain how to use her breathing to empower her air to play the flute with more precision and skill. She used the analogy of someone boring a hole through the door. Even though my young daughter did not know how to direct the air into the flute, she was still able to accomplish that goal because she understood the analogy. And she was rewarded with an enthusiastic, “Way to go! That was exactly how you needed to play that!”

The multiple times that barrenness occurs in Scriptures forms a strong ray of light that points to the spiritual analogy found in 2 Peter 1:8 *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

With just the word picture of barrenness, our minds recapture the emotion and the finality of this physical limitation of women. Then He embeds that word picture in 2 Peter 1:8 when He tells us not to be barren spiritually. What a strong statement that evokes the sadness of barren women in the Bible. God has prepared us with these stories to finally accept the even more devastating tragedy of spiritual barrenness. Then, God births within us the power to produce spiritual fruit as we follow the instructions in the two verses above: *5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

As the concert comes to a close, the musicians bow and exit. But the thunderous applause demands one last song. And they return, repeating many notes but with such variety, skill and energy as well as accompanying video technology that the music is truly thrilling to hear and see. Their muscle memory rippled with strength. It had been gained through the treadmill of repetition. And we were lavishly blessed with the result of their repetition. Like the musicians, we, as Christians need to repeatedly study, read and compare Scripture, searching for the spiritual analogies until we are ushered into the delights of the treasures of His Word!

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



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Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County



Growing up here in the mountains has allowed me to have some wonderful memories. To me, there will always be a special place in my heart for this place I've called home for 39 years. I've lived in Mitchell, Yancey, and Avery counties and unless I feel God is calling me somewhere else, I plan to stay. The people, the surroundings, the families and church families in these communities are special to me. Many times, I've had people say that I was raised a generation too late. Some of the memories I have of childhood are memories that the older generation have. Pinto beans, cornbread, raising chickens, milk cows, hunting, fishing, family gatherings, church services, etc., are memories I will cherish.

Many memories close to my heart are those of my grandma. To me and the other grandchildren she was known as "Mammie". As a matter of fact, that's what most everyone who knew her called her. The folks at the Estatoe Church of God would often call her Sister Lucy, but most, once they got to know her, knew her as Mammie. My grandpa on that side of the family was known as Poppy, but he died before I was born so I never knew him.

Our family lived just below Mammie's house. Most would say a "stone's throw" away. Just a hop, skip, and a jump we could be on her porch. She depended on the family a lot. My uncle cut wood and locust posts and would often bring loads of firewood. Many times, I've busted firewood, loaded it in the wheelbarrow, and stacked it to the ceiling on the little porch on the side of her house.

She never drove that I knew of, so she depended on family a lot to take her to the grocery store or the doctor. The church was just out the hill from her house, so while she was able, she always walked to church.

As a boy in school one thing I always remember is getting off the school bus and running as fast as I could down the driveway to Mammie's house. I'd sling open the screen door on the porch and go into the kitchen. There on the table, which made a screeching noise when you leaned against it, would always be a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a cold glass of milk. Mammie knew that grape jelly was my favorite, so she always made my sandwiches out of Bama grape jelly and Peter Pan peanut butter. I would gobble down the sandwich and milk as if I hadn't eaten all day. She always offered me something else before I left to go home. All I needed was PB & J!

At the beginning of my 8th grade year in school, I fixed up one of the bedrooms so I could stay at Mammie's house to help take care of her. I stayed until about a year after I graduated high school. No matter how late I was after school or ball practice, she always had a good supper waiting for me. Often it would be 8 p.m. before I got home. She would wait and eat when I got there so we could eat together. One of my favorites was pickled beans, cornbread, and streaked meat with a fresh onion on the side. She drank buttermilk, but I could hardly handle that, so I just drank whole milk. She would pour salt on her plate and dip her onion in it. So did I... just because she did.

Mammie had a deep faith in the Lord. One thing that the family always knew was that she was praying for them. Often, I would sleep in the same room with her when she was sick. I slept on the big bed and she slept on the twin bed on the other side of the room. Every night she prayed and prayed for a long time. One by one, she would call out the names of her family. She would pray for those she knew and if she couldn't remember their name she would simply say, "Lord, you know who I'm thinking about." She prayed for the sick, the lost, the church, the pastor, etc. I lay there many times in that bed across the room from her and heard her call out my name. Talk about conviction when you know you are lost without Jesus and your precious grandma is there praying for you and knowing you are hearing her! She prayed for bill money, broken down appliances, firewood, or anything she needed. If she had prayed for me to die, I would have laid down and got ready! One thing that I knew when I arrived home at Mammie's house was that if she was praying, she didn't come to the door until she was finished. Many times, visitors would sit on the porch until she finished praying so they could visit her. I would simply tap on the bedroom window to let her know I was home. Sometimes it would be a few minutes, sometimes almost an hour before she opened the door. She left our family a great legacy of faith and trust in the Lord. Most of us didn't realize how important this was until later in our lives.

Just a short time before Mammie passed away, I was able to tell her that Jesus had saved me. When I told her, she rose up in that hospital bed and shouted with her arms and hands waving praises to the Lord. She didn't get to see all of her prayers answered while she was here. Many of them were answered after she went home to be with the Lord, but I believe she knows. I would like to think that she knows God has called me and two of my brothers to preach and possibly God has allowed her to listen in on a few of our sermons to see her prayers were answered. I am going to see her one day and, most importantly, I'm going to see Jesus who made it possible to do so. Though I really loved those peanut butter and jelly



sandwiches, I realize now, it was the praying that would mean the most.
Proverbs 31:30 *Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.*

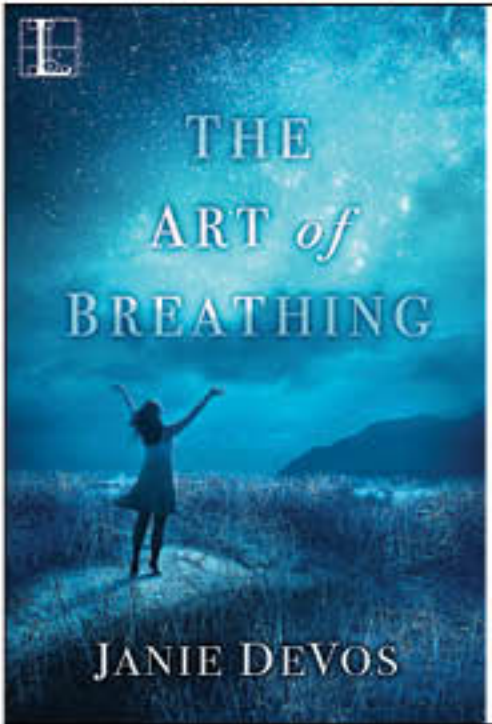
Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.



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March Madness....

By Mike Stroud
Burke County

What a crazy February. We had spring and summer like days. Is it possible to by-pass winter and get right into some warm weather? I see the March flowers blooming already. That is a great sign. I know as I write this, things could change and probably will. Here comes the boom, one last snow storm. It's ok with me. A little more snow cream to end the season. On the other hand, basketball rules the air waves. It's that time of year when all the college hoopsters are in full swing. I think about the Duke Blue Devils, aka the Cameron Crazies. What an appropriate name for fans gone wild. When it comes to our sports teams, we are relentless in our prayers for them to make the buzzer beater. To beat the other team into submission. We tailgate, we high five, and we paint our bodies in team support. We think nothing about being caught up in March Madness. I wish I could say the same thing about those Crazy Christians. Do I show as much passion for the Lord and His work? Do I go beyond the call and give it all? Do I scream and yell to see the prevail of another lost soul come to the light? Sadly, we are not as passionate about the Lord as we are about our sports teams. People would call you a Jesus Freak if you were to act like that. You would be frowned upon for showing that much emotion. Besides, you are supposed to be quiet and in order in church. It would be irreverent. Please, be quiet. Don't raise your hands to the Creator of all Heaven and Earth. Don't get emotional for being set free from the chains of darkness. Don't shout for being delivered from Drugs and Alcohol. That would be out of place. Let me never be around religious people who never have emotion for the Lord. People who stop the movement of God in any capacity. I love being around people who are set free in Christ. Willing to give their life as a sacrifice for the Glory of God. That is something to get crazy about. They say a Jesus freak is someone who loves Jesus a little more than you. So, in this March Madness season, give a shout for Jesus and join the true madness that makes the devil crazy. Yes, I am a Jesus Freak and Go Tarheels.... lol

Mike Stroud is a pastor at Horizon Church in Morganton, Music Director at www.AmazingGraceRadio.com, and owns Stroud Building Supply in Morganton.



The Centurions Are Watching

By Pastor Kurt Bomar
Avery County

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

It was at the time of our Lord's greatest suffering that impressed this loyal Roman Centurion. It is very possible and even likely that this Centurion was very familiar with Jesus as Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem had been very public for the last three years.

You don't miraculously feed 5,000 without the word getting out. Likewise, you don't heal the blind and lame and cure the leper without getting a name for yourself. He had even raised Lazarus from the dead just a few days earlier.

So, the Centurion had to have heard of some of this, but note this: none of Jesus miracles saved him. It was only Jesus' cry of anguish that elicited the Centurion's confession. In fact, we know of at least two confessions of faith at the cross (the repentant thief being the other) but we know of none at the feeding of the 5,000.

What's the point? It's that when we cry out to the Lord, "Why are you allowing me to go through this suffering? When will I get some relief?" He just might answer, "because the Centurions are watching and they can only be converted by seeing my light in your dark days."

Seeing us cruising through life with with prosperity and no difficulties will not change most people. Our testimonies about our material blessings are actually more likely to illicit envy and cynicism from them. But when we are broken, everyone suddenly sits up and takes notice of how we react.

Precious Saints, if you are going through a time of suffering, it may be of great solace to you to know that in Heaven's eyes, this may be your greatest hour- and the Centurions are watching!

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Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



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The Importance of the Home

Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



The home is a very significant part of a civil and orderly society. I believe our nation is in trouble mainly due to home life that has broken down and has become ineffective in contributing what it should to our society.

The Bible says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Psalm 11:3)? The home is a basic and essential foundation for our society. When the proper function of the home fails, it makes for a failing society.

When we see the importance of the home, then we will be working at making our homes what they ought to be before the Lord and before men. We owe that not only to our Lord but also to the society in which we live.

Here are four ways the home is central to a society that would bring pleasure to Almighty God.

The Home—A Place of Love

As we look around in our society there is a definite lack of love. People today too often live for themselves and have little regard for others. The essence of love is unselfishness and giving. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son..." (John 3:16). Notice from that verse the right kind of love is a giving love.

This is a story of a little girl learning to spell by imitating the sounds that animals make, spelling in this way "dog", "cat", and other simple words. Finally, the teacher asked her to spell "love."

Quickly the little one ran to her teacher, threw her arms about her neck, kissed her and said, "We spell 'love' that way at our house."

"That is beautiful," the teacher replied, "but do you know any other ways of spelling 'love'?"

"Yes," said the little girl, and she began to put the books away and set the teacher's desk in order. "I spell 'love' by helping everybody when they need me."

A home built upon love in action is sure to be a happy home.

I have been in the military, have graduated from three colleges and seminaries, but I have never seen love like I saw in my life as a child.

Children should be able to see love between mom and dad. They should not have to hear loud fussing, cursing and profanities, or physical violence. If they hear those undesirable things all the time, they will face difficulty in being what they ought to be in daily life. So many children have witnessed extreme conflict in word and in deed from their parents. As a result, they become violent and abusive themselves.

Love is giving and not taking. If everyone in a family would seek to give what they could to develop the best home possible, they would be doing exactly right. I am talking about mother, dad, son or daughter—the entire home.

Beyond any doubt, the right kind of family relationships manifests love, patience, kindness, gentleness, thoughtfulness and a host of other things. The closer one gets to the God who is love, the easier it is to love others, in the family unit and outside of it.

The Home --A Place of Learning

The Apostle Paul said to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5- "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

Paul brings attention to the impact of the genuine faith of Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Before Timothy ever had faith in the Lord, it was first in his mother and his grandmother.

I am sure Timothy learned many things in the home while he was around Lois and Eunice but the greatest thing he learned was to put his trust in God. He saw that genuine, authentic faith in both of them.

We are affected by those around us in the home. Before I had saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I saw it in the home where I was raised. My dad was a deacon in my home church. I knew I needed to trust the Lord and learned to do so by watching my dad.

No matter what came our way as a family, Dad calmly put his faith in God through it all.

He had Parkinson disease, lived in misery the last few months of his short life, but I saw a man who had absolute confidence in the Lord. As a son, I saw that faith, and decided that was what I wanted for my life.

While in Ben and Betty Walker's home, I learned how I ought to live by watching, observing and listening.

The Home --A Place of Living

It is one thing for a person to tell a child how to live, but it is another matter when the parents show the child how he or she ought to live. In John 13:15 Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Christ not only told His disciples to do certain things, he set an example for them to follow. He is saying to them, "Do as I do."

Where we live is the place to live out the Christian life. What better place could you find to live the Christian life than in the home? If every Christian home would live the Christian life daily in the home, there would be more good examples as people observe our attitudes and reactions of family members one to the other.

The Home --A Place of Learning

We are living in such a complex, divisive, troubled society. Because of its con-

dition, faith based homes have become more necessary than ever.

Learning should begin with mom and dad. Mom and Dad are to be the teachers of what is right in the family unit. What should they lean on the Lord for as parents?

Let me just list a few: salvation for the fallen, strength to do right and to do the will of God, wisdom to raise the children in the fear of the Lord, to have concern for others who are lost and poor, and power to witness to tell others about the Lord Jesus.

Children should be able to learn to lean on the Lord, but that all begins with parents who have given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Never forget the importance of the home in the economy of God.

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

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	F	O	O	T		H	O	U	R		A	L	S	O
R	A	W		T		R	E	S	P	O	N	D	E	D
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A	N	T		I	S	L	E	S		A	F	T	E	R

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Tools and Sanitation Supplies

By Nancy Yantchook



Please remember that these are all items that most people have in their homes. It usually is not necessary to go out to buy these items unless your supply runs out. We suggest that everyone round up these items and put them in a special place or container easily accessible.

- Mess kits or paper plates, plastic utensils, paper or plastic cups & glasses (Part 3)
- Aluminum foil, Saran wrap, plastic baggies (Part 3)
- Plastic storage containers (Part 3)
- Non-electric can opener (Part 3)
- Utility or pocket knife.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries.
- Battery operated flashlight and extra batteries.
- Candles of various sizes in containers that will not tip over.
- Fire extinguisher: small canister A-B-C type.
- Tape-Duct, Cellophane, & Masking.
- Paper & pens or pencils.
- Needles & thread.
- Pliers & Screwdrivers.
- Shut off Wrenches to turn off household gas and water.
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting or plastic drop cloths.
- Compass
- Sleeping bags
- Tube tent
- Map of area (to locate shelters or way out of town)
- Emergency Manuals and Information.
- Signal flares
- Propane camping stove or grill. (Part 3)
- Cooking utensils. (Part 3)

Sanitation Supplies

- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Towelettes or Wipes
- Hand Soap
- Liquid detergent soap
- Disinfectants
- Household bleach
- Plastic garbage bags & ties
- Rubber gloves
- Masks for dust, mold, mildew, bacteria.
- Personal hygiene articles
- Feminine supplies
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Towels and washcloths
- Dish towels and washcloths

Next week: Clothing, Bedding, Shelters, and Pets

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.

