



# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

## *He Is Risen!*



*"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, **Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.***

*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. 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.**" Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20 KJV*



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800 Medical Campus Drive | Burnsville, NC 28714

**Mission Women's Care - McDowell | (828) 659-3621**  
1633 Sugar Hill Road | Marion, NC 28752

**Mission Women's Care - Spruce Pine | (828) 766-3001**  
Mauzy-Phillips Center  
189 Hospital Drive | Spruce Pine, NC 28777

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Margaret Sullivan, MD, Nisha Patel, MD,  
Ellen Hearty, MD, Alison Christopher, CNM





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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



## 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  
www.bridgewnc.org

**Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin**

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

"Home of Tri County Christian School"  
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!

## Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

**Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler**

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

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

## First Advent Christian Church

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

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw  
Associate Pastor Javier  
Guzman**

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

## Faith Fellowship Church

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

## 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"

## 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

## 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"

## Plumtree Presbyterian Church

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

**Pastor Ryan Bridgeo**  
pastor@plumtreechurch.com

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

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

## 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

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

**Pastor: Terry Long**

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Service: 10:50 a.m.  
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.  
Youth and TeamKid: 6:00 pm  
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.splfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch  
Senior Pastor**

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

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

## Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

**Pastor Barry MaHorney**

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



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## The Beast We Face

By Timothy W. Tron  
Burke County

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." -Eph. 6:12*

As the distant separates the miles, the golden rays of fading sunlight cast their last hopes upon the sullen clouds that lie amongst the foot of the mountains. There is here a day that remaineth the same. What man can say he hath known the works of the Almighty when he can scarcely recall one from another, twixt the hours of time that passeth understanding.

His charge, one of Keeper; to watch over those in his domain and protect them from the darkness. As the fog of ancient tomes drifts across the driven land, he is called to another such place; a memory gone by, faded from view as the vines envelop the work of one long passed. The natural world reclaiming her own. He is there to see what is needed to bring the old place back to the living. With him travels another soul, one he cannot see, but he can sense its presence. It is a gentle, kind spirit like himself, but strong in ways he cannot match. They are connected as father and son, a bond that goeth deeper than the flesh which covereth mere bone and sinew. Together, their force is nigh to the Master they serve, but neither would dare compare to their creator, for each dwelleth only to serve Him more.

As they arrive, their first visit is to an outbuilding lying on the edge of the estate, just inside the front gate. Farther up the drive on the hill sits the dark, somber decaying mansion. Once this place was an exuberant, alive institution where all manner of animals, food, and life thrived. The building in which they now stood was once a stable and maintenance shed. Now, the rusty veins of disrepair peek through swollen arms of branches and vines that have devoured its once formidable shell. As the Keeper walks beneath the sagging overhead door, the smell from within causes the hair to stand up along his spine.

Beneath the myriad of branch and leaf, there is something of a dire will that lurks. An evil being lies waiting. It has recompensed its own soul for a void it can never fill; a wickedness beyond compare. The gentle spirit is alarmed, and at once is put on guard. Both Keeper and gentle being begin to back away, but before they can reach the light of day, the swift sound of earthly flesh sliding across the antiquity of concrete splits fear into, cleaving sanity from flight, as the beast seeks to devour the good son. A sense of cunning overwhelmed the Keeper as the serpent sought a weakness from which to attack. It was as if it had known they were coming and was welcoming their offering, their sacrifice of body and soul. A feeling of pain, horror, and unfathomable power surges through the Keeper as he suffers the feeling of the gentle spirit being torn asunder. But there was no sign of physical attack. The gentle one stood prepared for battle, but there was only the feeling of the onslaught.

Each being stood waiting, each with heightened senses. Their enemy, nothing of this world nor principality, circles; watching, waiting.

Then without warning, it strikes the gentle one from behind, out of nowhere the beast sprung, its massive coils instantly engulfing the young being. There was no time to scream, so quick were its Satanic sinews entwined about his body. Incredulously, there was nothing they can do to stop it; nothing of this world.

Lightning pulses through the Keeper's veins as he is blinded by rage. His heart falters as he falls to his knees. At once, the prayer of supplication is lifted to the Master's realm, and as quickly, there is an answer.

The sound of rushing wind blasts past the Keeper's ears, until he cannot restrain his body in place. As he feels the world around him begin to summersault, head over heel, all countenance of space and time passes. His eyes are closed in the transition until there is calm. A feeling of warmth surrounds him, and slowly he peers through squinted eyelids to see himself bathed in sunlight upon a freshly mown lawn. Looking up, he sees the previously decaying manor, now aglow in the setting sun. It's alcoves, and trim are perfectly painted and shining like new. He turns to see all manner of life and activity as servants, workers, and guests come and go in their daily rituals. Below him, he watches as a young man of slender build leads a team of horses into what was before, the overgrown stables. The man disappeared. At the same time, from behind him, the Keeper hears the sound of an elder speaking to one of the workers, "Have you seen Jackson?"

The Keeper turns to see the well-dressed elder speaking to one of his servants. The former is dressed in tan pants with a matching vest. His girth protrudes beyond his belt line as it appears his wealth is more than just in the land around him. The black man to whom he speaks is dressed in the worn clothes that belie his position. His likewise worn hat, sits comfortably on his nearly bald but graying head, shading his eyes from the fading light of day.

"Nassuh," replies the servant, "Last I seen him he was walkin da horses to da stables. I'se can git him if you need-ssuh?"

"No Eugene," the elder replied, "I just wanted to see if he was about ready for supper or not."

"Yessuh, I'se can run down to da stables and let him know if yunz want?"

"Well, on second thought Eugene, that might be a splendid idea."

"Yessuh, I'se be right back."

And with that, the black man ran toward the Keeper, not straying nor altering his path as he headed straight toward him. The Keeper put his hands up to block the servant's charge fearing that the collision would send them both reeling, but before he could blink, the man had passed through his person and was gone on heading down the hill. Not quite understanding what had just transpired, he stood, turning to watch the black man disappear past the manicured hedges that lined the drive between the manor and the farmland beyond.

He blinked and once again, he had to refocus his eyesight. The darkness of the room caught him off guard. The smell of sweat, leather, and tack filled his nostrils.



The doors of the barn opened, and the whinny of the horses broke the silence.

"Easy ladies," the young man called. "Why you girls acting so skittish?"

As the Keeper watched the young man work, he opened the stall doors for each Percheron, placing the gentle giants each into their own paddocks. The horses pranced, for something was causing them to stir. The Keeper thought it must be his own presence that created their disdain. But as the thought passed, so did the sound of that earthly scrape along the floor. The darkness had found its way into the realm, and he was not alone. The youth was unaware, but there was little the Keeper could do. For some reason, there was no way for him to call to the boy. His voice was void of his mouth. The demon slid along the corner post and cunningly wrapped itself around the beam as it climbed aloft. The thirty-foot-long python was an enigma. It had survived the train wreck when the men who had claimed it from the jungles lost it in transit to one of the city zoos. They had no idea that those who had extracted it from the South American jungle never lived to see it board the train north. Their skeletal remains long ago excreted from the beast as their souls became one with its darkness. The rescuers who were the first on the scene of the twisted train never found the brakeman or engineer. They too succumbed to the beast. The warmth of the summer had buoyed its life force until it now found itself savoring its next meal below. The yellow slitted eyes watched the boy as he worked, waiting for the opportunity to feed.

Unaware, the youth continued to try to ease the tension of the horses, but to no avail. He had backed his way out of one of the stalls when he felt the strand of straw drop from above. Just as he brushed it off his shoulder, he looked up to see what might have caused the disturbance. Before he could react, the beast sprung its massive coil onto the man.

Horses screamed in unison as the lad was knocked to the floor. His hands fought against the massive sinews that intertwined his body. The youth fought to find any form of breath as the evil began to squeeze each time he exhaled until his ribs began to crack beneath the strain. His desperate hand found the wooden handle of the nearby ax he had used earlier in the day to break off a piece of rope. In a last futile act, he swung toward the lethal muscle that now engulfed his body, swinging blindly, he struck again and again. The blood of the sinister beast began to flood the stall below, but only increased the fervor for which its coils tightened about the boy. Bones began to crush as the heartbeat of the innocent began to slowly ebb.

The Keeper watched in revulsive fear as he saw all that transpired, helpless to stop the horror before him. He fell once again to his knees and wept as the sound of the human body was slowly drawn into the gaping mouth of the slithering demon. The last thing he heard was a whimpering voice cry out its last breath, "Mother."

In an instant, something inside that paddock changed. The feeling of a spirit of evil grew. The damned had devoured the precious son, their only child, the one that was to become the heir to all that was, and now, nothing remained lest the beast allowed it. For once the soul of the boy was exchanged from one to the other, its evil and intellect were magnified tenfold. All of the envy and hate the lad had contained for the contempt of his parents forcing him to carry on the work of the plantation now transferred into the dark being. The bitterness was like sweet essence to the beast as it supped upon the hatred like honey from the comb.

About that time, the door of the barn opened, and the loyal servant peered into the darkness.