Sudoku Solution

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

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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

I have no idea how many of you have ever worked in corn field beans, but if you have, I am sure you have probably walked out of the field itching, I know I have done that many times. Clint was extremely worried, as he should have been, about the using any kind of chemicals, and I was always conscious of warning him when there was a danger. He did have red wheelks around his arms and neck the day he came in from the bean field. I can still see him before he went to the field with his chemical suit on, respirator and gloves, I had put a little fear in him because I did not want him to get hurt or exposed to anything that might hurt him. When I looked at his neck it was instantly apparent what had taken place. The look in his eyes said, am I going to live? He did look much better after the shower and piece of Barbara's delicious cake.

Betsy, Barbara and I had a belly laugh about the watermelon situation, Clint was beginning to get the hang of farm life about the time we took over the paper, and he moved to Spruce Pine. Those were the days my friend!

Farmer Doug

Funny Farm

Dear friends,

As I reminisce about my past agricultural prowess, I am still amazed to have survived so many near-misses with death at Harrell Hill Farms. There are nights I awaken, terrified of "what might have been," always thankful for God's protective covering @.

This month I want to share two short stories, more evidence of how easily things can go awry!

Hazmat Suit...

It was a sweltering summer day as Doug dispatched me to spray insecticide on rows of beans and tomato plants. While I don't recall the exact name of the chemical, I believe it was first cousin to Agent Orange. Despite temperatures in the 90's, my buddy insisted that I wear a ridiculous crepe suit, gloves and hat. "Pollard, this is a dangerous chemical and you need to be careful not to let it get on your skin," Farmer Doug warned. Always compliant, I slithered my then fat self into the hunter's green material, donned my farmer's gloves and set out to eradicate the veggie cannibals.

I had the presence of mind to stand down-wind of the fine chemical mist so as not to drink too many of the tiny droplets. And spray I did...up and down...all around...bugs gasping for their last precious breath as I bobbed and weaved among the rows. Dodging pig weed, swarms of hornets and all manner of creepy crawly things I maneuvered throughout the vast garden. Mission accomplished.

Returning home that evening the skin on my neck was burning, tingling, and feeling as though a gazillion fireants were feasting on my blood. As I looked in the mirror I noted what appeared to be a vast blister, better said leprosy! Alas, my life flashed before my eyes as I envisioned the end...surely the dastardly chemical mixture was expediting my trip to heaven. I scurried to the farmhouse kitchen, hoping only to bid farewell to Doug and Barbara.

Running headlong into my mountain-man friend, my eyes telegraphing terror and distress, he asked, "Pollard, what's wrong with you?" I explain how I followed his instruction, "Doug, I wore the suit and gloves even though the heat was nearly exhausting. I even thought to stand upwind of the spray. But, as you see, my skin is being eaten from the outside in."

That crooked smile and mischievous look, the one he always displays just before saying "Pollard, I don't know what I'm gonna do with you," that one...and he asked, "Uh, did you get tangled up in the beans?" Thinking back I recounted how a couple times the corn row beans had wrapped their stringy vines around my neck, once nearly taking me to my knees. "You are allergic to the bean vine, lots of folks are," Doug said. "Take a shower, dry it off and you'll be okay in a couple days." Snickering, having a bit too much fun in my opinion, my friend offered me a piece of cake. And I devoured it, thankful that God spared me death from the nuclear material.

Waving Watermelon...

I had been plowing, hoeing, raking and otherwise eating dust all day long. An extended dry spell plagued our mountain farm as Doug lovingly and painstakingly taught me the process of harvesting hay. I had recently learned to lift and transport the round bales (a story for another day) and was returning to the barn with a fresh load.

As you know from previous musings, I love driving the tractor @. Tooling along down Harrell Hill Road I "was one" with the land...content in my role as farm hand extraordinaire...privileged to captain the Kioti along our rural roads.



I'm telling ya, this was a hot day and I'd had no water in a few hours (Doug didn't give me breaks @). As I rounded the bend I saw a lovely lady standing at the intersection of Harrell Hill Road and Byrd Road. Drawing near I recognized Betsy, Doug's cousin and my friend. Her arm was extended as though flying a kite but I quickly noticed that instead she was waving a piece of watermelon.

As I passed by I could almost taste the succulent, dripping, cool red melon. And I wondered aloud, "Why is Betsy standing there waving a slice of watermelon? Such unusual customs in these mountains." Nevertheless, I smiled, tipped my Farmer Clint hat as a gentlemanly gesture, and went to deposit the hay. All the while wishing I could figure out a way to finagle that watermelon from Betsy.

A week or so later Doug remarked, "You hurt Betsy's feelings and I think you might want to talk to her about it." I searched the cobwebs of my mind to comprehend what I possibly could have done to offend this wonderful woman. "What did I do now?" I whined. Once again, his eyes two mischievous marbles, my friend explained, "Betsy tried to flag you down for some watermelon last week and you just drove by and waved."

I immediately I went on the attack, defensive to the extreme I proclaimed, "Now look, I don't know the rules of etiquette here. What was I supposed to do? You know I like Betsy, and you know I like watermelon. What you don't know is that I WANTED Betsy's watermelon! But how was I to know she wanted to share with me? It just didn't seem right to stop and say, 'Hi Betsy, may I please have your watermelon!' Or what if I had leaped from the tractor and said, 'Gimme that watermelon Betsy!'" Bursting into laughter my friends Doug and Barbara nearly died at the hilarity of that vision.

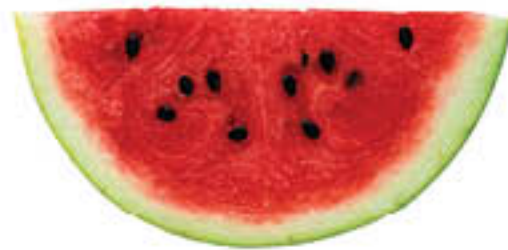
That was an important day, though, in my education at Harrell Hill Farms. What I learned is that on the farm virtually every gesture has meaning and every movement has purpose beyond what is apparent.

A few days later I apologized to Betsy for my faux pas. "That's okay," she said. "There's always another day and another watermelon." So, if you're new here and don't know what to do, remember...never fly by a lovely lady waving watermelon in your direction @!

As always, I thank God for the memories and experiences at Harrell Hill Farms...growing more distant now as the years roll along. Your old pal Farmer Clint enjoyed a special time of healing and restoration in the corn rows, sorghum cane fields, at the river, at the farmhouse table...among true friends. Thank you, Jesus @.

Still humbled in these hills,

Farmer Clint



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"Your Heavenly Father Is Watching, So Play Your Heart Out!"

LORD THANK YOU
By Joyce "Joy" Harwood

Lord thank You for this brand new day
With stillness in the air
For quiet solitude with You
As I send up a prayer.

Thank You for refreshing
Of the air You give to breathe
The pureness of a raindrop
Sent from heaven as You please.

Thank You for the beauty
Of the welcome morning sky
The warming sun that shines by day
The lovely moon that glows by night.

Thank You for the flowers
With fragrance new each day
Sweet birds to sing so cheerfully
As little butterflies happily play.

For all of these things we're thankful
Lord You talk to us it is true
We're grateful that You made a way
That we could talk to You



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



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"Since 1982"

By Pastor Tom Anglin
Mitchell County



I don't remember my Dad coming to watch me play a single game. He was working long hours that summer so that I could wear a uniform and have a roof over my head! He was my hero! He is watching me play now from Heaven's grandstand!

Hebrews 4:13 *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

In our human nature, many tend to read the preceding verse and cringe. It sounds a bit ominous, does it not? Look at it this way: We are loved by a God that would rather bless us than blast us! His gaze is transfixed upon us because He created us to be the object of love and care. Friend, you need to see God the Father this way; He is cheering you on because He knows what awesome things can be accomplished through your life if you trust and obey Him!

The following is a heartwarming and inspiring little story. Please read it and I will finish my thought.

When Lou Little was coaching Football at Georgetown, he had a player who was definitely third rate but had so much spirit he was an inspiration to the team. He rarely saw action except in the last few minutes of a game that was already decided. One day news came that the boy's father had died. The youngster came to Little and said: "Coach, I want to ask something of you that means an awful lot to me. I want to start the game against Fordham. I think that's what my father would have liked most."

Little hesitated a moment, then said: "Okay, son, you'll start, but you'll only be in there for a play or two. You aren't quite good enough and you know it." The boy started the game and played so well Little never took him out. His play inspired the team to victory. Back in the locker room Coach Little embraced the young man and said: "Son, you were terrific. You never played that way before... what got into you?"

The boy answered: "remember how my father and I used to walk around arm-in-arm? There was something about him very few people knew-he was totally blind. This afternoon was the first time my father ever saw me play."

Bits and Pieces, Vol. F, #41

The Bible says, "Your Father, who sees in secret..." Matt. 6:18

This verse is speaking about doing your good works for and because of the one who secretly is watching every move you make. He is taking it all in! He knows the things you do for His eyes only. He knows when all that you care about is to please Him. He is storing up a blessing for your eternity that will absolutely blow your mind! 1Cor. 2:9 Play your heart out for Him on this playing field of life. He will never miss a game you play in and your Father will always be your greatest fan. He is watching you and assisting you in every good thing He gives you to do!

Matt. 25:21 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

Play your heart out for Father! Do something bold through the guidance and power of His Holy Spirit! Let Him hear you say, "Watch this Daddy!"

Can you see that the Father you cannot see, sees you and is waiting with great anticipation to give you your eternal championship award?

If we will work on our walk, our walk will work wonders in our world. See 1John 2:6

Tom Anglin is the Pastor of The Bridge Church of WNC in Spruce Pine, NC. For more information visit www.TBCWNC.org.

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Share Your Faith

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)

It is estimated that only 2 to 5 percent of today's Christians share their faith. Yet, we have the greatest story ever told; the greatest news ever to share. It's the message of love and redemption, and it's our own story. It's the story of what the Lord has done for each of us personally, powerfully and perfectly. Imagine, we were dead in trespasses and sins. We had no way of helping ourselves. Because of our condition, we were doomed to eternal punishment. But, One loved us so much He died for us. He paid the price for our sins and made it possible for us to escape this punishment and live with Him forever in His home...Heaven. How can we not share that Good News? It is literally the news everyone is dying to hear!

We were commanded to share this news in Matthew 28:18-20 – "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." That command was reiterated in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." So, we must. Who must share? Men, women, boys and girls. How must we share? Compassionately, regularly, prayerfully and Scripturally.

The overwhelming percentage of those with whom we come in contact are lost. They are in our communities, places of business, schools and perhaps even in our own home.

This time of the year many of us plan our gardens. We gather the seeds and plants, till the ground, plant and water hoping for a great harvest. Why not do that evangelistically? We have the seed: it's the Word of God and the story of how that Word has literally changed our lives. The Holy Spirit tills the heart. He gets the heart ready to receive the seed of the Word. Our task is then to plant! Tell everyone we can about Jesus. Who knows, we may just be able to see someone make the greatest decision of their life...to accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

Let God use you to bring a harvest unto Himself. In doing so you change our world one soul at a time.

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.



everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Upon proper reflection of our faults and failures, such should cause every person to tremble, because it doesn't require a host of sins to condemn and bar us from paradise. As it was for Adam and Eve, it only requires one – just one – one single act of disobedience to God's law. Yet the records will reveal that all have failed miserably.

That is – unless the records are bought up and put away to never be played. Essentially, this is what Christ did when He gave his life as atonement for sin on the Cross. He bought up all the records and forever put them away for everyone who trusts Him for forgiveness and receives Him as Lord.

My mother will tell you that nothing she sought after before – riches, fame, success, etc. – could ever compare to the new life she found in Christ. Furthermore, let me say if she hadn't made that decision, I would have never known the grace and goodness of Christ ... and certainly wouldn't be writing about Him for this editorial.

The article by Dr. Creech was written and published by The Christian Post in 2006.

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



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We Need a Cyrus

By Daniel Whetstone
Mitchell County



January 20th, 2017, was a great day for America. Our God has once again heard the prayers of His people and through this past election, has given us one more chance. Some professing Christians are still unsupportive of our new president. It has been said of him that he is morally corrupt, rude, profane and a lot of other choice descriptive terms. Some doubt that God can use a man like Trump, but I refer you to God's Word. In Isaiah 45: 3-4, the prophet prophesied about a king that He would raise up for "Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect" to deliver them from bondage. That man's name was Cyrus. He concluded verse 4 by emphasizing that King Cyrus was an ungodly person, "I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

God's plan for His people is not subject to the ideas of man. God can and does work through people to accomplish His purposes regardless of what we think. God stated that He was using Cyrus for the sake of Jacob, a reference to the remnant of Israel that was still being held captive. Never in the history of this great nation have we seen such a time as this. Christianity and all things Godly have been under attack while evil has been allowed to run unchecked. Our former president started the assault when he declared publicly that "we are not a Christian nation." Christians have been held captive in their own land by a leader who has endorsed every demonic activity known to mankind.

We needed a Cyrus and God sent him. To say that our new president was not divinely appointed is to say that God turned a deaf ear to the multiple millions of prayer warriors who have been praying regularly for our nation. To say that he is not divinely appointed is to dash to pieces the hopes of a nation full of people that felt that they had no other recourse but faith in God. To say that he is not divinely appointed is to deny the astonishing events that took place during this election and dismiss them as "coincidence".

We begged for God's help and He heard us. Instead of trying to judge someone else's moral character, let's just lift our voices to God in praise and appreciation for this victory. Lord knows we needed it.

Reverend Daniel Whetstone is Director of Missions for the Mitchell Baptist Association and Chaplain for the Mount Mitchell Marine Corps League Detachment 1266.

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The New Morality

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County

In their book, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme*, David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons trace the path America has taken toward a new moral code: "the morality of self-fulfillment." The new moral code comes with six guiding principles:

1. To find yourself, look within yourself.
 2. People should not criticize someone else's life choices.
 3. To be fulfilled in life, pursue the things you desire most.
 4. Enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life.
 5. People can believe whatever they want as long as those beliefs don't affect society.
 6. Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is fine.
- Today's decree, later changed to a directive (because decrees are usually handed down by God and someone must have clued in the overreaching Department of Justice that they might be using a word with religious overtones...which of course isn't tolerated today) that all public schools must give equal access to bathrooms to transgender people is the government enacting these six guiding principles.

Russell Moore stated in his blog today:

The state here wishes to use its coercive power not simply to stop mistreatment of people but to rescript the most basic human intuitions about humanity as male and female. How, after all, does one win a culture war against one of the most basic facts of science and life: that there are two sexes? One does so by withholding the funds and recognition necessary to operate in public space, unless institutions get in line. Children, then, become pawns of the state for the state to teach what is ultimately a theological lesson, not a scientific one.

According to the state (and Hollywood, ESPN, Zuckerberg from Facebook and a host of other media elites), one's gender is determined by looking within, not by the biological standards of male and female anatomy. Anyone who disagrees is considered an intolerant bigot. Since people should do what they desire most and enjoying life is the highest goal, individual assessment of one's own gender takes precedence over safety of others, scientific evidence and basic discretion.

Pastor Kevin DeYoung, in a letter to the Michigan State Board of Education stated:

The current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) includes gender dysphoria, labeled as gender identity disorder until 2013, as a recognized condition when accompanied by distress over one's biological sex. While some parents may encourage their children to embrace their chosen gender identity, whether it matches their biological sex or not, many other parents will see gender confusion as a natural part of passing through puberty and will encourage their children to embrace their biological sex. It is not the place of the schools to undermine what is taught in the home.

We are experiencing a tsunami of cultural change. Underneath the tsunami lies the earthquake that created it: the morality of self-fulfillment. Moore states well, "We must bear witness to the goodness of what it means to live as creatures, not as self-defining gods and goddesses."

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever—not to glorify self and enjoy self forever.

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



By Helen Wilson
Burke County



A very important gathering takes place every Thursday at noon on the old Burke County Courthouse square. People from different churches in Morganton and the surrounding area meet to pray for our nation, state, county and town and for those in authority and those serving in various capacities. Each Thursday a different church is responsible for leading the prayer time. This prayer time began last August 4 and has been held each Thursday since then and will continue each Thursday until May 4, 2017. The group size has ranged from 5 to a high of 40 with a usual group of 10-15. The person leading the prayer time usually begins with scripture and then leads in a time of prayer with emphasis on the needs of the nation, state and community. The prayer time is very informal and usually lasts about 15 minutes.

This time of prayer was born in the minds of some of the ladies who serve on the Burke County National Day of Prayer Committee and who organize and plan the National Day of Prayer event for Burke County each year. The group felt that organized prayer for the nation should not be limited to 1 day each year, and that there were enough churches in the area to lead the prayer time weekly, with a particular church being responsible only once or twice in a year. At the last National Day of Prayer May 5, 2016, the idea was presented and many of those present indicated an interest and willingness to participate. So, with a little effort, contacts were made and a schedule prepared for the weekly prayer time. Pastors, leaders and members from many different churches and denominations have participated and have made this a very special event.

There is hope and anticipation that this prayer emphasis will continue beyond the next National Day of Prayer, May 4 this year.



Prayers Burke County

Hopefully other churches will become involved and the attendance will grow as well. As Christians, we have a duty to pray for our nation and those in authority. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." I Timothy 2:1-3, KJV. A good reason for doing this in a public place is the witness to our belief in prayer.

All churches are asked to share information about this ongoing prayer emphasis and encourage all who are able to be a part of meeting with other Christians united in prayer for this great nation. For further information, questions, or to participate the contact information is listed below.

Helen is a retired RN and a graduate of the UNC School of Nursing in Chapel Hill. She is a member of Mull's Grove Baptist Church and enjoys serving the Lord there in several areas as well as volunteer community work.

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The Rotary of Spruce Pine

MHS Seniors

By Doug Sudduth
Mitchell County

The Rotary Club of Spruce Pine recognized its February "Seniors of the Month" at the Feb. 16 meeting. Maggie Austin, Brinkli Burleson and Davis Sutton were presented certificates by Rotarian Glen DeVos recognizing the Mitchell High School students.

Austin told the club she loves art and she was saved in fifth-grade after her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She brought several of her paintings to display at the meeting.

"My best is yet to come," she said of her artwork. "All of my work is a work in progress."

Austin works currently with toddlers in an afterschool program at the Spruce Pine Montessori School. She is undecided about college, but does plan to take her core classes at Mayland, from where she has already earned her early childhood education associate degree.

If she does decide to go on to a four-year institution she said she would likely become an art teacher.

Burleson told the club she has always been interested in business and entrepreneurship. She was one of 23 students selected to attend a three-week summer program through Appalachian State University in Boone. She plans to attend ASU and major in hospitality and tourism management and minor in entrepreneurship. She said she chose her major because she wants to travel.

"I want to see as many places as I can," she said. "I would like to travel the world before I settle down and have a family."

When she does settle down, Burleson said it would likely be in Mitchell County and she admitted an "obsession" with hiking and exploring mountains. Burleson has interned at Young, Miller & Gillespie as well as the county's Central Office in Bakersville.

Sutton said he is passionate about sports, particularly soccer and basketball and considers sports one of the top-three things in his life. He plans to attend Mars Hill and has not picked a major. He said he may study education and teach American history, crediting Mitchell High School history teacher Matt Hurd with making him want to be a teacher.

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



Rotarian Glen DeVos with MHS Seniors Maggie Austin, Brinkli Burleson and Davis Sutton

Blue Ridge Partnership for Children

Child Fest

By Ruthie Styles

Spring is rapidly approaching and with spring comes the 17th annual Child Fest event sponsored by the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children and Child Care Resources and Referral. This year's event promises to be a great day with activities like rides on the Little Blue Choo, a Teddy Bear Clinic, make & take crafts, inflatables and Mr. Mystery will once again bring his mysterious magic show to Child Fest. Door prizes will be given away throughout the day and while the kiddos are enjoying all the activities, their parents and caregivers will have access to information about quality child care, early literacy, health and nutrition and services that are available in the area.



When asked about Child Fest, Jessica Hoyle, Waylon's mom, said she enjoys Child Fest so much because it "offers an opportunity for every young child in the area to experience something fun and positive that is free."

This year's Child Fest kicks off April, the month of the young child, on Saturday, April 1, 2017 at Mitchell High School from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please join us for this fun, free, family event that celebrates children and the joy they are.

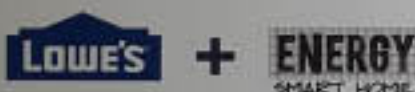


Waylon Stout with the brand new bicycle he won at Child Fest. The bicycle was generously donated by the Mitchell County Sheriff's Department.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children at 828.682.0717 or 828.733.2899.

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

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The Inspiring Word

The Sermon on the Mount

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County



Thanks for returning to read another publication of "The Blue Ridge Christian News" and our article "The Inspiring Word".

This month open your Bible to Matthew 7:7-11 and read as we continue with our look into "The Sermon on the Mount."

Comparing our February article with March it seems only natural that Jesus would move from discussing relationship with our fellow man to relationship with our heavenly Father. Consider this, our Christian duty of discrimination (not judging others, not casting pearls before pigs, and being helpful without being hypocritical) is impossible for us to achieve without divine grace. Grace is the key to our Christianity, that is a very broad statement but one with biblical support. Let's consider a few things about relationships, and how our relationship with others is directly influenced through our relationship with God. Not just from the perspective of having a relationship or not, but how deep is that relationship with God and how much of an influence do we allow it to have in our personal lives!

Jesus makes three promises in verses 7 & 8. Very simply put they are; ask, seek and knock. Let's take a condensed look at them. Do you notice they are in ascending order based upon urgency? For example; if a child's mother is near and visible the child will ask their mother, if the child's mother is not visible the child will seek their mother and if the child locates their mother but she is isolated (for instance in another room) the child will knock to gain the attention of their mother. Notice how urgency establishes the order of importance. These three verbs, ask, seek, and knock all illustrate the persistency we should exhibit when making our requests known to God.

Now notice with me the promises are in universal statements. The pronouns everyone, he and him indicate who the Lord is directing His instruction too. Let me be clearer. The Sermon on the Mount is directed to the Lord's disciples. Yes, the Pharisees and Gentiles are present but the Sermon is directed to those who believe in Him and follow Him. That may better explain the context of the pronouns.

Third, in our study is the home spun parable Jesus uses to expound His promises. From verses 9-11 we find a very interesting illustration. Jesus sets before them a situation



all of them and even you and I today can relate too. The parent child relationship. Specifically, a child coming to their Father with a request. Jesus illustrates the application through two very interesting items, a stone and a snake! If a child were to ask for bread, would the child be given something which looks like bread but is in fact very different, e.g. a stone instead of a loaf, or a snake instead of a fish? Said another way, if the child asks for something wholesome to eat (bread or fish), would the child receive instead something unwholesome, either inedible (a stone) or even harmful (a poisonous snake)? Parents who truly love their children would never intentionally do anything like this. Notice the depth of Jesus' teaching here. Parents, even though they are imputed with the sin nature, i.e. selfish by nature, still love their children and give them only good gifts. Jesus here asserts the inherent sinfulness of human nature. At the same time, he does not deny that sinful men are capable of doing good. What Jesus is saying is that even when parents are doing good, following the noble instincts of parenthood and caring for their children, they do not escape the depravity of a sin nature, because that is what we are.

So, we come down to the purpose of the passage. How do these three promises reflect our relationship with God the Father through Jesus the Son? First, we see the Lord asking, not if God is ready to give, but are we ready to receive? Are we asking the right thing for the right reason at the right time and is our heart ready to receive the righteous truth God has in store for us? Second, we see the necessity of seeking God the Father. We see Jesus identifying the disciple with God not only as creator but as Abba His Father, our Father. With that relationship and the application previously given we must not ignore the necessity in our life to seek God in a growing Father/child relationship. Having confidence that God will provide only what is wholesome and safe for our well-being. Third, when we ask for the right reasons and seek the proper relationship, our approach (knock) will be productive (the door will open).

The promises given by Jesus are not unconditional. It requires something from you and me. We must be born again as a child of God through Jesus Christ. Next, we must realize prayer is not a list of wishes to be granted by a genie. We should have a desire for God in our lives and when we do we will ask, seek and knock in a manner that pleases God and He will answer according to His word and His will. We have run out of space for this article. Until we meet again, may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Keep Plowing! Don't Look Back!

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



I remember when I was a little boy I used to always want to help my paw-paw plant the garden. I loved helping him drive the tractor and the smell of the fresh plowed dirt. I loved helping him put out the fertilizer, dropping the seeds or planting the tomatoes he had grown in his makeshift green house. But there was one thing my paw-paw would not let me do, and that was to lay off the rows to plant our garden. Reason being, he had tried to show me how, but I just wouldn't listen to him. He said, "Look straight ahead and don't take your eyes off the other end of the garden when laying off the rows." But every time he gave me a chance I would go a little way and then I would look back, and when I would get to the end of the row and look back it would look like a dog's hind leg. And then he would say to me, "Boy I told you not to look back, but to keep your eyes fixed at the end of the row, and you will have a straight row." The Bible says in Luke 9:62 *"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

The reason being is, you can't live in the Past and the Present at the same time. Looking Back hinders our forward progress in life and Looking Back keeps us from focusing in on what God wants us to do and to accomplish in our walk with Him. Proverbs 14:15 tells us that *"...the prudent man looketh well to his going."* This is saying a man should be focusing on where he is now and where he is heading in his life.

Looking back hinders our Plowing and Laying off the rows God intends us to plant in. In our walk with God we can't afford to look back, but many Christians fail to do this. Christians have a hard time not looking back at their past. I believe we all have this problem sometimes.

I want to encourage you-- Don't Look Back at Sins That Have Been Forgiven. When God Forgives us of our sins He places our sins in the sea of forgiveness never to bring them up any more. They are under the Blood of Christ; they have been taken care of so, we must move forward.

I want to encourage you-- Don't Look Back at Defeats That Get You Down. Understand this, that your past failures can only hold you back if you let them. Learn from your failures and reach to the future with your eyes set on God.

I want to encourage you-- Don't Look Back at The Past and See It Better Than It Was. Think of the time God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt on their way to the Promised Land. And when something got in their way or would come up against them, they

would complain and want to go back to Egypt and eat leek and onions and be in slavery again. See, they were familiar with the past and scared of the future. The Bible Says *"I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me."* Your future is ahead of you.

I want to encourage you-- Don't Look Back at Past Conflicts That Make You Bitter. As Christians, we must

remember we have been forgiven and so we too must forgive and move on. You say, "You don't know what happened to me." You are right, but God does. And I can assure you, none of us have ever been treated like Jesus Christ. Remember what He said on the Cross to those that crucified Him. *"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

Lastly, I want to encourage you-- Don't Look Back at Past Victories That May Cause You to Think You Have Arrived. Paul tells us in Phil 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Paul is telling us here that he cannot look back at what already has been accomplished, but look forward to what still needs to be accomplished. We need to quit living in our past and look to what God's future holds for us. **DON'T LOOK BACK, BUT PLOW ON.**

Words of Wisdom

- "The present is never as good as it used to be" Vance Havner
- "If you try to be everything to everybody you will end up being nothing to anybody." Vance Havner
- "He cannot keep us from temptation, but He can keep us in temptation." Vance Havner
- "The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps -- we must step up the stairs. Vance Havner

Just a Thought:

If you keep looking back in your life what are you going to bump into?

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

Bakersville Community Health Center And Celo Health Center Announce

A Partnership

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.

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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 :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



Spruce Pine Rotary

Updates

By Doug Sudduth

On Thursday, January 26, at the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine, Andrew Young, a representative from the Blue Ridge Parkway, spoke with the group about invasive pests that are damaging our trees. Andrew explained about new restrictions on bringing firewood to the parkway - an effort to try to stop the spread of these damaging insects that are killing our trees. Andrew was introduced by Rotarian Tina White.



Andrew Young receiving a locally handmade Rotary mug from Tina White

The Rotary Club of Spruce Pine at its regular meeting Feb. 9 heard from Pam Snyder about Project Lifesaver.

The primary mission of Project Lifesaver is providing timely response to save lives and reduce potential injury for adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's, autism and other related conditions or disorders.

Snyder said the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina in January gave the project a grant of \$5,000 to purchase equipment and train 11 people in the ongoing effort to implement the program in Mitchell County.

A group of several community agencies, private citizens, local law enforcement and emergency personnel formed Safety Awareness for Everyone, or SAFE, committee

this past August to begin implementing Project Lifesaver in Mitchell County.

Snyder said the recent grant would also pay \$3,950 for startup equipment cost.

Including bracelets, which cost anywhere from \$300 to \$350 depending on the type.

Upon the project's implementation the sheriff's department and the county's emergency personnel will operate the program with all activities monitored by the SAFE committee.

Starting the project began when Mitchell County Sheriff's Office Det. Courtney Beam had a chance encounter with an autistic child wearing a discreet tracking device on his ankle in Unicoi, Tennessee, Snyder said.



Rotarian Reid Duncan presenting a locally handmade Rotary mug to Pam Snyder

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

Date: Saturday, April 8th (Games starting at 10am, Egg Hunt 11am)

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Mitchell County SafePlace:

The First 30 Days of 2017

By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

I'd bet some of you wonder what a typical month looks like at Mitchell County SafePlace. Do those ladies just sit there, day after day, staring at that 828-765-4044 Crisis Hotline, waiting for it to ring, springing into action...kinda like Batman and Robin hanging out in the Bat Cave, waiting to see the Bat Signal? I can't help



Wonder woman, Kellie Biggs

but laugh as I envision Connie Sedberry and Tracy Black grabbing their capes and sliding down the Bat Pole, dashing off in a Bat Mobile driven by Wonder Woman Kellie Biggs! Welllllll, that's not quite how SafePlace works.... mainly, because we can't get funding for the Bat Pole.