"Jackson, my boy, is you in here?" The black man shaded his eyes from the bright light from the outside trying to obtain a focus into the dank cell of death before him. He had seen the boy grow from childhood into a young man. He had come to know the boy as if he were his own. The horses continued to cry as the smell of blood spewed utter fear into their nostrils.

The Eugene timidly pushed the door aside and stepped in, pulling the cap from his forehead. The Keeper wanted to call to him, but again, it was not his time, nor could he speak. The coils of the evil one now silently slid into the shadows awaiting its next victim.

The old man wearied of the silence and called again, raising his hand to the fearful horses trying to calm them as he walked further into the lair of the darkness.

"Jackson, is you here?" He reached the paddock door and started to turn, but the sheen of red on the floor caught his eye, and his breath was taken away. At that instant, before he could think to run for the door, the feeling of cold death, wrapped around his body from above, and like his master before, Eugene began to fight for his life. Heavy, black cold flesh wrapped about his body, tightening until the air escaped his lungs. As his life force ebbed, the years of toil and arduous labor for his Master began to surface, like a black tide. The demon drank it forth, as venom is extracted from the wound, pulling it further from within the servant's soul. The long years of utter despair culminating into an anger that fed the pulsating muscles that rippled along the beast's frame as he finished the last breath of the old man. There was nothing left of the faithful servant, as he too joined the combined souls within the evil. The Keeper watched in utter horror as the insatiable appetite of the beast grew. He culled the darkness from each victim before their souls had passed, retaining each as an energy upon which it grew. Before he could manage to escape the macabre scene, each magnificent horse was eventually drawn down into the ever-growing beast's coils, until they too had become one with its dark powers.

From that day forward, man, beast, and life of the plantation began to disappear as the evil grew with each soul it recompensed. Dawn after dawn, there were fewer who breathed the air of the day, while the night was filled with screams of

*continued on page 7*



# Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church

## A Brighter Future

By Rick and Cindy Mercer  
Burke County

A friend of ours asked once if we had ever stopped to consider the unique perspective on the coming kingdom, eternal life, that was given to us by the New Testament writers? He then added that it was amazing that the writers were looking forward to eternal life as something that had already begun within them. They saw the good qualities of love, joy, and peace as samples of the good life we will enjoy in the coming kingdom.

In Romans 5:21, Paul summed it up as he contrasted the old, faithless life with the new. He writes, "As sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sin reigned before. And that cruelty and hatred and selfishness resulted in death. But now grace rules. It rules through righteousness, through those good qualities the Spirit produces. And it leads to eternal life. That's Jesus Christ's quality of life. It's something we can begin to experience now. It is something that will take us through the fire and the smoke, all the way to Christ's second coming.

Reflect on the fact that twenty centuries ago the Son of the living God gave Himself up for weak and sinful human beings. He gave Himself up because this world was hostage to the terror of sin. All of the tragedies of this world weighed on His shoulders and slowly crushed the life out of Him.

But by that great sacrifice Jesus nullified the curse of sin. He broke the chain reaction of hatred and cruelty and suffering.

Praise God this is the Savior who is coming! He is the one who will appear gloriously in the clouds. He is the one who offers us the brightest of all possible futures. And this offers us great hope in this challenging world.

It's time to own that future. It's time to claim it for yourself. Don't let the threat of terror intimidate you. Don't let acts of hatred cause you to react in kind. Own a brighter future. God has gone to great lengths to make it possible. He has made the greatest sacrifice to put it in your hands.

It's up to you. You can choose that destiny with the beloved Son of God. You can decide right now that you will be among those who welcome His glorious return. You can open your heart to ensure that your arms will be open later, on that great day.

Seize the blessed hope. Put your life in the hands of this blessed Savior.

Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. —2 Corinthians 5:5 NKJV

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 [cjmerc@ids.net](mailto:cjmerc@ids.net). Check out [www.morgantonsda.org](http://www.morgantonsda.org). Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.



# Blue Ridge Partnership for Children

## Child Fest 2018

By Ruthie Styles  
Tri-County



Spring is in the air and springtime is Child Fest time! Child Fest 2018, sponsored by the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children and Child Care Resources and Referral, is our 18th Child Fest and promises to be the best one yet! This year Child Fest happens on Saturday, April 21st at Mitchell High School, 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Come early and plan to stay a while because there will be all kinds of activities for the kiddos including a Teddy Bear Clinic, make and take crafts, face painting, inflatables and Mr. Mystery's Mysterious Magic Show just to name a few. You will be able to go for a ride on the Big Sammy Train, sponsored by Mineral City Transport LLC, and Buster the Bus will also be there. We are looking forward to hanging out with some very special guests...Llama Llama will be there in his red pajamas and we will have a llama petting zoo. When asked what her daughters enjoy the most about Child Fest, Sandra Burleson said "I can't pick out just one thing". Eight year old Alivia and four year old Scarlet "Just love it and want to make a whole day of it. This year they are really excited about Llama Llama and petting the real llamas."



Mitchell County Sheriff Donald Street fingerprints Hudson Hall while his cousin, Maddox Holmstrom, waits for her turn.

While the little ones are busy doing all that fun stuff, their parents and caregivers will have access to information about quality child care, early literacy, health and nutrition, healthy vision in children and services for young children and their families that are available locally.

As always, Child Fest is FREE and, if you need a ride, so is transportation for families with children who are ages birth to five years old. Please contact the transportation office in your county by April 6th to schedule your trip. You can call the Avery County Transportation office at 828.733.0005, the Mitchell County Transport office at 828.688.4715 and the Yancey County Transport office at 828.682.6144.

If you have any questions or would like more information about Child Fest, 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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horror and fear.

The Keeper now understood what he faced. For this was no earthly being with which he fought.

Again, the sound of rushing wind churned in the air about him, and he had returned to the sodden space from which he had left. The beast was still there, as was the gentle being, both neither had diminished nor had their battle continued, for it was as if they had been frozen in time. No matter the length of his recent escape, it was as if it were only a blink of an eye that he had returned. The Keeper called out to the son and warned him of what it was to which they now fought. From within, both instinctively called upon the only one with whom they knew could save them in this darkest hours. Meanwhile, the coils of the beast continued to attempt to suffocate the life from the gentle one.

Dropping to his knees, the Keeper began to seek God in ultimate prayer, bowing his hands upon the earth.

The darkness heard him and lurched for the chance to devour them both at once, sending its tail around the Keeper, pulling him into the maze of death.

As the serpent surged, the sudden force of energy from beneath its coils shocked the beast, stunning his advance. Pausing, it couldn't understand what had happened, so the beast pulled at the Keeper again, this time forcing all the guile within to his surface, throwing the massive coils into one colossal force which no terrestrial being could withstand.

Once more, the power from above stunned the beast until its deathly grip lessened.

At this moment, the Keeper and the gentle one stood, shedding the grip of evil and turning, they both now faced the beast.

Eyes of blood red, with a screaming rage, the demon surged once more, massive jaws agape as the fangs dripped with deadly venom, at the two beings of faith.

The horrific screams squealed into the air, reaching a pitch that caused any living thing to cower in fear. The beast retracted as its flesh began to sizzle and burn away from the power that now flowed through the pair, Keeper and son.

The demon, feeling its skin begin to fall away, revealing bleeding sinews and bone, lurched again, only to find the force against it growing stronger.

The screams continued until the smell of burning flesh overpowered the dying sounds of the evil beast.

It was hours later as the sunrise began to break across the new day, the charred remains of the demon could be found before the weary Keeper and his son.

Exhausted, worn and spent. Each dropped to the soil below and gave thanks to the Lord.

Somewhere in the distance, a rooster crowed at the coming day.

Once more, the darkness had been defeated, as the Keeper added another dwelling to his charge.

As we go through this life, we face demons of this world that seem unstoppable. Alone, we cannot defeat them as stated in Ephesians, "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." As Paul writes to Ephesians, he shares with them that we must "put on" the armor of God. The Greek word for "put on" is also "enduo," as if to clothe or put on a garment. If we go back to Luke 24:49, we see again where he tells his disciples to go back to Jerusalem and wait, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In other words, Jesus was telling his disciples, that first before you go out into the world to evangelize, yea first must receive the Holy Spirit. In this story, we are allowed to visualize ourselves within the Keeper. Some may see this as being one with the Holy Spirit. If we are one with the Holy Spirit, then we can assume the "Gentle One" in the story would then be the Word. Either way, we are not alone in our battles, if we choose to accept Christ into our lives. Without Him, we cannot defeat the powers of darkness. But the good news is, we know how the story ends, we have victory in Jesus. We may not win the battle, but through Christ, we have won the war.

May the Lord's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thanks be to God.

*"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." -Eph. 6:13-20*

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



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# History of the National Day of Prayer

**1952:** On April 17 a bill initiated by Mr. Conrad Hilton of Hilton Hotels and Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas was passed (Public Law 82-324) that the President of the United States was to set aside an appropriate day each year, other than Sunday, as a National Day of Prayer.

**1974:** The National Prayer Committee begins as a subcommittee on prayer at the International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. Out of the Lausanne gathering came the U.S. Lausanne Committee, now Mission America, and America's National Prayer Committee. Mrs. Vonette Bright was appointed to the Prayer Advisory Group.

**1976:** The first members are selected for the Prayer Advisory Group: Dr. Dick Eastman, Mr. Frank Insen (World Vision), Millie Dienert, Evelyn Christenson and Vonette Bright. Dr. Harold Lindsell of Christianity Today also met regularly with the group at the Christian Embassy in Washington D.C.

**1979:** The National Prayer Committee is officially formed. Today there are 18 members on the NPC Executive Board. Federal EIN: 75-1914068, Exempt 501 C3

**1981:** Businessman Joe Mays (Religious Heritage of America), David Bryant and the NPC group meet to cast the first vision for the National Day of Prayer. Contacts were made with the Public Liaison office of the White House to begin planning efforts.

**1983:** The first National Day of Prayer observance, organized by the NPC, takes place at Constitution Hall in Washington D.C. with featured speakers Vice President George Bush and Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie.

**1986:** Vonette Bright and the National Prayer Committee contact Senator Strom Thurmond (R) for guidance on writing a bill that would designate a day for the National Day of Prayer

**1987:** Senator Thurmond writes the bill then introduces it to the Senate Judicial Committee. It became bill S.1378, which would amend public law 82-324. In total, 13 Senators and 90 Congressmen signed giving their endorsements. The following individuals sponsored the bill: Congressman Tony Hall (D-Ohio), Congressman Carlos Moorhead (R-California), Senator Howard Heflin (D-Alabama), Senator Strom Thurmond (R-South Carolina), Senator Bill Armstrong (R-Colorado), Congressman Frank Wolf (R-Virginia), Congressman Bob Garcia (D-New York)

**1988:** Rabbi Haberman and Rabbi Tanenbaum express their support of the bill.

**1988:** Monday, May 5 – the Judiciary Committee in the Senate and the Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service in the House each release the bill for vote

**1988:** Wednesday, May 7 – 4:00 p.m. final confirmation is given that the bill passes unanimously in the Senate (a few days later in the House).

**1988:** Thursday, May 8 – Ronald Reagan signs into law Public Law 100-307 the designation of the first Thursday in May as the annual observance for the National Day of Prayer

Those present at the signing:  
President Ronald Reagan, Vonette Bright, Pat Boone (then Co-Chair of the NPC), Susan Sorensen (National Coordinator), Tony Hall (D-Ohio), Frank Wolf (R-Virginia), Dr. Richard Halverson (Senate Chaplain), William Ford (House Chaplain), Senator Howard Heflin (D), Rabbi Joshua Haberman, Father John O'Connor, Dr. Jerry C. Nims (National Advisor), Gladys Harrington (Year of the Bible)

**1991:** Shirley Dobson accepts the role as Chairman of the NDP Task Force.

**1998:** Bill Clinton signs into law - Pub. L. 105-225, August 12, 1998, 112 Stat. 1258: The President shall issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a National Day of Prayer on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.

**2016:** Millions will observe the 65th Anniversary of the National Day of Prayer Shirley Dobson's 25th year as Chairman

**2016:** Shirley Dobson passes the baton, and Anne Graham Lotz accepts the role as Chairman of the NDP Task Force

**2017:** Dr. Ronnie Floyd is appointed as the President of the NDP Task Force phasing out the position of Chairman



## NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Theme: "Pray For America – Unity"

Thursday, May 3rd, 2018

Local Event: Riverside Park, Spruce Pine

(If inclement weather, meet at Tri-County Christian School above the park)

12:00 noon and 6:30 p.m.

EVERYONE INVITED

Days of Repentance (leading up to the Day of Prayer)

all at Riverside Park, 12:00 noon, Thursday, April 26,

Friday, April 27, Saturday, April 28, Monday, April 30,

Tuesday, May 1, Wednesday, May 2

On Sunday, April 29th, every church is asked to set aside a special time of Repentance and Prayer.

# High Country Prison Ministry

## Kairos Prison Ministry International

By Jody Griffin  
Avery and Mitchell Counties



"I was in prison and ye came unto me." Matthew 25:36

Kairos Prison Ministry International provides care and inspiration to the incarcerated (through Kairos Inside), their loved ones (through Kairos Outside), and to incarcerated youth (Kairos Torch). "Kairos brings the light, love and friendship of Jesus Christ into the lives of prisoners." (AMCI Kairos is scheduled for May 15-18, 2018!)

During a three and a half day "retreat" (Kairos Inside) men are introduced to the loving Spirit of faith through fellowship, teaching, singing and sharing with a team of volunteers from the 'outside'. These volunteers are provided excellent equipping through the Kairos Team Training and enter the institution with a focus on the "Kairos Way" which is characterized by the phrase "Listen, Listen. Love, Love."

Many Kairos participants report that the volunteers who give of their time to come through the gates each day of the "retreat" offer them the very thing they need the most while serving their sentence: the reassurance that someone 'out there' cares! God's Love is tangibly experienced, as brief lessons are shared and small groups of men share around "family tables" to express what they have learned. Interspersed throughout the retreat are examples of the broader community of faith thinking and praying for the participants. By the time the retreat ends, there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that they are loved.

As it turns out, my introduction to AMCI came when I agreed to serve as a member of a Kairos Team a few years ago. The Kairos volunteers who serve here are very well trained and provide a setting that invites participants to experience the purpose statement listed above.

Provision for the Kairos events is made through generous donations of time, energy and money from individuals, churches and organizations. And, as it turns out, the Kairos Team at AMCI is currently seeking out men who are willing to experience the life changing love of God amongst the participants this year!

In addition to the initial entry through a retreat, a short time later there is what is known as an "Instructional Reunion" where the Kairos Team reviews and re-inforces what the participants have learned and challenges them to continue in it. Then, the volunteers come back one evening a month for a reunion that provides continued connection to the Kairos methods and inspiration to pursue personal and spiritual growth each day.

The true strength of the Kairos experience is the heartfelt compassion of people who give of their own time, energy and money to bring a message of hope to those who are 'cut off' from every day society.

I once received a beautiful response from someone who had been a victim of another's criminal activity. In their response, they thanked me for caring for the incarcerated. But then they went on to say that they believe that by encouraging care for those who had been convicted and sentenced, I was somehow dishonoring the pain that they and other victims had been through (my paraphrase, entirely). The communication we shared opened the door that allowed me to pray for them in her pain, brought on by the actions of another. Her honesty about her struggle to appreciate the efforts made to reach offenders, helped open my eyes to the reality that the consequences of our decisions often affect far more than ourselves.

So you see, Kairos is about much more than 'Kum Ba Yah' and 'Krispy Treats'. It is instead a time for God's care to be felt and hearts to be touched and changed. And I don't just mean the hearts of the inmate participants! I mean every person who shares in the experience, who comes alongside the inmates, the outside team of volunteers, and all who pray, give, or serve in ANY way to help make it happen!

Would you like to be involved in "God's Special Time" (Kairos)? Go to [www.kairosamci.org](http://www.kairosamci.org) and check it out! You can access testimonies, Volunteer applications and much more! Or, feel free to contact me directly at [joseph.griffin@ncdps.gov](mailto:joseph.griffin@ncdps.gov)



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





Life Lessons

By Doug Harrell

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. — John 21:17 (KJV)

As I pass through the years I realize more and more how important this verse should be in our lives. Most of the time the pressures of this world tend to keep us focused on trying to make a living, feed the family, taking care of those things that in the grand scheme of things tend to fade away. Don't get me wrong, the Bible clearly commands us to feed and care for our family and not to depend on others to do that for us. In today's society the entitlement mentality has gone way too far, and this is not scriptural at all. In Paul's writings he tells us if they won't work, let them go hungry! Maybe we need to really look

at this concept more today. Now don't misunderstand me, we should definitely take care of those that are not able to take care of themselves and do it freely, but we weaken folks when we feed the wanting rather than the needing!

What Jesus was saying here is to concentrate on feeding the sheep spiritually and emotionally. How do we do this best? I have found that the best way to do this is to live a life as close to what Jesus lived as we humanly can, but we can never be perfect, but we can strive. God wants us to be a shining light on the hill that people can depend on, be willing to be a service to others in their daily lives. Are you willing to sit down with someone and pray with them on the spot? Some folks pass out tracks and other things and that is okay, but still the best witness we can be is with our personal smile, our consistent, unswerving dedication to the daily life God would have us to be. Don't be afraid to let others see Jesus in you, we all want to hear the words, "well done thy good and faithful servant"! Make sure you are paving the way each day for that moment because that moment will come to all of us at some point in time, be ready and be prepared!

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



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## One in Six Binge Drink Every Week, But Do Lawmakers Care?

By Rev. Mark Creech



According to a new report published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control conducted a study to determine how much booze Americans are tossing back. It turns out that the amount is astonishing.

A statement released on the study Friday, March 16th, said "CDC scientists analyzed data on self-reported binge drinking during the past 30 days from CDC's 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Total annual binge drinks were calculated by multiplying the estimated total number of binge drinking episodes among binge drinkers by the average largest number of drinks consumed per episode, and was assessed by age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, household income, and state."