Each month, Associate Director Tracy Black compiles a summary of actions and tasks for our Board of Directors. Below is a sampling of how Mitchell County SafePlace spent the first month of the year:

- We gave emergency shelter to a mother and her 2 children. We also provided services to 65 women, men and children. These services include peer counseling about domestic violence and sexual assault victimization, emergency crisis calls, in-kind and emergency financial assistance, etc. We helped 3 clients file for and obtain Domestic Violence Protective Orders, and provided court advocacy and accompaniment. We also provided transportation 3 times for vital services.
- Kellie began teaching her 6-week, evidence-based Love=Respect Program to 80 6th grade boys and girls at Harris Middle School 4 days a week. The first two weeks they talked about what makes a healthy relationship and the red flags of harmful behaviors. This was followed by dressing up and acting out scenarios, everyone's favorite activity. After completing the program at Harris, Kellie will move on to Bowman Middle School, and then will return to Mitchell High. By the end of the school year she will have presented Love=Respect to 280 students!
- Tracy returned to Life Skills Class at Mountain View Prison, where she presented an introduction to Domestic Violence Prevention Basics. All 15 men were very engaged in the topic. They asked many, many questions, and several related stories about experiencing domestic violence in their childhood. It was a very moving experience for both Tracy and the inmates.
- Connie was the guest speaker at the Spruce Pine Kiwanis Club January meeting. She explained the different aspects of the work that SafePlace does, and offered ways in which their members might become involved.



- Beth attended a "Coffee Talk" sponsored by WNC Nonprofit Pathways about using Mail Chimp and Constant Contact to engage and inform our community about the work of SafePlace.
- January was a deluge of submitting grant applications and reports. The work was frenzied, as we submitted applications for VOCA Basic Services, SASP, Women for Women, and the ERS grants.
- The SafePlace thrift stores started an interesting new sale. All shoppers would be given a 20% discount at the Touch of Class Boutique if they presented a receipt from their purchase at the SafePlace Thrift. Thirty-two people took advantage of this sale. The stores continue to serve as an outreach to the community for SafePlace. In addition to providing clothing, furniture and household goods, we also partnered with:
 - Mitchell County Sheriff's Office to provide clothing for 2 prisoners going to court.
 - Mitchell County DSS requested emergency clothing for 2 children who had to be removed from their home.
 - SafePlace Thrift also gave in-kind assistance to a family devastated by a house fire at the request of Mitchell County DSS. Manager Cheech Stewart is currently revamping both of the stores.
 - In total, we provided in-kind assistance valued at \$1,200 for 16 families for the month of January.
 - Connie continues our Community Close Up radio programs on WTOE/WKYK.

HUGE News!! Beginning Monday, April 3, SafePlace's wildly popular Fresh Start Program will (for lack of a better phrase) start fresh! Led by Shelter Manager Lisa Cassaro, Fresh Start is free to anyone who wishes to improve their employment or employability through ongoing Life Skills, Job Skills, and Computer Skills courses. We also provide support groups for anyone who has been a victim of domestic or sexual violence, as well as their family and friends. Fresh Start will meet at the Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall each Monday, 5:00-6:30. Look for more information about this exciting program in coming weeks, or call Lisa Cassaro at 828-765-4015.

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator for Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or bethbdavis60@gmail.com.



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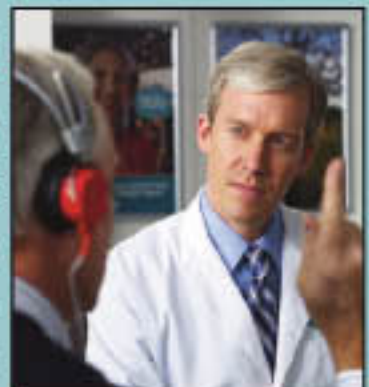


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My Mother, Once a Country Music Singer
By Dr. Mark Creech

During the late 1960s and early 70s my mother was a country music singer. She had one top ten hit on the Billboard charts – a country version of “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down” that went to number 9. Not that you can’t be a celebrity and be a faithful Christian too, but my mother says she wasn’t fully surrendered to the Lord during that period. Her complete surrender would ultimately lead her to leave the music business and devote herself to motherhood. I can never be grateful enough for that commitment and sacrifice. She would have been a big star, no doubt. She is incredibly talented. Mom was also a high school dropout. Yet in her 50s, after my sister and I were grown and moved out of the house and were making lives of our own, Mom went back to school, got her GED, then pursued nursing and received her degree and certification at the age of 58. Today she is still a practicing nurse at the age of 77. You’ll forgive me for my bias and boasting, but that’s pretty impressive, if you ask me!

To the right is a picture of my mother, backstage after an appearance on the Grand Ole Opry. She was an exceptionally beautiful woman in those days, and no less beautiful to me today.

I once wrote a piece for the Christian Post that contained more information about my mother’s music career. You can read the article below:

He Bought Up the Records

Not many people are aware of it, and others may have forgotten about it, but my mother had a distinguished country music singing career back in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Two of her records did very well; her country rendition of “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down” went to #9 on the Billboard charts; and “We’ll Sing in the Sunshine,” which was originally a folk tune, reached #24. Alice Creech was the opening act for some of the most revered country artists today: Ernest Tubb, Dolly Parton, Hank Williams, Jr., Charlie Pride, Merle Haggard, String Bean, Grandpa Jones, Bill Anderson, Tammy Wynette, Loretta Lynn and many more. In addition to being rated #21 of the top female vocalists of 1972 with a single by Billboard magazine, she was also the recipient of two ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) awards that same year. She even made a guest appearance on the Grand Ole Opry, when it was previously located in the famous Ryman Auditorium.

About the time my mother was just becoming a major country and western celebrity, she decided to surrender her life to Christ and leave the business so she could be a better mom to my younger sister and me. I earnestly pray I would always live worthy of the godly influence and instructions she gave during the years



that followed.

Recently, while attending an Ethics Leaders Conference at the offices of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, I retraced some of my mother’s steps during her days as an aspiring artist in Music City. I visited the historic Ernest Tubb Record Shop and saw the stage where my mother often performed on WSM’s “Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree.”

But the greatest thrill came when visiting the Lawrence Record Store downtown, where they have a tremendous selection of vintage vinyl records. You can imagine my delightful surprise to discover they had all of my mother’s recordings – original labels, jackets and everything. There they were – all of them – ready to play on the nearest phonograph. Naturally, I bought them up to safely put them away.

That experience made me think of a profound truth often forgotten in our day: God has every recording of our lives and He’s planning to play them at the Judgment. He has them all – the originals – everything we ever did; the things others either never knew or had forgotten about. It’s all there and none of it is omitted. Moreover, there’s no spin to it. It’s all just the bare and unadulterated truth about who we really are and what we’ve done.

LIFE magazine once interviewed dozens of people to learn how Americans feel about prayer. One person interviewed was a young prostitute from White Pine County, Nevada.

“I don’t think about my feelings a lot,” she said. “Instead I lie in my bed and think onto Him. I meditate because sometimes my words don’t come out right. But He can find me. He can find what’s inside of me just by listening to my thoughts. I ask Him to help me and keep me going. A lot of people think that working girls don’t have any morals, any religion. But I do. I don’t steal. I don’t lie. The way I look at it, I’m not sinning. He’s not going to judge me. I don’t think God judges anybody.”

Very few modern notions are more popular than the one that God judges no one. The problem is, however, that comforting perception is patently false!

Judgment is as certain as God is holy. The Psalmist says in Psalm 7:11, “God is angry with the wicked every day.” In other words, as Dr. George Sweeting of Moody Bible Institute puts it: “God never makes détente with sin.” The apostle Paul explicitly warned: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life



Mark's mother, Alice Creech

continued on page 17



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Avery County

Avery County Chamber - "Quarterly Breakfast"-March 14- 8:30 am- The River Dog Café-3616 Mitchell Ave., Linville
Guest Speaker- Troy Cook, Chief Deputy, Avery County Sheriff's Office- Troy will share how High Country Crime Stoppers is helping our community.
Tuesday, March 14, 8:30am- A \$5.00 donation is appreciated for the breakfast.

First Baptist Church of Newland - Friday, March 10th- Kids' Lock-In - 6pm Friday night, through 8am, Saturday morning
• Sunday, March 12th- Children's Ministry Team Meeting- 5pm-6pm
• Thursday, March 23rd- Backpack Ministry - 6:30pm-7pm
• Tuesday, March 28th- Harlem Globetrotters in Boone - 7pm (Tickets - \$18)

Burke County

Catawba River Baptist Association

March
• 2-Cuba Mission Trip Information Meeting @ CRBA @ 6:30 p.m.
• 4-RA Racer Day @ Oak Ridge Baptist from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
• 6-10-Vision Trip to Chicago
• 13-Ministers Golf Tournament Registration Deadline
• 19-Associational Bible Drill at Burkemont Baptist at 3:00 PM
• 23-CRBA Spring Meeting @ El Bethel 5:30 PM-Supper/Business; Worship-6:30 PM; Nursery Provided
• 28-Minister's Wives "Get-Together" at 6:30 p.m. at CRBA
• 30-Ministers Golf Tournament @ 9 a.m. (\$25 per person)
• April (month of food collection for the Children's Homes of NC)
• 1-State RA Racer Day
• 6-Senior Adult Outing
• 16-Easter
May
• 2-Church Security Seminar @ 6:30 p.m. @ Walker Road Baptist
• 21-Association Missions Offering
• 23-Why They Stay Seminar with Dr. Steve Parr at 6:30 p.m. @ Mulls Grove Baptist
Mission Trip - Catawba River Baptist Association will be leading a mission trip to Cuba September 16-22. This will be an exciting trip where we will do construction, prayer walking, personal evangelism and preaching. The cost for the trip which includes transportation, food, lodging and supplies is \$2,000 per person. This trip is open to both men and women. If interested you will need to begin the process of getting a passport and you will want to attend the Cuba information meeting March 2nd at our CRBA office at 6:30 p.m.

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 - LifeStart Seminars: Lose Weight Naturally and Learn Commonsense Ways to End the Struggle and Permanently Achieve the Level of Fitness You Desire! Beginning Thursday, March 16th., at 6:00 p.m., at Limbertwigs Café, 120 N Sterling Street, 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 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. When-12:00-2:00 pm-March 28, 2017-Where-Marion Train Depot- 45 Depot Street, Marion, NC 28752
Historic Marion Tailgate Market is hosting a community potluck to kick-off the 2017 market season. Learn about the exciting plans for the 2017 Historic Marion Tailgate Market! Bring a friend & your favorite covered dish. The HMTM will provide the meat and drinks. Vendor applications will be provided.

In 2016, the HMTM celebrated 10 years of providing local foods and crafts by our local farmers and artisans. Let's continue the tradition. Please RSVP by March 21, 652-2215 or Lou Godfrey.

Historic Marion Tailgate Market is open on Tuesday from 3 to 6 pm and Sat-

urday from 9 am to 12 pm in downtown Marion under the Tailgate Market shelter. Opening day, Tuesday, May 2.

Hospice of Rutherford and Carolina Foothills - Hope Grief Support for those who have lost loved ones: Offered at First Presbyterian church, 79 Academy St, Marion. March 7, 14, 21, 28 at 6PM.

New HOPE of McDowell (Marion) - New HOPE of McDowell is seeking a full-time Associate Director - Shelter Manger. 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

Bach's Lunch at Trinity Church 15 Hemlock Ave Spruce Pine NC A series of free noon hour 30 minute concerts beginning at 12:05 Wednesdays during March followed by a complimentary lunch Contact Trinity at 828-520-1151 for more info

Bear Creek Baptist Church-Ledger - Women's Prayer Breakfast at Helen's Restaurant on Friday March 10, 2017 at Helen 8:00am. Ordering from menu. All women are invited.

Primitive Quartet will be at Bear Creek on Sunday, March 19th at 6:00pm Everyone is invited and a love offering will be taken.

Celebrate Recovery

This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hip and 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. (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.

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 jnutouzs@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 - Associational Bible Drills Saturday, March 25, 2017 Bear Creek Baptist Church starting at 9:30

The Mitchell County Historical Society announces its First Annual History Bee, scheduled for Thursday, April 6th, 2017, at 7:00 pm at the Historic Courthouse in Bakersville. The goal of the History Bee, and the mission of MCHS, is to help Mitchell County residents, especially young people, become more aware of our rich heritage.

There will be two divisions of competition, one for Mitchell County students under 15, and one for students 15-18. First prize in each age division is \$500, second prize \$300, and third prize \$200. Local businesses and organizations are providing the prizes.

All questions in the History Bee will come from Elizabeth Hunter's Voices of the Valley, which was published in 2011, the 150th anniversary of the formation of Mitchell County. This publication is already in public and school libraries, and more copies will be made available to libraries by MCHS. It is also available for

purchase from the Historical Society office in Bakersville or from other sources. Students are asked to sign up to participate in the MCHS History Bee by 3/31/2017, and registration is free. Ask your history teacher for a registration form or find it on mitchellnchistory.org.

If you have questions about the History Bee, go to the MCHS website or call 828-385-0564 or 828-688-3471.

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 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.

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.

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) or Harvey Schestag - 828-284-0707 (harveyschestag@gmail.com) or go to www.bsfiinternational.org for comprehensive information about BSF.

Laurel Branch Baptist Church (Burnsville) - Seeking bi-vocational pastor, please email resume to floreecapps@frontier.com.

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.

Madison County

Hannah Furgiele [\$500]: To create a documentary film that tells how a music festival saved Bluff Mountain in Hot Springs from being clear cut in 1995.

From Mitchell County:

Christina Shmigel [\$800]: To acquire studio equipment needed for the fabrication of my work in steel for sculpture and installation

Michael Kline [\$800]: To complete the next phase of construction on my studio to create a workspace for an apprentice and an organized, dry glaze storage area

From Yancey County:

Jem Klein [\$800]: To purchase a Jet bench top wood lathe to help create large sculptural work.

Mayland Community College

SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

The Mayland Small Business Center (SBC) offers high quality training and confidential counseling for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Whether you are considering launching a new business or managing an existing one, the small business center provides resources tailored to fit your needs. If you would like to schedule a free confidential business counseling session or sign up for free small business seminars, contact Mayland SBC Director Allen Cook at 828.766.1295 or email him at acook@mayland.edu. - Check out our March classes:

Niche Markets: Specialty Crops- Specialty crops are high value crops. They do not have to be produced on large acreages in order to make a profit. Learn site selection and crop selection. Marketing options for a variety of vegetables, herbs, flowers and ornaments. 3/2, 6:00-8:00pm Mayland Campus

Market Your Arts/Crafts Online -Back by popular demand! Dynamic speaker and marketing expert, Zen Wildkitty will discuss ways to market your art, your business, and your story online. This seminar will be packed full of the latest tactics to market efficiently and sell your art online. -3/15, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. -TRAC Resource Center Spruce Pine

Financing Your Small Business -Are you in need of a loan to start or expand your business? The Carolina Small Business Development Fund can help you navigate the process. Tommy Dennison, Business Development Officer, will be discussing what the CSBDF looks at in order to render an approval on a loan. Topics covered will be the 5 C's of Credit, types of loans available, what you will need to apply, and a typical loan timeline. -3/22, W, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Yancey Campus

Business Building Tips from a Master Artist -World renowned basket maker and marketing expert, Matt Tommey, started out building baskets for fun from Kudzu. Merging his love for art with his knowledge of marketing, Matt went full time into the business of making baskets. He made his passion his job and now owns a lucrative studio in the River Arts District of Asheville, NC. Hear Matt's story about how he launched his business and made it profitable. Learn tips from the pros! -3/29, W, 4:00-6:00 p.m. -TRAC Resource Center Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

Facebook for Business -Learn how to create a business Facebook page! This seminar will cover the basics of creating and managing a Facebook page for your small business. Learn how to create posts and interact with your customers! 3/30, TH, 5:00-6:00 p.m. Mayland Campus

Canva for Marketing -Canva is a free online design service you're going to want to use for your small business. At this quick course, learn how to use Canva to create professional looking publications that will have you marketing like a pro. -3/30, TH, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Mayland Campus

Implementing Strategic Marketing Plan

By Laura Verla

(Mitchell County, NC - February 21, 2017) The Mitchell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) recently announced a three-year strategic plan to recruit new business, encourage residential growth, and bolster the tourism industry. The Mitchell County EDC began the project with North Star Destination Strategies (North Star) in April 2016 to create a branding and marketing plan for the county. The announcement and presentation of the plan elements took place on February 3, 2017. The local committee will now begin work to implement the plan.