The results? Drum roll, please.

The study determined that Americans swigged down 17 billion drinks in 2015, which amazingly equals a total of 470 binge drinks per binge drinker.

"CDC researchers found that 1 in 6, or 37 million, adults binge drink about once a week, consuming an average of seven drinks per binge. Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more drinks for men, or four or more drinks for women, in about two hours," said the press release.

Other findings showed that while the prevalence of binge drinking is more common among ages 18-34 as might be expected, more than half of binge drinking is done by adults over the age of 35. Men binge drink the most, approximately 80 percent. While people of lower incomes (under \$25,000 annually) consume substantially more drinks each year than those with higher incomes and educational levels.

Dr. Robert Brewer, coauthor of the study and the lead researcher for the CDC's alcohol program, said, "This study shows that binge drinkers are consuming a huge number of drinks per year, greatly increasing their chances of harming themselves and others."



Binge drinking is a national scourge that produces a host of social problems such as hazardous driving, precarious sexual activity, and violence. It's at the bottom of serious health issues like cancer, heart disease, and liver failure. Every year, it accounts for more than half of the 88,000 alcohol-related deaths in this country, and no less than three-quarters of the \$249 billion in economic costs connected to drinking.

Researchers say in this recent study that among some of the most important ways to reduce binge drinking is limiting the number of alcohol outlets, limiting days and hours of sale, and imposing stiff penalties on outlets that illegally serve underage or intoxicated patrons.

Hmmmm... the findings in this study are really interesting!

Who in North Carolina has been arguing the problems with alcohol abuse in our state and nation are no inconsequential matter? Who has been contending alcohol is not an ordinary commodity, and, therefore we can't afford to treat it as we do other commodities? Where have I heard limiting alcohol outlets is a necessary means for reducing the harms associated with our national drunkenness? Where have I heard limiting the days and hours of alcohol sales are critical for holding back the flood of alcohol-related social ills?

Oh, now I remember. I said it, over and over again for years – that right-wing

preacher – that lobbyist for the Christian Action League – that fool who needs to realize times have changed – that neo-prohibitionist determined to take away everyone's freedom to drink. Baseless accusations leveled at me, distractions from arguments about responsible alcohol policies that were unquestionably guided by faith, but mostly based in sound scientific research.

Yet these arguments which I have made to lawmakers, conclusions not only reached by the CDC in its most recent study but also found in numerous

other reputable studies, more often than not, seemed hardly more than a tiny blip on their radar. In the last 20 years, lawmakers in the North Carolina General Assembly, both Democrat, and Republican, continuously rolled-back the state's alcohol control measures, providing one legislative gift after another to restaur-

*continued on page 13*

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**17 billion**  
 total binge drinks  
 by US adults annually

**= 470** total binge drinks  
 per binge drinker



35% of total binge  
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 by those aged 35+



www.cdc.gov/alcohol



No Excuse

By Billy Graham

From a message preached Aug. 21, 1963, during the three-and-a-half-week Crusade at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Many people are asking today, "What is wrong with our world?" Our newspapers are filled with murder, rape, hate, lust, bombings, race against race, war. Can we not solve our problems? Is there an answer?

Look inside of you—sense the emptiness, the frustration and the tension of our times. We have everything to make a society and a culture happy, to have security, to have peace. But we don't have security, we don't have peace, we don't have happiness. We think that if people are educated, if they have a good job, if they have financial security, then they are going to be happy. We think this is the end of all of our dreams and hopes, and utopia will come, but we've been disillusioned.

We're beginning to find that the words of Jesus were correct when He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." In other words, if you spend all of your time on your body or even on your mind, that's not enough. We need a relationship with God.

Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Many of you have gained the world—everything you ever dreamed. But you found it is not enough. You thought, if only I could marry Jimmy, I'd be happy. You found Jimmy wasn't all you thought he was. You thought, When I get my Ph.D. degree, I'm going to find everything I want. But you got your Ph.D., and you found that wasn't the answer. Something is missing. When God created man, he was perfect in the Garden of Eden. There was no war, there was no hate, no lust; there was no sin. There was no suffering, no hospitals, no jails, no police force. A wonderful world. And this is the kind of world that God meant it to be.

And God gave to man a priceless gift. He gave him the freedom of moral choice. But tragedy struck: Sin came in. Where did sin come from? Nobody knows how it ever entered the heart of Lucifer, son of the morning. Let's just accept the fact that we have a moral disease that pulls us down. We've sinned against God. We are a planet in rebellion. And God is a holy God.

We could have chosen to serve God if we had wanted to, but we chose to disobey God. And all of us are involved. We are all sinners. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "In sin my mother conceived me," said David in Psalm 51:5.

And when God looks at your heart, He says it's full of evil imagination (see Proverbs 6:18). The Bible says your heart is wicked. Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

I talked to a man about giving his life to Christ, and when it came right down to it, after I had answered about a dozen of his questions, I said to him, "Your problem is not that you cannot believe. Your problem is that if you do believe, it's going to change your way of living. That's the thing you're really fighting, isn't it?" He bowed his head and said, "That's it. You hit it right on the head."

That's it. For the truth about God is known to people by instinct. God has put this knowledge in their hearts, the Bible says. "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Someday you're going to come to the judgment of God and say, "But, Lord, you know my problems." No excuse, the Bible says. Yes, they know about Him all right, but they won't admit it or worship Him in truth, or even thank Him for His daily care. They began to think up silly ideas of what God was like and what He wanted them to do. The result was that their foolish minds became dark and confused.

Has there ever been an hour of more education and more confusion in the world than this very hour? All of our education and all of our brilliant scientists have not solved our problems. They've created more confusion, claiming themselves to be wise without God. They became fools instead, Scripture says. Isn't that a commentary on our day? So, God let them go ahead into every sort of sex sin.

The first chapter of Romans says He let them do whatever they wanted, "to dishonor their bodies among themselves" (Romans 1:24). In other words, they rejected the idea of God, they began to live like immoral pigs, and the Bible says that God gave them up. Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies, so they prayed to the things God had made.

"Has there ever been an hour of more education and more confusion in the world than this very hour? All of our education and all of our brilliant scientists have not solved our problems. They've created more confusion, claiming themselves to be wise without God." —Billy Graham

We believe the lie today that we can save ourselves. We believe the lie that somehow the United Nations can save us. We think that somehow, we can stumble through without God.

You've left God out of your life, and it hasn't worked. The Bible says: "God gave them up to vile passions" (Romans 1:26), so that even their women turned against God's natural plan for them and indulged in sex sin with each other. "Likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another; men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Romans 1:27).

Isn't that happening today? As a result of leaving God out, God said, "I give you up. Go ahead and sink into the moral pigpen. This is what you have chosen." The Bible goes on to say that when they gave God up and would not acknowledge Him, "God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not



fitting" (Romans 1:28).

We've sinned against God, and we're never going to solve the problems of the world until we know what's wrong with us. Until something radical takes place in your heart to give you a cure, you're going to die.

You're going to die in your sins. The Bible says our hearts are blind and deceitful (see Ephesians 4:18 and Jeremiah 17:9).

We have the Gospel preached more in America than in any country, I guess, in the history of the world. We hear it, we see it. We're exposed to it. And we reject it.

What's going to be the result? Revelation 20 says: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

Yes, there is a day of judgment coming when every man and woman and boy and girl will have to stand before a righteous God to give an account for one thing—what did you do with Jesus Christ? The Bible says the wages of sin is death (see Romans 6:23). And, ladies and gentlemen, I believe the Bible, that death is coming upon every person in the world who is without God.

But God loves us in spite of our sins, in spite of the dreadful wickedness of our heart. God says, "I love you," and the Bible teaches that God is a God of mercy; that He's a God of love, He's a God of forgiveness. And God said, "In spite of your sins, in spite of the sentence of death that hangs over you, I love you." And God sent His Son to the cross. And the Bible teaches that God took all of your sins and all of my sins and laid them on Christ. He became sin for us and His blood was shed. That blood was symbolic of His broken heart and it was symbolic of His life that was given for you. In other words, Jesus took your death, your suffering, your hell on the cross. He took your judgment, and now the Bible says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ" (Romans 8:1).

"There is a day of judgment coming when every man and woman and boy and girl will have to stand before a righteous God to give an account for one thing—what did you do with Jesus Christ?" —Billy Graham

No, I will not be condemned. I will not be sentenced to death. I will never see hell. Why? Because I deserve it? No, but because God, in His love and His mercy, said to me, "I forgive you, because my Son has taken your death and your sentence and your hell."

I want you to receive Him by an act of faith. I want you to trust Him. I want you to believe in Him. I want you to make Him your own. Make Him your Lord, your Master. Receive Him as your own. This is the Good News. ©1963 BGEA God says you have no excuse. You know in your heart that God exists and that you've fallen short of His standard. But He loves you.

Come to Christ today; don't put it off.





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# Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

## All that Matters

By Brent Price  
Mitchell County

Most mornings I jump out of bed as soon as the alarm sounds. Feet hit the floor, clothes are waiting where I laid them out before I went to bed. I'm downstairs within ten minutes tops. You'd think the house is on fire. But there's a trap waiting—one that's set every morning, long before I get out of bed.

Sometimes I get tangled up in it before I make it to the end of the driveway. The day's schedule swirls through my head. Where, when, how long and how much? This appointment, that commitment. Scheduling and rescheduling. Meaning and purpose is already being measured by how busy the day looks.

For many, all the above simply constitutes what it means to hold down a job and make ends meet. That's life and all there is to it. Show up on time, be where you have to be and hurry every chance you get. Make sure you're quick enough, smart enough or have a back that's strong enough to hang in there. But, really—Is that all that matters?

We've left so much behind in our efforts to keep moving ahead. Still, there is a longing and a sense of homesickness that pushes toward the surface of our lives. All which is not quite forgotten calls to us through scarce moments of silence. There is so much hidden away behind doors that were never meant to be locked.

When is the last time you stopped to watch your breath float upon the air of a cold winter morning? What about the lingering space between sleeping and waking, between dreaming and believing? Can you remember?

The lighting bugs will be out before too long. How many summers has it been since you caught one? From the Parkway there a million stars waiting to be counted. Wait on a clear night with a child who believes she can count them all. Sit in the bed with a bowl of cereal and two spoons when neither of you can sleep. Laugh until it hurts and cry like you'll never stop if that's what you need to do. Not too long ago I visited a woman whom I've known for some time now. Her memories of the past are pretty clear. However, when she tries to recall what she ate for lunch things get a little fuzzy. Her eyes always look a little sad even when she's smiling. We never visit for long before she shuffles off to complete some task or another.

When we neared the end of our visit she took my hands as I stood before her. She smiled at me past her sad eyes and almost in a whisper she asked, "Would you put your arms around me?" I did and we held on until we both remembered. And that's all that matters.

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



## Christian Action League of NC

*continued from page 10*

rants, lodging, and alcohol industry interests at the expense of healthful living and a wholesome society.

Every excuse in the world has been concocted to make these changes more palatable – despite the overwhelming evidence our alcohol problems are worse than the troubles associated with all of the illicit drugs combined – despite the fact that alcohol issues are monstrously larger than all our problems with guns.

The predicament is not unique to the Tar Heel state. It's this way across the country. Many have been sounding the alarm in their respective states and it's largely fallen on deaf ears. Moreover, on the federal level, as a part of the President's tax reform bill, the U.S. Congress gave a huge tax break to craft brewers, wineries, and distilleries – something a vast amount of research shows exacerbates the problems of alcohol abuse.

But the efforts to reduce the inebriation of our culture must continue – for the sake of the alcoholic who feels helpless in the grip of a habit he cannot control – for the sake of those who choose to totally abstain, because they see what alcohol abuse has done to the people they love – for the sake of the social drinker who nevertheless understands something ought to be done to reduce the tragedies that accompany alcohol abuse – for the sake of earnest people of faith who understand that they are their brother's keeper – for the sake of people everywhere who genuinely want everyone to experience the best life possible – for the sake of those more interested in knowing and doing God's will than they are defending the indefensible.

This is not a diatribe against drinking, although I personally embrace abstinence. Instead, it's a call – a plea for policymakers to take an honest and objective look at the evidence. This nation has a serious drinking problem that's growing and laws that encourage temperance and restraint are desperately needed.

Share this:

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

## The Crimson Robe

By Joyce (Joy) Baldwin Harwood

*Jesus, Savior of the world who came for one and all,  
In true obedience to God's voice, humbled to His call.  
Our Father had to turn His back, One thing He could  
not do,*

*To look upon His Only Son as He died for me and  
you.*

*One day soon He'll come again, Jesus Christ God's  
lovely Son.*

*Appearing in His robe off white, the victory has been  
won.*

*The Lamb of God will reign on high, a crimson robe  
He'll wear.*

*A crown of glory on His head, with radiance in His  
hair.*

*Ascending with a victory shout over death, hell and  
the grave.*

*The saints with Him will then be dressed in robes of  
white array.*

*Our Jesus in His crimson robe, God's precious dar-  
ling Son,*

*With lovely countenance so divine, the crimson robe  
has won!*



*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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It's that time of year when the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force starts compiling information for our Summer Resource Guide – the free publication we distribute to help families find free/low cost activities for their children during the summer months. We want to include as many activities as possible! Are you, your organization, church, children's group, team, etc. planning camps or events for the summer?

Please go to <http://bit.ly/PATH-summer-guide> to submit activities to be included in the guide (submission deadline is April 25th). Please share with others!

**No Regrets Family Ministry-  
"Come See The Place"**

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County



Miss Miler gave each of nineteen students in her second-grade class a large plastic egg and instructed them to bring something back in it that represented life. The next day the kids were excited to show the things in their eggs. However young Jeremy brought an empty Easter egg. Other children brought numerous things that represented life like butterfly, flower, and a bug. When Jeremy opened his egg the other kids laughed. His teacher with a bit of disgust in her voice thinking Jeremy had misunderstood the assignment asked how does an empty Easter egg represent life? Jeremy responded in a quite humble voice-- the tomb was empty-- Jesus is alive. Three months later Jeremy went to heaven due to a chronic terminal illness. Those who went to pay respect to the family would find nineteen empty Easter eggs on his casket. (Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul; 239)

Jesus is the living Savior. Jesus is not just the Christian Savior. He is everyone's Savior whether they recognize it or not. Jesus said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead and behold, I am alive for evermore."

As a wonderful hymn goes "I serve a risen Savior He's in the world today; I know that He is living whatever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him He's always near. He lives He lives Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives He lives salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives. He lives within my heart."

The single most important event in all of history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Compared to all other dates it is the only date apart from creation, the birth of Jesus, and the death of Jesus that matter. The apostle Paul stressed this when he said, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; you are still in your sins." The resurrection is a pillar of the Christian faith. Without it we would have no hope. Praise be to God we do have hope. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."



My mom is a great example of hope. When she had a tumor removed from the base of her tongue the size of an orange and after a 12 hour surgery left her with no tongue and staples from ear to ear she was told she would probably never talk again. Hope in God is what gave my mom strength. My mom would communicate with us by writing on a dry erase board and she wrote I hope I can talk again. Hope is a big word, but with God it is a sure word. All things are possible with God. Despite what medical doctors have said and to their shock mom can miraculously talk.

The resurrection is not just a religious date. To assume that Easter is just a religious date is to misrepresent the entire Gospel message. Jesus is not a martyr; Jesus' death on the cross was a sacrifice. Jesus said no man takes his life but He lays it down. Jesus' on the cross was a substitute for us and his death atoned for our sin. John the Baptist said, "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The resurrection regardless of one's religious beliefs affects the entire world from the creation of Adam to the last baby born, all of humanity past, present, and future. To set aside Easter as a religious holiday without realizing its magnitude is contempt. Many people will celebrate Easter weekend without giving one thought to the risen Savior.

The resurrection is everything and without it we would have no hope. Jesus died, so we might live. Jesus was bound in linen cloths; we are set free. Jesus was anointed with spices; we are anointed with the Holy Ghost. Jesus was laid in a tomb, but we stand in the grace of God. Jesus was placed on a bed of rock; Jesus is my rock and sure foundation. Jesus was laid in a borrowed tomb, my salvation is not borrowed. I belong to Jesus and Jesus belongs to me. Jesus was laid in a rich man's tomb; we have all the riches of His grace. Jesus lost his grave clothes; but we will be clothed in robes of white. The body of Jesus was not found in the tomb; in Christ I will never be lost. A great stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb. And a great stone of sin was removed from my heart. The tomb was sealed by man but broken by God; I am broken by sin but sealed by the Holy Ghost. The tomb was kept by guards who failed; I am kept by God who never loses. A tomb was found empty, that we might be filled. Jesus appeared alive to more than 500 people at once, Jesus is alive today, Jesus will be alive tomorrow, and I will see Him one day. Jesus is alive in my heart. We never have to say good-bye. The grave is not final. O death where is your sting? O grave where is your victory? We have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, [snowhillbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:snowhillbaptist@gmail.com), or visit their website at [www.snowhillbaptist.com](http://www.snowhillbaptist.com).

**Crossword Solution**

S	W	I	M		Z	E	A	L		A	R	A	B	S
C	O	D	E		E	A	S	E		C	O	B	R	A
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**Sudoku Solution**

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



# Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

## The Rest of The Story

By Farmer Doug

This is undoubtable one of the funniest stories Farmer Clint ever wrote. I remember the first time he told me about grabbing his clothes and running to hide behind the church in Harrell Hill. I must have laughed for ten minutes. Your sides will be hurting from laughter when you finish.

### Funny Farm

Dear Friends,

Among the many things I learned while living at Harrell Hill Farms is that the term "day-off" doesn't exactly mean "day-OFF". Rather, it's a day when we slept until 5:30 am vs. 4:30 am and the chores had more to do with family and less to do with commerce.