The EDC reviewed proposals from several marketing firms with the decision to hire North Star based on its experience and success branding hundreds of communities across the country. North Star is known as the leader in community branding, research, and planning throughout the United States. Another positive factor was that the firm had already spent nearly a year working with Toe River Arts Council, and the firm's familiarity and love of the county was important. While the final presentation to community leaders largely consisted of concepts for the implementation of the brand, the project as a whole also consisted of an abundant amount of research and strategies for future use.

North Star conducted research to identify what differentiates Mitchell County from its competitors for the purposes of resident recruitment and retention, tourism development, and business attraction and support. It set out to learn the perceptions and beliefs of local stakeholders, residents, consumers, businesses and influencers, as well as understand the competitive situation with the surrounding counties and Western North Carolina.

North Star combined research with its expertise and skill to present ideas to the local committee throughout the project. One of the elements included in the plan





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was a logo, but the investment in this plan was for much more than that. The final strategic plan is a nearly 400 page document that will guide tourism and economic development for the next three years.

As part of its community research, North Star conducted immense research and planning that involved reviewing existing community materials and vast efforts to gain input from local citizens. During North Star's visit to Mitchell County, the team traveled from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Roan Mountain, stopping at dozens of assets throughout the county. The team held in-person individual interviews, creative workshops, and community focus groups, in addition to phone interviews. North Star also carried out consumer awareness and perception studies through interviews about Mitchell County with external influencers and surveyed visitors and non-visitors to Mitchell County from within North Carolina to gain insight about external perceptions. North Star also analyzed competitive positioning.

Research data was analyzed for trending insights that hone in on the Mitchell County story. These insights were funneled into a strategic brand platform, which reads as follows: "For those who seek treasure in its purest form, Mitchell County, centered amongst the oldest and greatest mountains of Western North Carolina, is the source for both ancient inspiration and modern interpretation, providing clarity and perspective in a noisy world."

The brand narrative expands on the platform. An excerpt reads: "Along the winding Blue Ridge Parkway, yet off the beaten path, Mitchell County is a treasure trove where you'll uncover life's most sought after gems in all forms. Here, you'll find nature's welcoming sense of place that renews your connection to the things that matter most. And whether you discover gems you can hold in your hand or in your heart, all are worth the journey."

"Mitchell County... Seek + Find" was chosen as the strapline. Among many reasons, it was chosen because it creates a vibrant sense of adventure, has a layered meaning (one can find whatever you are seeking: peace and quiet, gems, adventure, culture, history, business opportunities, etc.), works for residential, tourism and economic development messaging, is short and memorable, and links to the hidden treasures in the area. Some of the advertising will utilize phrases around this tagline to highlight Mitchell County in a refreshing way, for example, Seek: Mountain Views, Find: New Perspective, or another example, Seek: an Escape, Find: an Oasis.

Mitchell County has a wonderful spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship, and the EDC will use this research to facilitate ways to enhance support and expansion efforts surrounding this culture and significant asset. An external influencer stated, "The creative environment is a critical element in industry recruitment, because companies need to recruit, and that talent desires an inspiring and interesting place to live. And, Mitchell County has it."

Keith Holtsclaw, Chair of the EDC Board of Directors and Mitchell County Commissioner, emphasizes the importance of the plan. "Over the past few years every individual who has been on the ballot for County Commissioner has indicated a strong desire for enhancing economic development. This is much easier said than done and requires a strategic plan that is doable and incorporates other facets including a marketing plan. After much work and local input, the "Mitchell Works" strategic plan was presented and endorsed by the County Commissioners, Municipalities, Economic Development, and Chamber of Commerce boards and is now being implemented. One part of the implementation was completion of a marketing plan that has now been finalized. We are now positioned to move forward with solid plans that will contribute to enhancing the economy of the county. As Winston Churchill said "those who fail to plan, plan to fail" and we certainly do not want to make that mistake."

The plan will assist the EDC in its work to strengthen and support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, attract new businesses to the area, as well as people to visit, and maybe even relocate. Laura Verla recently began the role of Director of the EDC. She stated she is "excited to have this strategic marketing plan for the county, and look forward to using it as a valuable tool. Work on the implementation of the plan will begin immediately. The EDC will utilize North Star's extensive research and strategy in striving to transform Mitchell County's challenges into opportunities and work to develop untapped potential."

Laura Verla is the Director of the Mitchell County EDC

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God Doesn't Give Up

By Wendy Cannon
Mitchell County

My husband, Bruce Cannon, and I love Mitchell County. I do not believe we are here by accident. I do not believe any of us are here by accident. I believe we have been placed here by God to reach the people around us for Him. We are so glad that God has placed us here to serve Him and to serve others.

Mark 5:19 "Go...to the friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

Because of some very hurtful words said by a Circuit Riding minister when my parents were very young and had lost a child to death, my parents stayed away from church for over 40 years. I had very wonderful, moral parents; but they did not raise me in church. There was no Bible sitting out on any table, no Bible stories were told, no prayers said, nothing. My parents did eventually go back to church and I am sure that they are now with the Lord. I am so thankful that I will see them again.

My Grandmother was the one who began taking me to church, but it was not an easy thing for her to do. She met resistance. I can remember my grandmother asking my mom on many different occasions to be allowed to take me and my siblings to church. My Mom always had a reason why we could not go; it was Easter and everyone would think we were going just because it was Easter; it was Christmas and she didn't want us to go just because it was Christmas and the reason used most often... just plain "No." But, my Grandmother was persistent and one day when I was nine years old, my Mom allowed my Grandmother to take us to church.

I was the kid who went to church and heard the stories in Sunday School about Noah, Jonah, and Daniel and I thought they were just that...stories. I did not realize they were real people. I also remember being embarrassed because all the other kids seemed to know the stories. They knew how to pray and they knew who Jesus was but I didn't.

My Grandmother influenced me. When I was in 3rd grade, my Dad got hurt and had to go to the hospital in another state and my Mom had to go back to work. So, my Grandmother came to live with us. I heard her pray at night and I can also remember my Grandmother talking about there being "two in the field and one was taken, but the other was left." She also said that "two were in the bed and one would be taken but the other one would be left." It scared me. Now, at this time, my sister and I shared a room and a bed. Being 9 years old, I must confess, I hoped if we were in the bed and one was taken, it would be me.

Even though I was a little kid, the influence of my Grandmother, sitting under the Word in "big church," and going to Sunday School changed me. I understood that I was a sinner and that Jesus had died to save me. So, my little girl heart was changed when I was ten and I accepted the Lord as my personal Lord and Savior. When I was 12 years old, I was given my very first Bible! My other grandmother, who had 18 children, gave each grandchild a Family Bible when they had their 12th birthday. So, my first Bible was a big, white Family Bible which I kept out on my desk in my bedroom.

My birthday is in March and sometime later that year I stopped going to church. I was part of the Youth Group at church. Some of the kids in the Youth Group hurt my feelings so I decided I would not go back to church. I don't remember what happened, but to a 12-year-old it was important. Anyway, I stopped going to church. I stayed out of church for 2 years. During that time, no one from the church contacted me and asked me to come back. No adult came by the house. No child from my youth group asked me to go back. No one at church seemed to be concerned that this 12-year-old girl no longer attended.

We need to tell people, even children, that we miss them when they are not in church. Ask God to make you aware when people are not there and to give you a burden for them. Be careful not to let someone fall through the cracks. You may be the instrument that is used to get someone back into church.

I had dropped out of church and no one invited me back. But God... God had not forgotten me. It makes me teary every time I think about this truth. During this time, when "no one with skin on" seemed to care; God wooed me. I would ride my bicycle on the empty dirt roads around our house and have the thought, "you need to get back into church." In the evening, I would go upstairs to bed and I would feel an urge to read my Bible. Remember, my Bible was a very large Family Bible that I kept on my desk. I would get that big Bible and sit on my bed and begin to read.

How do you read a book? You begin reading a book at the beginning. I had no clue that the Bible was different. I would start at the beginning. Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." I would do OK until I got to "the begats." Oh, I would read some of the begats, but I did not



understand all the strange names or why they were listed and there seemed to be so many of them. So, I would get hung up and frustrated. I would stop reading until a few days later when the Lord would gently call me back to His Word and I would begin again to read. I would start reading again at Genesis 1:1. I can't tell you how many times I read "the begats."

Even though "the begats" seemed boring and hard to understand, God placed them in Scripture and reading them taught me something. I did not get it immediately, but as I got older, I did. Reading "the begats" taught me that God can use anyone, including me and including you, to be a part of His plan; His ministry. See, in those names, is the lineage of Christ. God used Rahab, the harlot, and other unlikely people in His lineage. God uses unlikely people today to do amazing things.

Over the next two years I continued to feel the draw to go back to church. When I was 14 I finally asked my Mom if I could go back to church. After some persuading, she said I could go. Occasionally, my Dad would drive me to church and drop me off. Many times, I had to walk about one quarter mile on a dirt road to catch a ride with my Uncle. When I walked back into church I felt the Lord's tender embrace and knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was where I should be. It was an added benefit that Bruce Cannon was there. He seemed to be interested in me and I was interested in him. He has now been my husband for almost 39 years.

More importantly, my Jesus was there as well. I began to grow in the Lord and I wanted to grow in Christ. The Lord has never left me in all the years that have followed. He continues to tenderly embrace me and woo me to Himself. I can never thank Him enough for His wonderful love and mercy.

Wendy Cannon serves with her husband, Rev. Bruce Cannon, at Bear Creek Baptist Church. She states, "I love western North Carolina and am so happy the Lord is letting us serve Him here in this very beautiful part of the State."



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

Many of us remember that just a few short years ago, North Carolina was burdened with the highest taxes in the Southeast and one of the worst tax climates in the nation. But over the past six years, Republican state leaders have implemented major and nationally recognized tax cuts and tax reforms. Now, North Carolina businesses and citizens pay billions of dollars less in taxes. Our state boasts the best tax climate in the region and the 11th best nationally.

I was pleased to co-sponsor legislation that would empower voters to keep income taxes low by amending the North Carolina Constitution. If the bill becomes law, voters will consider a constitutional amendment on the November, 2018 ballot to lower the maximum personal income tax rate in North Carolina from 10 percent to 5.5 percent. The amendment does not limit the growth of state government spending based on changes in population and inflation – a provision erroneously described by critics as TABOR.

Since Republican tax cuts have helped create hundreds of thousands of North Carolina jobs and a half-billion dollar budget surplus, and since Gov. Roy Cooper has said he does not want to raise taxes, we hope he will enthusiastically support this constitutional amendment.

I am a primary sponsor of Senate Bill – 73 Modernize Nursing Practice Act. A major challenge facing health care consumers today is access to quality care, particularly in rural areas of our state where long commutes for medical treatment are often necessary. This legislation will address that concern by expanding the role of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) by allowing them to diagnose and prescribe treatment without the supervision of a licensed physician. If passed, this legislation would improve access to quality health care in our state while containing costs for taxpayers, employers, and patients.

Another bill, which I co-sponsored, is Senate Bill 24 – Allow Restaurants to Use Outdoor Grills. This bill would allow restaurants to use outdoor grills to prepare food while also protecting the safety of the consumer. Specific safety criteria must be met by the restaurant in order to lawfully use an outdoor grill for food preparation: the grill must be made of stainless steel, have a semi-permanent cover, and be cleaned daily. All food must be processed within a sanitary kitchen or indoor preparation facility. This bill will expand the capabilities of small business while also protecting the health of the customer.

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

NC House District 86



Rep. Hugh Blackwell
919-733-5805
Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net

In Proverbs 21:20, the Bible says *"In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has."* I am inclined to the view that this is wisdom North Carolina's state government would be smart to heed. After a period of poorly controlled state spending with little regard for future economic downturns or emergencies, voters chose a new legislative majority that began in 2011 to make great strides to get the state's finances in order. As a result of both tax cuts and other sound financial moves, by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2017 we anticipate having an additional \$552.5 million in collected revenues beyond what was expected. The state's recently delivered Consensus Forecast anticipates revenues will increase over the next two years by substantially more than a billion dollars. That same forecast predicts gains in North Carolina's employment, wage increases, and, therefore, household income. If the General Fund Consensus Forecast is correct, we could perhaps see 100,000 new jobs in 2017.

We can, I believe, credit these improvements in our state's economy to the wise decisions made and implemented since 2011. The significant additions made to our state's "nest egg" or "rainy day fund" has not hampered funding critical needs in areas such as education, transportation and paying off a sizeable \$2.5 billion debt run up to the federal government prior to 2011 for borrowed unemployment benefits that our state's employers had to pay off. We are not resting on our laurels. Despite criticism of our savings from Gov. Cooper, my fellow legislators and I will continue to take a judicious approach to spending. We will reduce waste wherever we can. We will maintain our commitments to North Carolina's students and teachers. We will continue our policies to grow our economy with regulatory reforms and favorable tax and spending policies.



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.



NC House District 118



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

A consensus forecast between the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division and the Office of State Budget and Management predicts North Carolina's 2016-17 tax collections will be \$552 million more than forecast.

North Carolina is one of only four states running such a large budget surplus. Many states across the nation are struggling due to fiscal mismanagement and inflexible economies with entrenched special interests. Meanwhile, we're expected to outpace budget projections and run a surplus once again.

The predicted surplus is "the result of stronger-than-expected wage growth, increasing both Personal Income tax and Sales tax collections," according to the revenue report. Our state continues to solidify itself as one of the fastest growing, most vibrant and most agile economies in the nation.

The speed and agility by which our state's economy continues to grow is only possible because of the tax cuts and regulatory reform put in place in the past few years. We're allowing businesses to grow the economy by removing the shackles placed on markets over decades of useless regulatory overreach.

By focusing on what matters and cutting spending in places where state government never should have been in the first place, surpluses in the past few years have allowed us to fund priorities that matter. For example:

- Teachers are making more than they ever have in North Carolina – even when accounting for inflation – by a wide margin.
- Overall education spending is greater than it has ever been in North Carolina – again, even when accounting for inflation.
- State employees have received raises, as have state retirees.
- Our state has well in excess of \$1 billion in savings, which allowed us to easily cover damage from Hurricane Matthew and wildfires around my district last year.

North Carolina is thriving. People are coming to our state from across the country – they're building families, homes and peaceful and prosperous lives for themselves.

I'm sure we'll hear nothing but doom and gloom from the media, the handful of protesters they'll cover extensively a select few others who refuse to examine the facts. It's hard to argue with numbers, though, and data show our state is performing among the best in the United States.

NC House District 85



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

I try to find common ground on every issue that I can. That is my style and that is the way I like to work. However, there are some things that are sacrosanct and without compromise. A few of those issues are; 2 Amendment rights, Pro-Life, Marriage. Another issue that I don't work on at the state level that much but is just as important, is our countries unapologetic support for Israel.