Totally oblivious to the "day-off" phenomenon, I had dreamed that perhaps on Saturday morning I would sneak down to Rock Creek for a bit of trout fishing. Farmer Doug, Miss Barbara and I had a long and arduous week tilling, weeding, pruning, fertilizing, harvesting and generally farming. As you might expect, I also had dodged many near-death experiences with various species of killer critters and farm equipment gone haywire. So I was ready to wade in the cool river and entice a large rainbow into my net.

The day began, like so many others, with a tall, steaming stack of buckwheat pancakes lovingly crafted by Farmer Doug. And I must admit that I slathered on a pound of butter and topped 'em off with a quart of molasses – perhaps a slight exaggeration but not by much. I mused that Doug's pancakes likely bore a close resemblance to the manna God showered on the Israelites in the desert...they are "to die for!"

As we gathered around the kitchen island, prayers were offered for the bounty of God's provision and thanks given for our families and loved ones. Barbara would talk about her "list", a very loooooong and meticulous litany of things she needed done; Doug would bring up the 5,319 things he had for us to do; and I would tremble in anticipation of how I might break something or accidentally kill myself ☹.

It's not enough to manage a HUGE household with children and grandchildren and great grandchildren spilling out every door and window...and a HUGE farm with more chores to do in a day than the entire National Guard could accomplish. My friends, the Harrells also looked after their aging parents and neighbors along that hallowed tract of land called Harrell Hill.

During my tenure as "Farmer Clint in-training" I also surmised that being a farmer's wife is more like being head-honcho of the hacienda! And no one worked harder than Barbara Harrell at caring for others. For example, she mowed so many others' lawns that she could easily hang a Harrell Hill Lawn & Garden shingle from her lawnmower shed. There was her own yard, and grandmother and daddy d's yard, and her mama's yard, and the shoulders running alongside Byrd Road, and the cemetery, and the church yard and heaven only knows where else. On this particular "day-off" Doug and I made plans to attack Barbara's "list".

I knew Barbara had an incredibly hectic day ahead, picking up grandkids, going to Sam's Club for a railroad car filled will groceries, and checking-up on the parents. So I suggested that she let me mow the church yard. She was thrilled and quickly accepted my offer. Selfishly, I thought to myself, "This is a SAFE venture for me; I know how to mow grass and run a weed eater." I mean, how much danger could there be in mowing a lawn...especially a church lawn.

I mounted the John Deere mower and began my trek down Byrd road, mowing the shoulder as I whistled a happy tune. 'Twas a beautiful day to be alive. "I'll make Barbara proud," I thought, as my mind had visions of the fish I would later hook.

I decided to begin by trimming the long grass alongside the cemetery fence which stretches behind the church. If you've never stood at the back of Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren, perched high atop Harrell Hill, you've missed a spectacular sight. It is unquestionably one of the most beautiful vistas on planet earth. All was well with the world.

As I meandered, slowly and methodically, along the barbed wire fence row I recall praying for the little church and its members. This was a healing place, one where God had ministered to my heart in special ways. My heart was filled with the joy of the Lord as I manicured this holy ground.

There are times when the solitude and serenity of our mountains almost scream praises to the Lord. This was such a day.

Weed eating, whistling, singing, praying and praising...I sauntered along. Hmmm, that felt strange...I wonder if...this could be electric fence. I leapt sideways, weed eater in hand, in reaction to sharp tingling pains in my neck and shoulders. My first thought, naturally, was that I again had come in contact with an electrified barbed wire fence. "Just pull away, and you will be fine," I imagined.

The harder I tugged the more I recoiled back to the fence...pain was radiating from my neck, shoulders, back, head...now my hands. I dropped that weed eater, its flailing plastic line doing a pretty nice number on my ankles, and lunged away from the fence leaving my tattered tee shirt behind on the barbed wire.

As I jumped up and down, performing what might be termed the "weed eater Macarena", I saw millions and millions – okay maybe only dozens – of vicious yellow jackets gnawing away at my triceps. I slapped with both hands,



seeking to rid my balding head of the ferocious beasts...I backed up to the brick wall of the church hoping to smash the ones eating my spine. When suddenly... the nibbles began in my groin area! Stop, drop and roll.

I vividly remember thinking, "I am in the church yard, and I can't take my pants off here!" But the yellow jacket picnic continued and Farmer Clint was the main course!

As I pulled off my shoes and socks – yes there also were monsters in my tube socks – I successfully removed my jeans and sprung to my feet. Get the picture?... Farmer Clint, dancing about in only his unmentionables, screaming at the bees as if they understood English!

Oh, this was bad enough...but then I saw a vehicle coming up the driveway. Now my shirt was impaled on the fence post, my shoes were who knew where, and my pants were in the back yard as cousin Betsy and Betty Jo approached. They were on site to clean the church for tomorrow's service.

I ran around back of the building, grabbing clothing as I flew by, hoping the Harrells had not witnessed my nearly-nude "yellow jacket Mambo." You know the feeling, "Nowhere to run, Nowhere to hide!"

Well, I completed the mowing/weed eating project without further incident. The only evidence of my misfortune was a pennant of tee shirt permanently attached to the fence.

Back at the farmhouse, Doug asked, "Well, Pollard, how did it go at the church?" Poker-face intact I replied, "I did a wonderful job up there. I think Barbara will be proud of me! ☺"

And, you know, to this day I haven't a clue as to whether or not Betsy or Betty Jo witnessed Farmer Clint in a Speedo running from man-eating bees? Not a pretty picture, my friends...we can only hope not!

Oh, and by the way, I learned another valuable lesson on the farm that day... yellow jackets REALLY get annoyed if you bang their front door (a hole in the ground) with a buzzing weed eater!

Still Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint



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Biblical World View  
By Franklin Graham

In late January, the United States Senate failed by nine votes to pass legislation that would have banned abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy. Since Roe v. Wade made abortion legal in 1973, more than 60 million children have been murdered in their mothers' wombs.

In New Mexico, Oregon, Colorado and Washington, a photographer, bakers and a florist have all been fined and accused of illegally discriminating against same-sex couples for not participating in a gay wedding. Businesses have been shuttered and livelihoods taken away by government authorities.

The nation's highest court infamously ruled in 2015 that states must allow same-sex marriage.

At the University of Iowa, the school tried to ban a Christian group from campus after they refused to allow a practicing homosexual to lead in prayer.

In many European nations, especially France and the United Kingdom, fundamentalist Islam has gained a strong foothold. Despite its brutal treatment of women and complete disregard for their basic rights, opposition to it is designated as "Islamophobia."

In Canada, the mere preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's authoritative Word has the potential to be branded and treated as a hate crime by provincial authorities.

In each of these scenarios, and most every aspect of personal and public life, a worldview lies at the heart of the prevailing thought, sentiment and ultimate judgments. A worldview is the way a person views the world and himself. It is the lens through which an individual sees issues and relationships, and it becomes the foundation and framework for all decision making.

For example, just recently, a tragic shooting occurred at a high school in a small Kentucky town, killing two students and injuring 18. Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, a social conservative and strong evangelical with a clear, Biblically informed worldview, quickly responded that more gun laws were not the solution.

Gov. Bevin instead challenged Americans to "wake up," recognize that such shootings are a "cultural problem," and to determine their "root causes." The governor went on to say that "we can't celebrate death in video games, celebrate death in TV shows, celebrate death in movies, celebrate death in musical lyrics and remove any sense of morality and sense of higher authority and then expect that things like this are not going to happen. Our culture is crumbling from within."

Courageously, last summer, Gov. Bevin proposed a bold, Bible-centered ap-



proach to address a scourge of violence that has gripped Kentucky's largest city, Louisville. Bevin called for Christians to gather in "small groups of 3-10 people ... quietly walking one block, in one troubled neighborhood at 7 p.m. several days a week for one year, praying as they walk."

Gov. Bevin believes in the power of prayer, but as you can imagine, his comments were met with disdain from the secular media and institutions, who obviously don't consider prayer of any particular importance or value.

An individual with a Biblical worldview looks at the world and sifts all information through the lens of God's Word. Scripture informs his thinking and behavior, guiding his intellect and moral determinations. The Bible is the bedrock that undergirds his entire life.

First and foremost, the Biblical worldview says emphatically there is a God who has created all things in Heaven and earth. Think about it for a moment. The evolutionist is always searching for how to describe the origin and development of life in purely quasi-scientific or materialistic terms. He completely dismisses any notion of a Creator God, and thus is forced to come to ridiculous and preposterous assumptions, unsubstantiated by proof.

An atheist communist state rejects any acknowledgment of God, and thus seeks to assert itself as the sovereign authority, leading to inevitable ruin and misery. Just a few weeks ago, Fidel Castro's son, a nuclear physicist who studied in Russia, took his own life. With no God, there is no hope.

The secular worldview dismisses God as irrelevant in the affairs of men and government, and views critical moral issues as independent of God's moral character and principles. Clear definitions of right and wrong are impossible to determine, having been replaced by cultural whims and situational ethics.

Over and against every competing worldview, the Bible forcefully declares, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind"* (Romans 12:2). In other words, the only way to see all of life accurately is through the transforming lens of Scripture.