That is why I cosponsored House Bill 161, short title for the bill is: AN ACT REQUIRING STATE DIVESTMENT FROM, AND PROHIBITING STATE AGENCIES FROM CONTRACTING WITH, COMPANIES THAT BOYCOTT ISRAEL. The bill basically requires the North Carolina State Treasurer and other state agency's to divest of any investments from company's or entities that are engaged in a boycott of the State of Israel.

I am strongly in favor of this bill. Israel has been a staunch ally of the United States and a beacon for freedom in the Middle East for over 60 years. That relationship is essential to the security and peace of the United States.

HB 161 goes on to say: Whereas, it is the public policy of the United States, as enshrined in several federal acts, to oppose boycotts against Israel, and Congress has concluded as a matter of national trade policy that cooperation with Israel materially benefits United States companies and improves American competitiveness; and Whereas, Israel in particular is known for its dynamic and innovative approach in many business sectors, and, therefore, a company's decision to discriminate against Israel, Israeli entities, or entities that do business with or in Israel is an unsound business practice making such a company an unduly risky contracting partner or vehicle for investment; and

Whereas, North Carolina seeks to act to implement Congress's announced policy of "examining a company's promotion or compliance with unsanctioned boycotts, divestment from, or sanctions against Israel as part of its consideration in awarding grants and contracts and supports the divestment of State assets from companies that support or promote actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel"

It is critical for the United States and for North Carolina to stand strong with Israel and do whatever it takes to make sure this relationship endures for generations to come.



Love the Bus

By David Burleson
Avery County



Avery County is one of the most beautiful places on earth and has some of the most spectacular views a person will find anywhere. With the beauty of our area comes some of the most dangerous roads in our state. The 2,300 miles our buses travel each day create a challenge for any driver in any type vehicle, especially a school bus. Thankfully we have some of the most competent bus drivers in the country.

To honor bus drivers, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has designated the month of February as "Love the Bus" month to express our sincere appreciation to our drivers. According to the American School Bus Council (ASBC) national school buses carry approximately 26 million children safely to and from schools



each day. Avery County Schools travels 2,303 miles daily, and transports 1,120 students served by 30 buses and 30 drivers. Transporting students involves teamwork and effort as we strive for efficiency and safety.

In North Carolina, over 700,000 public school students ride in 14,000 yellow buses each day. NCDPI School Support Division Director Ben Matthews said the benefits of school bus transportation are not

limited to safety. As more students take the school bus to school, the environmental impacts are significant. "Traffic congestion and pollution can be reduced around schools, not to mention the fuel savings for family cars. In this economy, lots of families are looking for ways to trim their fuel budgets," Matthews said. Here are some more facts about school buses and some safety tips:

Fact Sheet: School Bus Safety

- The National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other authorities agree that school buses are the safest form of transportation for getting children to and from school.
- Some 480,000 school buses carry 26 million children — more than half of America's schoolchildren.
- Students are about 50 times more likely to arrive at school alive if they take the bus than if they drive themselves or ride with friends. Students are much safer riding the bus than being driven by a parent, and are about 20 times more likely to arrive to school alive if they take the bus than if a parent drives them.
- School buses decrease our dependence on foreign oil through an annual savings of 2.3 billion gallons of fuel.
- A 20-mile round-trip school commute saves an approximate \$420 annually for each student who rides the bus and an approximate \$10.9 billion nationwide.
- Large school buses are heavier and distribute crash forces differently than do passenger cars and light trucks. Because of these differences, the crash forces experienced by occupants of buses are much less than that experienced by occupants of passenger cars, light trucks or vans.
- Safety features including the color and size of school buses, height, reinforced sides, flashing red lights, cross view mirrors, and crossing and stop sign arms ensure children are protected and secure on and off the bus.
- School bus drivers are highly trained professionals in student behavior management, loading and unloading, security and emergency medical procedures.
- Drivers participate in pre-employment and random drug/alcohol testing, as well as frequent driving record checks, and submit to background checks and periodic medical exams to keep their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a School Bus Endorsement.
- The school bus industry operates by a set of safety, security, health and driver qualification guidelines that meet, and in some cases exceed, federal and state laws, and ensure that school buses are the safest mode of transportation for our nation's schoolchildren.

Safety tips for students:

- Be alert to traffic. Check traffic both ways before exiting the bus.
- Make eye contact with the bus driver; wait for his/her signal before crossing the street.
- Walk in front of the bus; never walk behind the bus to cross the street.
- While waiting for the bus, stay in a safe place away from the street.
- Before leaving the sidewalk, look for the flashing red lights.
- Never go near or under the bus to retrieve something you've dropped.

Safety tips for parents:

- Review the safety tips with your child regularly.
- Get to know the parents of other riders as well as student riders with your child.
- Team up with other parents to get involved and monitor bus stops and bus routes.

Voice concerns immediately to your school district.

- Attend "back to school" nights and tour your child's school bus.
- Get to know your school's transportation coordinator and your child's bus driver.
- Keep phone numbers handy in case the bus is delayed or in the event of an emergency.

Please join me in the campaign to thank our drivers and transportation department for their dedication and diligent work. On behalf of Avery County Schools, "Thank you, Bus Drivers, Brian King-Director of ACS Transportation, Linda King-Transportation Information Management Specialist and our Transportation Mechanics for ensuring that our students are safe and cared for as they travel on our buses. We truly appreciate you!"

David Burleson is Superintendent of the Avery County Schools

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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.

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



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Consider becoming a Hospice volunteer. Your presence will be a blessing and you will be blessed. For more information contact Kathy Honeycutt at (828)-765-5677



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Plow Sow Reap

By Allan Buchanan

Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. Job 4:8 (KJV)

Webster's definition of iniquity is "a gross injustice, wickedness, a wicked act or thing, sin." Therefore, I take this to say that a person who "plows wickedness or sows wickedness will reap wickedness. The same could also be said about a good person with good intentions. One who plows good and then sows good will reap good.

It's no secret our days are getting longer and warmer. Spring is around the corner. Many of you will be making plans for a garden. Your plans must include turning over the soil to prepare a seedbed. You must plow the land. Once that's done you will take the seeds of your favorite vegetables and sow them. God provides the sun and rain that's needed for the seeds to burst forth underground and push up through the top soil. You will work to keep weeds from choking the growth. You may need to guard the plants from animals which would feed off them. At the end of the season, when the plants have reached their full development, it will be time for you to reap the benefits of your work.

I believe God places his children where their life and their testimony can plow, sow and reap souls for His kingdom. It's my desire that everyone believe on Jesus at an early age so they will have a lifetime to work for Him.

Bible Drill represents an excellent way to plow, sow and reap. It helps children and youth increase their knowledge, memorization and application of Scripture. When thinking about Children's Bible Drill (Grades 3-6), I immediately think of Martha Burleson. For nearly 50 years, she has worked with many young lives helping them hide God's Word in their heart. They can recall these Scriptures at any time throughout their life to fight off Satan.

Twenty-five years ago, Sherri Buchanan joined Martha at Bear Creek working with the children. Sherri's heart's desire is to reach people for Christ and Bible Drill is her favorite way to do so. After she worked alongside Martha for one year, Martha went to Ledger Baptist Church and began a Children's Bible Drill Ministry there. After a few years there, she returned to Bear Creek and started the Wee Drillers (Ages 4 years to Grade 2). Bible Drill is a family affair for Martha as well. Her oldest son, Ronnie and his wife, Rhonda worked with the Youth Bible Drill (Grades 7-9) for twenty years. They also worked with High School Drill and Speaker's Tournament (Grades 10-12). Martha's daughter, Marsha Letterman, has assisted Sherri for 7 years as well. Britney Carver and her mother, Sheila Speight, became leaders after Ronnie and Rhonda passed the Youth Bible Drill on in 2016. One driller, Jessica Pitman (Biddix), also helped Sherri after finishing the high school drills. Martha told me that long before she got involved, the late Vessie Willis and Reba Willis started the legacy of Children's Bible Drill at Bear Creek Baptist Church. Jerry Duncan remembers Virginia (Sis) Ferguson working with him as a boy in Bible Drill.

Each driller needs to know 25 verses, 10 key passages and all the books of the Bible. Today, Sherri is getting the children ready for competition drills that begin in March. 3rd graders only compete at Church Drill; 4th - 6th graders compete at Associational Drills and these winners go on to compete at Regional (State) Drills in April. Each driller is allowed 12 mistakes at Church Drills, 8 at Association Drills and 4 at Regional Drills. All Children Drillers that compete for 3 years are recognized by the Association. Then, if they continue on in Youth Drills for 3 more years, they are once again recognized for 6 outstanding years by the Association and are given a gift.

I don't remember having these drills when I was a boy. Watching these children through the years makes me very proud of each one. They wouldn't be nearly as successful in Bible Drills without the support of parents and grandparents. Just think, God's Word is stored away in their memories for ever. Nothing and no one can take it from them. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119:11 KJV

With Jesus' return heavily on our minds, it would be good for all of us to encourage more children to participate in Bible Drills. No electronic gadget or sport should take the place of time spent learning God's Word.

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



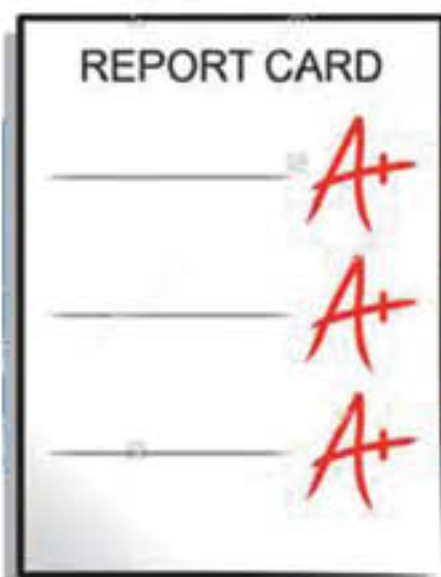
Bible drill winners at Bear Creek

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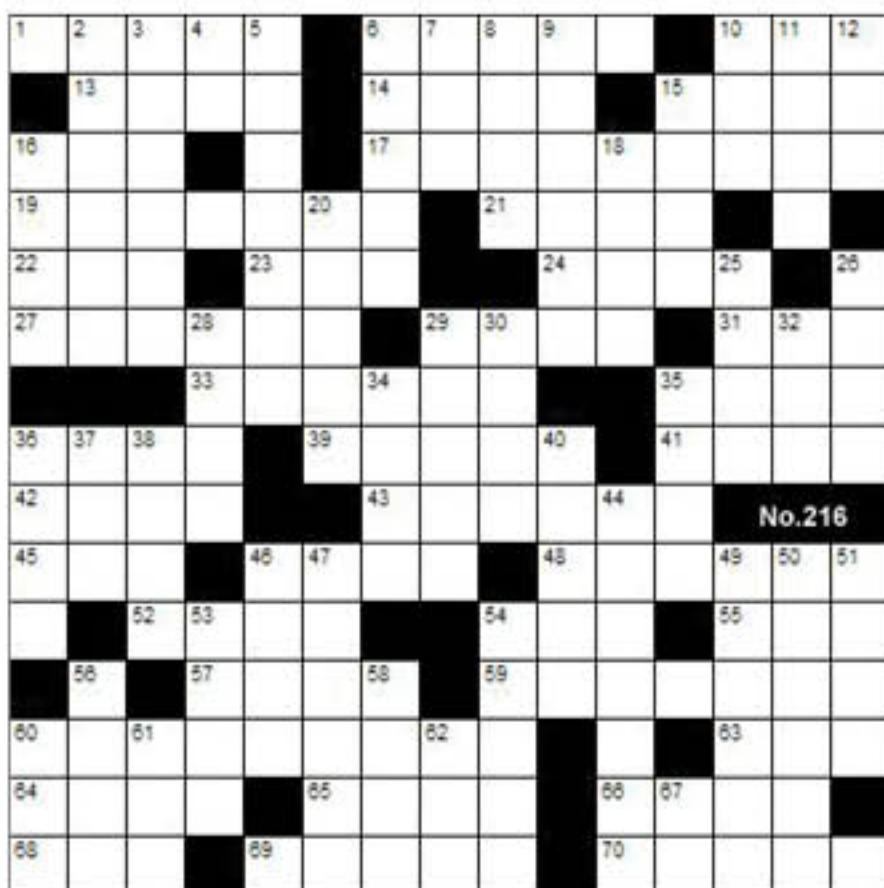
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Crossword

ACROSS

1 we found out that the island was called ____ (Acts 28:1)
 6 your heart will ____ and swell with joy (Isa 60:5)
 10 The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in ____ eyes (Matt 21:42)
 13 on your way in safety, and your ____ will not stumble (Prov 3:23)
 14 No one knows about that day or ____ (Matt 24:36)
 15 in the earth in those days; and ____ after that (Gen 6:4)
 16 Eat not of it ____, nor sodden at all with water (Exodus 12:9)
 17 Some of the teachers of the law ____, "Well said, teacher!" (Luke 20:39)
 19 Raise, lift (Heb 11:19)
 21 Sharper ____ any double-edged sword (Heb 4:12)
 22 low tech form of Old Testament transportation
 23 Both ____ and high, rich and poor, together (Ps. 49:2)
 24 ____ and Dumah, and Eshean (Joshua 15:52)
 27 they did not think it worthwhile to ____ the knowledge of God (Rom 1:28)
 29 a net by the wayside; they have set ____ for me (Ps 140:5) KJV
 31 "I don't know," he replied. " ____ my brother's keeper?" (2,1) (Gen 4:9)
 33 much less man, who is but a ____ (Job 25:6)
 35 there before me was ____ with two horns (1,3) (Dan 8:3)
 36 by him we cry, ____, Father (Rom 8:15)
 39 One who is ____ in his work is brother to one who destroys (Prov 18:9)
 41 under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and ____ (Job 40:21) (KJV)
 42 Surely there is a ____ for the silver (Job 28:1)
 43 They neither worship the LORD nor ____ to the decrees (2 Kings 17:34)
 45 No ____ sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old (Matt 9:16)
 46 a quarter of a cab of seed ____ for five shekels (2 Kings 6:25)
 48 ____ of the teachers of the law (Luke 20:46)
 52 small is the gate and narrow the ____ that leads to life (Matt 7:14)
 54 and a quarter of a ____ of seed pods for five shekels (2 Ki 6:25)
 55 or goat hair, ram skins dyed ____ (Exod 35:23)
 57 By the sweat of your ____ you will eat your food (Gen 3:19)
 59 guards his own house, his possessions ____ (3,4) (Luke 1:21)
 60 the Babylonians, that ruthless and ____ people (Hab 1:6)
 63 on wings like eagles; they will ____ and not grow weary (Isa 40:31)
 64 Some people are like ____ along the path (Mark 4:15)
 65 and drink with him after he ____ from the dead (Acts 10:41)
 66 and wore a ____ of scale armor (1 Sam 17:5)