The Biblical worldview says there is a God—One who is personal, powerful and caring—who created the world and everything in it. It states unequivocally that man is created in God's image, living in essence as God's co-regent over creation. Mankind—born and unborn, rich and poor, able and disabled—has intrinsic worth. Almighty God is a sovereign God, ruler over nations, states, empires and governments. He is to be worshipped and obeyed through the precepts and principles revealed in His infallible Word. He not only exists, but He is sovereign over all of history according to His wisdom and purposes, and He is intimately involved in every aspect of life.

The Biblical worldview also asserts the existence and reality of sin and evil. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). War, disease, violence, injustice and the myriad of problems that beset the world are the result of man's rebellion against God. No amount of higher education, no enlightened political agenda or social program can cancel or remove the devastating consequences of sin. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick"* (Jeremiah 17:9).

The Biblical perspective also recognizes the active opposition of a personal adversary, the devil, who is constantly on the prowl to tempt and destroy. The devil aggressively opposes God and His people, wreaking havoc in virtually every arena. A deceiver, a liar and a murderer, he seizes every opportunity to carry out his diabolical schemes.

Any attempt to create a utopian society, to permanently solve global problems, is doomed to fail.

For now.

But one day soon, as the Biblical worldview triumphantly proclaims, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth, meting out eternal judgment to those who have rebelled against Him while gathering to Himself the saints, who will rule along with Him in a new Heaven and a new Earth. There will be no more sickness, no more death, no more disease, no more violence, for our enemy will be cast into an eternal lake of fire, and sin will be no more (Revelation 20:10).

This is the only worldview that sees clearly, rightly and rejoices the heart for eternity. ©2018 BGEA

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





April Showers Bring May Flowers  
(Boy, I am looking Forward to Spring!)

By Rev. Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

What a glorious time is Spring! Flowers are blooming. Temperatures rising. Gardens will be planted, and these beautiful mountains turn green. Won't that be a blessed time! Perhaps then we can finally see an end to the flu that has so plagued people across the nation.

My wife reminds me regularly to remember to look at God's creation here in Western North Carolina. I hate to admit that I get so focused on the tasks at hand that the beauty around me gets lost in the details. She will direct my attention to a rock formation, a babbling stream cascading over rocks or to a few deer grazing in a pasture. There is so much aesthetic value in beholding what God has created instead of focusing on the creations of my own mind!

Take time to witness the unfolding of the amazing creativity of our Lord as Spring comes. Remember there is a God behind all of that who could have created a black and white world only. Revelation 4:11 states, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." He created all of this for His pleasure, but we get to take joy in it also.

While studying for a message to be delivered to students recently, I learned that CNN reported in May 2004 the universe is estimated to be 156 billion light years wide. If accurate, the universe is HUGE! A light year is the speed light travels during a year (5.86 trillion miles) which must be multiplied by 156 billion years. You do the math.

A hermeneutical principle states, "that which is created is always less significant than its creator." If God can create such a magnificent universe, as He has, surely, He can take care of us.... His greatest creation!

My heart breaks for those such as Stephen Hawking who believes our God to be nothing more than a fairy tale and crutch for "those afraid of the dark". Hawking stated over and over that there is no God. He emphatically believed everything came from the natural order of spontaneous creation due to factors such as gravity; not from our God.

Stephen Hawking met the Lord on March 14, 2018 with no evidence whatsoever that he ever changed his mind about God. If not, what a shame and tragedy....to stand before a Holy God without having accepted Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. All he had to do was to look up into the heavens and realize all of that came from the mind, heart and hands of a loving Creator, ask that Creator for forgiveness and he would have been granted it immediately!

The next time you are driving around these mountains pause to reflect the love and greatness of the God we serve. After all, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof." (Psalm 24:1) And, "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Psalm 19:1)

Enjoy Spring. Remember there is a loving God who created it all and whose heart is for us. Remember also the depths of His love for us. That He would give His only begotten Son as the perfect sacrifice for our sins AND that the tomb is empty.

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.



Empty Tomb

By 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".

As you read this Resurrection Sunday has probably past and the memories linger in your heart of another Easter. You have probably spent time in Church, enjoyed the hymns, programs and cantatas. Let's think about the first Easter and talk about the disciples of Christ and their spiritual condition after the resurrection. I think we can learn a lot about our spiritual walk with the Lord and hopefully all of us can become closer to Jesus than we are now.

Reading over the gospels, including John's, we learn the disciples were down and out. Even though they had walked with Jesus and heard Him preach, teach, watched Him perform miracles and even raise the dead they struggled with seeing only the Messiah of their forefathers. A Messiah who would overthrow the Roman empire and place Jerusalem as the worlds capital again.

They saw Jesus die on the cross but then the news came the tomb was empty! Jesus then appeared several times to the group and showing them His hands and spear pierced side they all came to realize He was alive. Do you really realize Jesus is alive today? He is alive in heaven, but do you know He can live in your heart? When the disciples believed with their heart and not their head they saw the true Son of God. Not just Jesus the miracle working carpenter's son. I don't mean to sound disrespectful, but I fear too often today we fall into that situation. We see the Lord as His disciples saw Him when they walked with Him. We too often develop our image of Jesus and it takes something very bold to bring us to reality. That's where the disciples were until they experienced revival while on a fishing trip. Peter led the others on a fishing trip that was embarrassing to say the least. These professional fishermen came up empty. Their heart was drifting from the Lord and the lure of their old life was calling them. It happens to us too. Then Jesus showed up, set them straight, blessed their efforts through obedience and on the shore, Jesus challenged Peter to lead the group by feeding His sheep.

Here we are. Easter is over, the Resurrection has been celebrated-- now we must decide. Will we return to the lure of an old life or will we follow Jesus through obedience? He asks today if you love Him? Do you love Him more than anything? Are you willing to feed His sheep? There are many opportunities to serve the Lord where you are right now. Be His witness wherever He places you in life. I never dreamed the Lord's work in my life would involve being a bi-vocational pastor and working in a maximum-security prison. I am His witness to staff and inmates alike daily. Many times, I have had the opportunity to pray with people and share scripture and even be blessed by those around me. Yes, Jesus does save those in prison. What a testimony many of the staff and inmates have as they witness the grace of God behind the walls. Then the Lord has opened a door for me to volunteer as a hospital Chaplain. Visiting with those in the hospital, the E.R. and the surgery center. Along with medical staff as I experience their efforts and watch their commitment to save lives. I am blessed as I give myself to the Lord as a vessel for His service. Loving the Lord and feeding His sheep takes us to places we may not plan on going but the journey is amazing.

So where are you right now? Are you struggling with your relationship with Jesus? I have been there and often get distracted by the lure of the world. Then Jesus shows up and revival happens. It can in your life as well. Let Easter be the beginning of a revived relationship with Christ, a relationship that thrives on His Love and your work feeding His sheep. Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

You can contact Terry by calling 828-460-6120 or by emailing theinspiringword@gmail.com

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.

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## Toe River Arts

### Blacksmiths Blaze At The Toe River Arts Gallery

By Kate Groff  
Mitchell County



On the morning of Saturday, March 31, the front door of the Spruce Pine Gallery (269 Oak Avenue) will open onto a cavernous white room weighted with massive forged and intricate hand-wrought metal pieces. For the 12th year in a row, Toe River Arts, in tandem with downtown Spruce Pine and Penland School of Crafts, mounts a month-long exhibit featuring regional blacksmiths. This black and white world will give visitors an experience in contrasts from the deepest iron, brightest bronze, welded steel, and hammered copper works to painted, patinaed, and no finish at all, and is a prelude to the Fire on the Mountain Festival on Saturday, April 28. Blacksmiths have been invited to participate, be eligible to win \$2,500 in cash prizes or walk away with a handmade blacksmith tool by Rachel Keding.

This year's honored master blacksmith comes to the Toe River Valley from Dolores, Colorado, with a history of teaching at schools up and down the east coast and exhibiting in shows across the country. Now, at her own shop, Maegan Crowley creates sculpture and custom interior/exterior architectural ironwork for residential, public and commercial sites. During the exhibit, Crowley will invite two master blacksmiths, "representing excellence in blacksmithing" and well respected in their field. The showcase will be up during the entire month of April and will be a spectacular display of metal work.

A pizza and beer reception on the eve of the Festival and recognizing the talents of these blacksmiths will be held at the gallery on Friday, April 27, from 5 to 7pm. This is an opportunity to share a slice, lift a pint, and meet the blacksmiths who will occupy lower street on Saturday.

Following the reception, Crowley will give a lecture and slideshow in the Dottie Owen Room on the second floor of the Spruce Pine Gallery. The lecture is free and open to the public. The exhibit runs from March 31 through April 28.

Some of the displayed work rise high on a practicality scale from hinges and sconces to andirons, and utensils—both for the dining room and the garage. Other pieces rise to a level on a different scale—for reflection and contemplation. Under the heading of "work in metal," one finds the most exciting proliferation of creative expression. Whatever the style, whatever the purpose or birthplace of the metal work, Spruce Pine continues to be the premier setting for celebrating this ageless craft. Toe River Arts and Fire on the Mountain promotes and honors that living legacy.