68 picnic pest (Prov 6:6)
 69 Now shall the ____ tremble in the day of thy fall (Ezek 26:18) KJV
 70 But ____ I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee (Matt 26:32)
 DOWN
 2 ____ witness who pours out lies (1,5) (Prov 6:19)
 3 But when you are invited, take the ____ place (Luke 14:10)
 4 when you give ____ the needy, do not announce it with trumpets (Matt 6:2)
 5 From ____ they sailed back to Antioch (Acts 14:26)
 6 Each one ____ down his staff and it became a snake (Ex 7:12)
 7 As for all the hills once cultivated by the ____ (Isaiah 7:25)
 8 where moth and ____ destroy, and where thieves break (Matt 6:19)
 9 Do not take advantage of a widow or an ____ (Ex 22:22)
 10 no one pours new wine into ____ wineskins (Mark 2:22)
 11 with their tongues they have ____ deceit (Romans 3:13)
 12 A fool's talk brings a ____ to his back (Prov 14:3)
 15 a prophetess, ____, the daughter of Phineas (Luke 2:36)
 16 they were being attacked at both front and ____ (2 Chr 13:14)
 18 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine ____ (Ezek 27:6) KJV
 20 which he had taken with ____ from the altar (Isa 6:6)
 25 he tore the lion apart with his ____ hands (Judg 14:12)
 26 the axles, ____, spokes and hubs were all of cast metal (1 Kings 7:33)
 28 there came ____ of God unto Eli (1,3) (1 Sam 2:27)
 29 for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing ____ (1 Sam 13:21)
 30 On the seventh day the priest is to examine the ____ (Lev 13:34)
 32 The LORD God took the ____ and put him in the Garden (Gen 2:15)
 34 I will be ____ and rejoice in you (Ps 9:2)
 35 the cloud was over the tabernacle only ____ days (1,3) (Num 9:20)
 36 And Israel vowed ____ unto the LORD (1,3) (Num 21:2)
 37 youngest son of Jacob (nickname) (Gen.35:18)
 38 King David himself walked behind the ____ (2 Sam 3:31-32)
 40 I was among the exiles by the ____ River (Ezek 1:1)
 44 wife of Isaac (Rom 9:10) KJV
 46 the tongue is a small ____ of the body (James 3:5)
 47 golden vials full of ____, which are the prayers of saints (Rev 5:8) KJV
 49 The ark came to rest on the mountains of ____ (Gen 8:5)



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50 and you will ____ every tongue that accuses you (Isa 54:17)
 51 a river went out of ____ to water the garden (Gen 2:10)
 53 And ____ begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David (Ruth 4:22)
 54 and to decide all ____ of dispute and assault (Deut 21:5)
 56 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. ____ (Phil 4:20)
 58 His head and hair were white like ____, as white as snow (Rev 1:14)
 60 For the LORD your God ____ consuming fire (2.1) (Deut 4:24)
 61 Can you make a ____ of him like a bird (Job 41:5)
 62 Of what ____ is money in the hand of a fool (Prov 17:16)
 67 in the image ____ God he created him (Gen 1:27)

Solution on page 14



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Mitchell County Chamber-- The Market on Oak

Launch of New Book

By Patti Jensen

Spruce Pine, N.C. Western North Carolina author Janie DeVos will launch her newest release "The Art of Breathing" on March 11, 2017 from 11 am-1 pm at The Market on Oak store in downtown Spruce Pine. Mrs. DeVos will discuss her new release and sign books for those in attendance.

"From author Janie DeVos comes a poignant and richly detailed novel set in the 1950s in North Carolina, where one young woman struggles to save her own life—and finds the strength to truly live it."—NetGalley

When Kathryn Cavanaugh steps over the threshold of the Pelham Sanatorium in 1954, she has no idea when, or if, she will ever leave it again. Despite the rise of promising new treatments, Tuberculosis is still feared and often fatal. But twenty-four-year-old Kate has proven her resilience before, leaving her Blue Ridge Mountain home for a very different life in the city with her ambitious attorney husband, Geoffrey. For the sake of her family, especially her young son, she's determined to get healthy again.

The sanatorium is a strange battlefield, with every patient fighting for survival amidst a numbing routine of tests, treatment, and enforced rest. Kate quickly finds camaraderie among the women on her ward—and a growing kinship with fellow patient Philip McAllister. As weeks pass, the hospital's confines come to offer more independence than Geoffrey's preoccupation with status ever allowed. And with this surprising new discovery comes the courage to contemplate the choices she has made—and, perhaps, the chance to breathe freely at last...

DeVos began her freelance writing company, Rainy Day Creations, in 2000, and began composing verses for several greeting card companies. Then, *How High Can You Fly?* DeVos' first hardcover picture book published through River Road Press, made its debut in 2001. In 2003, Ms. DeVos' second hardcover picture book, *The Path Winds Home*, was released.

Both books grabbed the attention of a New York publisher, East End Publishing, and in 2007, Ms. DeVos' third book, *Barthello's Wing*, made its debut. Scholastic Books was interested in including *Barthello's Wing* in their North American school book fairs, and asked that it be produced in soft-cover. It was, and to date it has sold over 90,000 copies. In the spring of 2012, DeVos once again teamed up with seasoned publisher Pat Avery to release her latest children's book, *The Shopkeeper's Bear*. It was released in November of that year, and has become a fan favorite.

In 2015, DeVos' first adult novel found a home with prestigious Kensington Publishing. *Beneath a Thousand Apple Trees* was released in the fall of 2016, and its sequel, *The Art of Breathing*, will be released in February, 2017. Recently, Kensington signed DeVos to a three-book series about old Florida, beginning in the 1870's. The first book in the *Glory Land* series is set to be released in December, 2017, with the second and third books planned for publication in 2018.

The Market on Oak is located at 262 Oak Avenue, Spruce Pine, NC. For more information call 828-765-0571.

About The Market on Oak

The Market on Oak is a vibrant lifestyle destination where North Carolina craft people, farmers, musicians and authors from Western North Carolina sell and share their work. The shop speaks to the unique cultural values and way of life in the western North Carolina Mountains.

Our non-profit mission is to provide the gifted, vibrant people of our region—a way to supplement their income doing what they love and what they know best. We want to be a place where you can come in the store, shop, smile and laugh and learn about our culture. Then we want you to take a piece of "our way of life" home with you.

Patti Jensen is Interim Director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce.



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By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County

Another hot summer day was emerging. My husband, Ken had gone out to mow the lawn in the early morning 'coolness.' Sometime later, I realized the mower wasn't disrupting the morning quiet anymore. I stepped out in the backyard and watched as he patiently persevered unwinding a clinging vine that had wrapped itself around our split leaf philodendron.

Those plants have broad stems and I've never seen vines encroach them. It finally gave way with his careful, persistent unwinding, snipping and pulling. At last, the philodendron was released from the grasp of the vine.

And, that was a good thing as the vine would have eventually taken over and choked out the life of the plant.

Have you ever experienced being that philodendron? Another person seems to think you are their source and they drain the very energy from you, depleting you whenever you're in their presence. It's an unhealthy situation needing to be remedied by gentle, but persistent untangling that leads to release.

However, there is a clinging that should take place spiritually which is actually welcomed and encouraged.

Anyone who has ever been in God's waiting room knows how difficult it is to wait. And yet we are encouraged in passages in the Bible to do just that.

For example, one of my favorite passages is Psalm 27: 14 NKJV where it says, *"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."*

This is not inactive waiting. We don't sit back in our lazy chair and do nothing. We get to work with whatever it is God has placed in our hands to do... right where we are...as we wait for him to move. And in our 'good courage' God strengthens us, preparing us for his answer.

I recently heard a delightful and meaningful expression of the word 'wait' as we see it in the Bible. It means that we are to cling, to actually wrap ourselves around the Lord. Being a clinging vine with the Lord shows our willing dependence on his sovereignty, wisdom and his heart of love for us. We can never cleave too tightly to the One who cherishes our devotion and trust.

In fact our close embrace achieved through prayer, Bible reading, teaching, praise and thanksgiving helps God's character to rub off on us. It's like the clinging grape vines firmly wrapped around the support holding them up as they produce beautiful, nutritious fruit.

Let's be the right kind of clinging vine. Selah

Sowing Seeds Of Righteousness

*In the darkness of the earth,
warm soil cradles newly sown, unimpressionable seeds.
Sun and rain call forth life as the seeds become trees, vines, and plants.
Suddenly, yellow, red, and purple emerge in the form of fruitfulness.
We are cradled in sin's darkness until... the Master calls forth new life in us.
We become the colorful, fruitful bearers of His name sowing seeds of righteousness.*

*"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower...
Multiply the seed you have sown
And increase the fruits of your righteousness.
2 Corinthians 9:10*



Yours for the picking

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.

No Regrets Family--
Bearing Precious Seed

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:6

Psalm 126 is a song of degrees or ascents. The Hebrew word means to go up or ascend. Fifteen Psalms bear this subtitle. (Psalms 120-134) They may have been pilgrim songs sung by those going up to Jerusalem to worship. Psalm 126 may have been sung by captives returning to Jerusalem. They were very happy to be going home. Our Christian Hymn Bringing in the Sheaves is based on this Psalm.

I see a person whose only hope is in the bag of seed they are carrying. Seed is a lifeline for these people; if they had no seed, then they had no crops. If they had no crops, then they had no food. The time honored translation is "precious seed". The person that goes forth, he has to go. He cannot stay where he is. In other words it is imperative that he go. If he does not go the seed will not get planted, and there will be no food for next year. The seed is preserved from last year, or it has been purchased, but none the less it is a bag of precious seed, and in this seed does he hope for a harvest.



I want you to think about this seed for just a moment. John 12:24 says unless a seed falls into the ground and die, but if it die, it brings forth a lot of fruit. A seed in itself is not viable, in other words it is not capable of living, but when it is placed in the right conditions in the ground a miracle takes place. That seed will produce life when it is placed in the right soil, with the right temperature and nutrients, with proper amounts of water. That seed germinates and brings forth life. And from that one seed a lot of food is produced. Jesus Christ is the seed of life. From that one life yet being dead placed in the right conditions in a tomb, and life from the quickening Spirit of God, brought forth life in the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. And from the resurrected Savior many people have life. For when the seed of the Gospel is planted in the right conditions in the heart a miracle takes place and a heart that was given over to death brings forth life.

That is what this verse is all about. This person has to carry the seed, he feels the weight of the seed bag as he carries it. He has the burden of carrying the seed and sowing it in the ground. We must remember he has to lose the seed before he can gain. He has to trust the Lord for the harvest. His burden is not that he has to carry the bag of seed or labor to put it in the ground. He is not weeping over the work he has to do, but he is weeping over the hope in what the seed will produce. This requires faith and a trust in God. I see a beautiful picture here of a man or of a woman planting this seed and crying out to God "O God bless us once again; bless us with a harvest. As he weeps his tears water the seed. What does God notice? God notices the heart; God hears the weeping over what is hoped, that will come forth from the seed. This is not about a farmer that has a good harvest; this is about the people of God rejoicing over sinners being saved.

Because he has put his faith and trust in the Lord he comes home with shouts of joy bringing his harvest with him. God has rewarded his faithfulness.

May I add here the "American Dream" is a bunch of bologna. May I explain that the Christian has been deceived to pursue something that is foreign to a disciple of Christ and scripture? Our number one pursuit as a child of God is to "sow in tears" weeping for the lost and praying for their salvation. Would you consider that one cannot "grow until they go", cannot "gain until you lose", and expect where you have sown bountifully to reap bountifully. (2 Cor.9:6)

May the Word of Lord rest in your heart and let us stand before Him one day with "No Regrets".

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



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Going Home

Cindy Mercer
Burke County

Some time ago I read an interesting analogy; a human being steps off a mountain and goes down. The Son of God steps off a mountain and goes up. We are then reminded that the Creator is not bound by the laws of His creation. He is going home. Soon He is out of sight of earth and in sight of heaven. As He ascends still higher, He is met by tens of thousands of angelic beings. The Bible actually records the chorus the heavenly choir sang as they greeted their returning Lord. David pictures the scene in Psalm 21.

The angels divide into two groups. One group sings the melody, asking a question, and the other sings a harmonious response. The combined voices of countless angels reverberate throughout all heaven: "Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in" (verse 7).

Listen as one group of angels asks in song, "Who is this King of glory?" And another group responds, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (verse 8). They do not ask "Who is this King of glory?" because they don't know. They want to sing praises to His name. The joyous song echoes and reechoes through the chambers of heaven.

The gates of heaven swing open. Surrounded by the rapturous singing of tens of thousands of adoring angels, Jesus Christ enters into the glorious splendor of heaven. His Father stands before Him with arms wide open. In that magnificent moment, Father and Son are reunited. As they approach one another, in the ecstasy of eternity, a hush falls over heaven. Seraphim and cherubim are silent. The angels prepare to lift their voices again in a rapturous song of praise. But Jesus raises His hands and waves them back. He stands silent before His Father for a moment.

Jesus stands and lifts His nail-scarred hands and says, "Father, I want those whom You have given Me to be with Me where I am. I cannot accept Your warm embrace or the praise of the angels until I know that because of Calvary's cross, because of My sacrifice, My followers on earth will be here with Me someday." The Father replies, "Son, the sacrifice is accepted."

The angels sing anew: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5:12).

If Jesus would not accept His Father's embrace until He knew that I could be there, if He loves me that much, I want to be there! I don't want to miss the glorious reunion Jesus is longing for.

Is this the burning desire of your heart too? Do we really long to be there?

As you are out in the harvest fields plowing and sowing seeds, it may seem that the ground is hard and difficult to penetrate. But we have a faithful work to do... we must keep our hands on the gospel plow and lift high the blood stained banner! Jesus is coming again and the reaping will soon begin.

Now is not the time to grow weary and throw in the towel. We must labor in the Vineyard as never before. Precious souls are waiting!

The angels are ready to join their voices in a Hallelujah chorus as we make final preparations for going home.

"While they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Acts 1:9

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



Sustaining Bread

By Lana Ellis
Tennessee

While preparing to write concerning this month's theme "Plow, Sow and Reap", I came upon this quote by Thomas Jefferson that was too good to pass up. He said, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow, and when to reap, we should soon want bread."

Imagine the process that would be required if we depended on the government for our bread. First a congressional committee is formed to discuss and debate the issue. Meanwhile the sitting president appoints a Bread Czar. However, after only a few days the czar has to resign because it has been leaked that he owns stock in Panera Bread. Due to the lack of bread available to the consumer there are violent



protests throughout the country. In an attempt to quiet the chaos the president signs an executive order stating that all bread will be imported from France, ergo French bread. The ink has not dried on the order before a judge declares it discriminates against bakers from other countries and nationalities. Meanwhile there is no bread to be

had. Thank God for farmers across the country who do know when to sow and when to reap. In the right season they get up before daybreak to plow the fields and sow the seeds that will produce wheat that will be ground into flour that will be made into bread that will be consumed by the likes of you and me.

Throughout the world bread is considered a sustainer of life and God provides our daily bread by way of the farmer. The human soul is also in need of sustaining bread and God provided bread for the soul by way of Jesus. The bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world. (John 6: 33) Those of us who have partaken of that bread were once described by Isaiah as sheep who have gone astray and turned to our way. There are many more "gone astray sheep" among us. They are our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers. Jesus says to us, "I am the Bread of Life. If you love me you will feed the sustaining bread to my sheep."



US Congress

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

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C & G Nursery Awarded

NCNLA Grower Of The Year

By Gwen Clark
Avery County



The North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association (NCNLA) selected C & G Nursery, Inc., of Newland, NC, as the 2016 Grower of the Year at the annual NCNLA Green & Growing Show in held Greensboro, NC on January 16-20, 2017. This is the highest honor a Nursery / Landscape business can be awarded in the State of North Carolina by the NCNLA.

The NCNLA works to promote nursery and landscape business, train and educate nurserymen, and to promote the cutting edge technology in the industry. The North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association is a 501 (c)5 non-profit membership organization of firms interested in the welfare of North Carolina's green industry, with emphasis on the nursery and landscape industry.

NCNLA's vertically integrated membership includes growers, landscape firms and retail garden centers. Additionally, NCNLA has membership categories for industry suppliers, horticulture students and educators. NCNLA's purpose is to be a flexible, knowledgeable, responsive, environmentally conscious organization providing the nursery and landscape industries with leadership, technological and business advancement opportunities, and information services.

NCNLA's ultimate goal is to benefit its member's economic, professional and personal growth.

C & G Nursery is a family owned Nursery operation. Doug and Jane Clark began the business in 1961 growing Christmas trees and native ornamentals. Today, C & G Nursery is a wholesale grower of over 100 different varieties of trees and shrubs as well as still growing the Fraser fir trees and other native ornamental plants. Our (C & G Nursery) Mission is to provide our customers with quality plants/trees at a fair and reasonable price and strive to maintain repeat business instead of a "one time" sale.

Owners Doug and Jane Clark have worked side by side to build the Nursery and establish a trust and quality in the Nursery and its products. Incorporated in 1982, the over 2,000-acre farm is still family owned and operated.

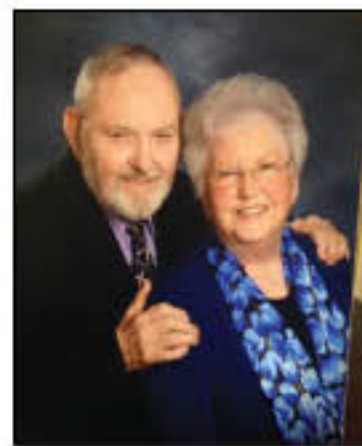
Dee Clark, Missy Clark Isaacs, and Reed Clark, children of Doug and Jane, have followed in the family business. The Clark's have 8 grandchildren (Jared, Carson, John, Alex, Ben, Chris, Jeremiah, and Riley) and all help to work in the Nursery in some capacity.

C & G Nursery employees between 20 to 49 workers throughout the seasons and have Nursery Crops in Avery, Burke, and Caldwell Counties in NC as well as Carter and Johnson Counties in Tennessee. Christmas Corner in Pineola, NC is operated by C & G Nursery during the months of October- December for retail sales of Fraser Fir trees, wreaths, and other seasonal holiday items.

Congratulations to C & G Nursery, Inc. and to Doug and Jane Clark.

For more information about the Nursery check the website at www.candgnursery.com

For more information about the NCNLA check their website at www.ncnla.com



Doug and Jane Clark

For more information about the Nursery check the website at www.candgnursery.com



Grower of the Year Award

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

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Toe River Arts Welcomes Erin Dalton

By Kate Groff, Programs, Marketing/Programs
Yancey County

Burnsville, NC: The Toe River Arts Council is pleased to announce Erin Dalton as their new intern for the Toe River Arts branding initiative. Part of the marketing strategy of Toe River Arts is recognizing Mitchell/Yancey counties as home to hundreds of artists. Erin will be interviewing selected artists, writing articles, taking photographs, and shooting short videos for promotional use of the Toe River Arts in both print and online.

Erin is a recent graduate from UNCA with a double major in Mass Communications and Art History. She worked as an intern at a local Asheville radio station and as an assistant at Adrian Etheridge Photography. Also during her time at UNCA and in addition to her track and field activities, she worked as a media assistant for the Associates Athletics Director. As she says, "I enjoy volunteering, commission work, assisting people, being outdoors, writing, and exploring new ideas and concepts." For the next several months during her internship with TRA,



Erin Dalton

she will get an opportunity to work with all those enjoyments as she meets with some of the talented artists in the area.

Erin was provided a list of visual, literary, and music artists—natives and new to the area, artist couples, those who create outside the box, and those who use the box in their creations. She'll dig a bit deeper to discover why they came; what they found; why they stay; and what the arts mean to them and to the development

of the Mitchell/Yancey county region. After interviewing, photographing and taking an occasional video, Toe River Arts will post the stories she's written on the new website, www.toeriverarts.com, and in local and regional publications.

Toe River Arts is part of the Toe River Arts Council, a non-profit organization founded in 1976 to promote the arts in Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Branding of the Toe River Valley as a cultural designation has been made possible in part with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Community Foundation of WNC, John & Robyn Horn Foundation, and the Samuel L. Phillips Family Foundation. For more information about the Toe River Arts or the Arts Council, please call 828.682.7215.

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



Good Soil-Good Harvest

By Rev. John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

James says something which every Christian Church and every Christian group should have written on its heart This is a highly-compressed sentence. *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* James 3:18 Remember the importance of sowing the Word. Like a story I read, it was in war times while people were fleeing, guns firing and shells bursting, a farmer was seen in his fields, busy sowing seed. How can you keep on working with war raging all around you? he was asked. He replied, "I plough and I sow. If I don't reap the harvest another will. My granary may burn, but grain in the soil will be safe and grow." If we sow the incorruptible seed of God's Word, we may be sure that His promise will be fulfilled: *'My Word shall not return unto me void but shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in that where to I sent it.'* (Isa. 55. 11) The fruit or harvest of righteousness is sown in peace. That is to say, the soil in which spiritual work will come to full fruition is one of true fellowship among Christians where there is no discord or disharmony. Peace is the atmosphere in which we may expect the good seed to ripen. Let us remember that discord always damages God's work. Work that is full of promise can be blighted by quarreling, self-seeking, and self-promotion. It suggests a bountiful harvest, not just a few stalks here and there, with a few ears of corn hanging from them, but a field of grain bent low with the weight of the corn. How few churches experience this kind of harvest, and yet this is what we are meant to have. One of our modern scholars commenting on this says, "The seed which brings the rich harvest can never flourish in any other atmosphere than one of right relationships between Lord and Saviour. The right relationships are the soil in which the reward of righteousness alone can grow." The man who disturbs personal relationships and is responsible for strife and bitterness cuts himself off from the reward which God gives to those who live the Christian life in harmony and fellowship with other believers. Let us remember that peace means right relationships between God and then with man and man. So, then, what James is saying is this, "We are all trying to reap the harvest which a good life brings. But the seeds which bring the rich harvest can never flourish in any atmosphere other than one of right relationships with our Lord and Savior. And the only people who can sow these seeds and reap the reward are those whose life work it has been to produce such right relationships. Nothing good can ever grow in an atmosphere where men are at discord with one another. A group where there is bitterness and strife is a barren soil in which the seeds of righteousness can never grow and out of which no reward can ever come. The man who disturbs personal relationships and is responsible for strife and bitterness has cut himself off from the reward which God gives to those who live his life. What are my motives (13-18)? Is there bitterness in your heart or envy? Are you speaking from God's wisdom or the wisdom of the world? Are you a peacemaker or a troublemaker? If your heart is right before God (Heb. 4:12), He will use your words to produce the right kind of fruit. Each of us by our thoughts, attitudes, and



actions is constantly planting for a future reaping. Time may pass before the crop ripens, but the harvest never fails. The true nature of the seed we have scattered will surely be revealed! Witnessing is the evangelistic harvest that is always urgent. The destiny of men and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear the full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities. Harvest time is associated with many things. 1. Blessing from the Lord. "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness" (Psa_65:11, Psa_65:13). See the "Thou's" of Psalms 65. God's coronation time is the harvest time. 2. Faithfulness of the Lord. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease" (Gen_8:22). He binds Himself in love to bless us in grace. 3. Communion with the Lord. "One soweth, and another reapeth" (Joh_4:37). When we look upon the fields of man's need with the eyes and heart of Christ, we must have fellowship with each other, because we have fellowship with Him. 4. Responsibility to the Lord. In reaping the fields, the poor were to be remembered—Lev_19:9; and the firstfruits were to be given to the Lord—Exo_23:15, Exo_23:19. 5. Remembered by the Lord. The direction about the forgotten sheaf is very suggestive. What we forget is remembered by the Lord. Our loss is another's benefit, and another's benefit is always a benefit to us—Deu_24:19. 6. Joy in the Lord. The harvest is a time of joy. God's bounties are inspirations to praise. His givings cause our rejoicings—Isa_9:3; Psa_136:6. 7. Gathered Before the Lord. *The redeemed who have fallen asleep will be the firstfruits, and the righteous will be gathered in the Lord's garner, but the wicked will be cast out—Mat_13:37-43.*

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

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Accentuate the Positive

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

School public relations professionals across the state were honored Friday, Jan. 27 for the products of their craft during the North Carolina School Public Relations Association's (NCSPPRA) annual Blue Ribbon Awards for Effective Communications celebration at the O. Henry Hotel in Greensboro. Thirty-seven school districts were recognized for outstanding work and received a total of 237 awards in eight categories.

Included in the list of winners is Cheryl M. Shuffler, public relations officer for Burke County Public Schools. Burke County Public Schools received 10 Blue Ribbon awards in six categories.

In addition to Shuffler, Board of Education Members R.L. Icard, Buddy Armour and Seth P. Hunt Jr., Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam and Human Resource Director Sharon Colaw accepted the awards on behalf of the school system.

The story "Icard Elementary Teacher Selected for Engineering Program" won a Gold Award in the Excellence in Writing category and the stories "STEM Rocks" and "East Burke Senior Credited with Saving Life" won Silver Awards in the Excellence in Writing category.

In the Digital Media Engagement category, the district's hashtag: #IgniteLearningBCPS, won a Silver Award and the Facebook photo album "You Wanna Build a Snowman?" won a Bronze Award.

In the Electronic Media category, a 30-second promo video "Igniting Learning" that aired at Morganton's Marquee Cinemas over the summer won a Bronze Award.

In the Marketing category, a year-long focus on employee morale won a Silver Award.

Two photographs, "Maker-space Thinker" and "Class of 2016 Returns to Elementary School" both won Silver Awards.

And in the Publications Category, "Burke County School & Family Magazine" won a Bronze Award.

Dr. Putnam said, "Cheryl Shuffler has emerged as a school public relations professional since joining BCPS in June of 2013. She enjoys writing and reporting all of the great things that take place daily in our schools. Many of publications can be found at local restaurants and the Burke County Chamber of Commerce. By focusing and promoting positive attributes in our community, we hope this will help attract newcomers to our great county and school system."

NCSPPRA President Charlie Glazener, executive director of community relations & communications for Asheville City Schools, said entries of the award winners rivaled the best work of public relations practitioners in any field. "Blue Ribbon Awards are the highest honor in our organization and they validate the superior work done by my colleagues this year," Glazener said. "This roster of excellence is tangible evidence that NCSPPRA's public relations professionals are among the Nation's finest and that they are producing cutting edge communications and products that support their schools and school systems."

Georgia School Public Relations Association Board of Directors judged the entries. Prior to the awards ceremony attendees heard a presentation from Keith Posten, president and executive director of the Public School forum of North Carolina, entitled "Top 10 Education Issues in 2017." W. Jeffrey Booker, Gaston County Schools superintendent and NCSPPRA superintendent liaison, also offered congratulatory remarks during the ceremony on behalf of the state's school superintendents.

NCSPPRA's mission is to build support for public education through well-planned and responsible public relations. For more information visit the NCSPPRA Facebook page or www.ncsppra.org.



Sharon Colaw, BCPS HR director, Charlie Glazener, NCSPPRA president, Cheryl Shuffler, BCPS public relations officer, Buddy Armour, Board of Education member, Dr. Larry Putnam, BCPS superintendent, Chris Fuller, executive director NCSPPRA, R.L. Icard and Seth P. Hunt Jr., BCPS Board of Education members.



Chess Cover

Buffamoyer Named East Burke's New Football Coach

East Burke High School Principal Shane Mace announces Mark Buffamoyer is slated to be the Cavaliers' new head football coach. "Coach Buff," as the players call him, has been an assistant football coach at East Burke for the past eight years. Originally from Greenville, S.C., he has 31 years of education and coaching experience.

Mace said, "Coach Buffamoyer has been committed and dedicated to East Burke High School for the past eight years. He is a humble man and a man of integrity. He believes in discipline in the classroom and that an education comes before anything else. He is committed to our kids, our kids love him and our parents love him."

"I am thankful to Mr. Mace and East Burke High School and Burke County Public Schools for the opportunity to work here and to coach here," Buffamoyer said. "This is a first-class system. I want to make sure I live up to the standards of East Burke High School and that the kids get an education first. I am excited about this opportunity I have been given and I can't wait to get to work with the team on accomplishing the goals that we set as a team."

Buffamoyer played college football for Western Carolina University under the late Bob Waters. He was a nose guard on the 1983 Catamount team that went to the 1-AA National Championship game. He was captain of the team and made All Conference and All American. Buffamoyer started his coaching career at Western as a graduate assistant under Waters. He called Waters, who coached from a wheelchair and later died of Lou Gehrig's disease, an inspiration.

Buffamoyer also coached under Mike Biggerstaff at East Burke, another protégé of Waters'. "Those two are my mentors. They knew how to manage people, get people to get along with each other and motivate players."

East Burke Athletic Director Jim Childers has worked with Buffamoyer since 2008. Childers said, "I am excited about the opportunity for him to take over our program. He is a man of outstanding character and has a wealth of football knowledge and has coached every position."

Buffamoyer's has been head football coach at Southside Academy ESL School and Berea High School in Greenville, S.C. and at West Caldwell High School in Lenoir, N.C. He also was the head baseball coach at West Caldwell. In addition to East Burke, he has been an assistant football coach at West Caldwell and Eastside High School and Berea High School in Greenville, S.C.

Buffamoyer, a veteran of the US Army Reserves, is married to Dawn Buffamoyer. They have two children and three grandchildren.



Mark Buffamoyer

Supper Is Served

Mountain Crest Elementary School's cafeteria is now serving three square meals a day. Chartwells and Burke County Public Schools recently added a supper program at the school, which previously served only breakfast and lunch to students. The supper program is open to anyone in the community and is free to all children ages 3 to 18. The supper price is \$3 for adults. The hot meal is served between 4 and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and includes an enrichment activity for children. Menu items include barbecue chicken, baked spaghetti and a pancake breakfast for supper, just to name a few. The program is federally funded through the USDA, and, since it started on Jan. 24, an average of 80 suppers have been served each day at Mountain Crest.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "We are excited about this opportunity through the USDA to provide another hot meal to students and their families. Mountain Crest is the perfect location for this program as it is within walking distance for many of our families. Parents don't have to worry about cooking, and they can feed their children a good, healthy, hot meal for free. It really is a relief on their pocketbooks and their time. We are grateful for our partnership with Chartwells and for the fantastic job they have done the last few weeks in helping make this new supper program a success."

With the program in its infancy, Putnam has asked the Chartwells team to extend the dining hours until 6 p.m. to better serve parents who work later. The request has been sent to the USDA for approval. He added that the free supper is a great opportunity for faith-based organizations in the area who hold services on Wednesday evenings to take advantage of the program and visit Mountain Crest as a group for a meal.

Visit www.burke.k12.nc.us to view the monthly supper menu.



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

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