Toe River Arts is a non-profit organization formed in 1976 to promote the arts and connect with the communities in Mitchell and Yancey counties. For more information about TRAC programs and Toe River Arts, please visit the websites [toeriverarts.org](http://toeriverarts.org) and [toeriverarts.com](http://toeriverarts.com). The Spruce Pine Gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10:30 to 5pm; phone is 828-765-0520. The Burnsville Gallery is located at 102 West Main St. and can be reached at 828-682-7215.

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



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BCPS Annual Food Drive Yields Nearly 20,000 Pounds of Nonperishables

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

Burke County Public Schools held its fifth annual Superintendent's Souper Bowl Canned-Food Drive Jan. 8 through Feb. 15. The food drive collected 19,893 pounds of food this year, nearly doubling last year's collection totals. Collection barrels were placed at all 27 Burke County Public Schools campuses plus the Central Office, Olive Hill Resource Center, Auxiliary Services/Bus Garage and College Street offices. Salem and Ray Childers elementary schools collected the most food, filling 16 barrels each.

Four local charities benefit from the food drive; they are Burke United Christian Ministries, East Burke Christian Ministries, Abernethy Memorial United Methodist Church in Rutherford College and East Burke High School's own food pantry.

Joan Benfield with Abernethy United Methodist Church's food pantry in Rutherford College said, "Never has there been such a success. Because of this, the families living in (the Draughn) school district will be receiving this food in the near future to feed the children. This is a great blessing to our community."

Carolyn Yoder with East Burke Christian Ministries said, "Thank you so much for the 10 barrels of food collected for East Burke Christian Ministries. Wow that is awesome. This will allow us to help families for a while. We helped 125 families so far this month in seven days with food and it is with the help of folks like you that we can do that. We thank you so much for your continued support of EBCM and sharing and caring for others in need. God bless each of you that donated. We are so grateful."

The school system's food drive starts each year the week students return from Christmas break and runs until the week after the Super Bowl. Schools decorate their collection barrels and staff, students and the community are invited to fill them with non-perishable food items.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam had the idea to start the food drive five years ago and since then, the school system has collected nearly 50,000 pounds of food. He said, "The need in Burke County is great, and seems to be growing. I see it on the faces of the people I see walking our streets and unfortunately it reaches into the lives of our school children. This canned food drive is one of four campaigns we are proud to sponsor each school year, the other three being our United Way campaign, Relay for Life and the Burke Education Foundation Golf Tournament. I continue to be amazed at how giving our community is and how each campaign grows each year. We can teach science, math and technology all day long, but if we don't also teach about giving back, students will miss out on lessons on how to be well-rounded citizens in our community."

If you need assistance:

- At Abernethy United Methodist Church, bring identification or a bill showing you live in the Drexel/Valdese/Heritage/Draughn district. Free food, over-the-counter medicine and feminine hygiene products are available from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 3 as well as the last Saturday of each month March - October. The church is at 960 Malcolm Blvd. in Rutherford College.
- At East Burke Christian Ministries, contact Carolyn Yoder, director, cbyoder@gmail.com or 828-397-7074.
- At Burke United Christian Ministries, visit 305 W Union Street, Morganton, www.bucm.net or call 828-433-8075.

Freedom names Luke Little as football coach

Freedom High School Principal Felicia Simmons announces Luke Little is slated to be the Patriots new head football coach. Little has 17 years of teaching and coaching experience and has been a high school head football coach since 2007. He comes to Freedom after six seasons as head football coach at Whiteville High School in Columbus County, North Carolina.

Little said the region, the tradition at Freedom and the Burke County school system attracted him to Freedom High. "We are excited," Little said. "The sky's the limit for us, and my family and I are looking for a successful transition on and off the field."

Simmons said, "I am excited about Coach Little's stability, organizational goals and his vision for the Patriot football program. He has a passion for students to not only succeed as great athletes but also as great citizens."



Dr. Larry Putnam, superintendent of Burke County Public Schools, and Dr. David Burleson, director of Burke United Christian Ministries, stand in the BUCM warehouse with food the school system donated.



Freedom Athletic Director Casey Rogers said, "Coach Little will bring a foundation of toughness and stability to Freedom High School football, which is something our football program has been looking for. He has a proven track record, and he's a guy I think our kids will respond well to and play hard for. Good things are in store for us."

Little played linebacker and running back at West Stanly High School before going on to play college baseball at Appalachian State University. A shoulder injury sidelined his football playing career. Little completed his bachelor's degree in recreation management at ASU and in addition to coaching, teaches physical education.

As a high school head football coach at Whiteville and South Stanly high schools, Little has a combined record of 88 wins and 55 losses. At both schools he turned around losing football programs. Little's coaching experience also includes assistant football coach and head baseball coach at West Brunswick High School.

Whiteville High School's football team was conference champions four times under Little between 2013 and 2017, and Little was named 3 Rivers Conference and Columbus County Coach of the Year four times.

Little's father, Mark Little, is a retired, long-time high school football coach, and the two coached together at Whiteville and against each other in Stanly County.

MORE

"My dad taught me how to treat my players and the importance of having a relationship with the kids," Little said. "I believe in building good, strong relationships and treating each other like family. When you do that, the wins and losses take care of themselves."

Little said he has great expectations from his players. He said, "My teams are disciplined and well behaved on and off the field. We are hardnosed and give a lot of effort. As far as the Xs and Os, we will be well balanced with the run-pass game. I want people when they leave the game from watching us on Friday nights to say, 'That is a well-disciplined, well coached team.'" For Little, it's not all about his players' work on the field. "I will keep up with their grades and check in with their teachers on their academics and their behavior. That's the main goal. That they succeed in the classroom. That they have a background of a strong work ethic and are prepared for life after high school whether they are going on to college or the military or the workforce." Little also expects his players to be disciplined outside of school and ballgames. "Their actions are a direct reflection of me and this football team and the high school."

Little will be moving to Morganton with his wife, Nikki, who is a teacher, and their three children. He said, "I have a 13-year-old son who is very athletic and a fifth-grade son who also is athletic and a daughter in kindergarten who is our biggest cheerleader on the sidelines."

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "I appreciate the Freedom High School administration for taking their time in the selection process and using their professional judgement to hire a teacher and a coach that will have the best interest of our kids in mind."

Freedom is hosting a meet-and-greet for Coach Little and the community at the school in the teaching theater from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Luke Little's coaching highlights include:

- January 2012 – present - Head Football Coach at Whiteville High School
- 53-24 overall record (Previous 5 years Whiteville was 27 wins 30 losses)
- Conference Champions - 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017
- 3 Rivers Conference and Columbus County Coach of the Year 4 times.
- August 2007 - December 2011 – Head Football Coach at South Stanly High School
- 35 - 31 overall record (Previous 5 years South Stanly was 28-37)
- August 2006 - June 2007 - West Brunswick High School
- Varsity Football Offensive Coordinator, JV Head Baseball Coach and Physical Education Teacher
- August 2002 - June 2005 - Whiteville High School
- Varsity Offensive Coordinator, Varsity Assistant Baseball Coach and Physical Education Teacher
- August 2001 - June 2002. West Brunswick High School
- Assistant Varsity Football and Head JV Baseball Coach

Contact Public Relations Officer Cheryl M. Shuffler at cmsuffler@burke.k12.nc.us or 828-438-2989

Burke County Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of Burke County Public Schools is to educate diverse learners, nurture their potentials, and empower them to be competitive, successful, and productive citizens.

Burke County Public Schools Vision Statement

Burke County Public Schools, a world-class model of exemplary education, inspires students to be life-long learners who can compete successfully on the global stage and contribute to their community as productive citizens.

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

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# The Rotary of Spruce Pine

## Rural Education Partners

By Elaine Percival  
Mitchell County

Lori Gilchrist is the director of Rural Education Partners of Mitchell County. She has been a non-profit, education and human services leader in Mitchell County for well over a decade. At the March 8 meeting of the Spruce Pine Rotary she shared her passion for collaborating with partners throughout the community to empower Mitchell County school children to be successful in their own backyard.

"A rural community's most important resource is its children," she said. "For a rural community to thrive, its children must thrive." She explained how Rural Education Partners builds relationships throughout our community and helps partners organize our rural resources and strengths to design and sustain model programs that can be replicated.

Programs are designed to develop the strengths of the Mitchell County students they serve and build relationships between the community, the children, their families and REP partners. After-school clubs and enrichment programs like Art and Chess Clubs, in-school mentoring programs, and book and reading clubs like Blue Ridge Readers and Roan Readers bring together a diverse group of partners and volunteers, including local business and industries who fund the work. Transportation, food, supplies and high-quality supervision and instruction are always provided at no cost.

"These aren't just 'our' programs," she said, "Rural Education Partners is the backbone in a way. We develop what the kids want and need with interested partners, then we staff programs and coordinate volunteers and other agencies to make sure those programs are high quality, sustainable, and accessible to all our families."

"And training is important," she said. REP brings the latest research and resources to partners, so they know what works, what doesn't and how to implement high quality programs. "It's all about breaking down those traditional silos of service and funding that get in the way in a rural place with different or fewer resources than our urban neighbors."

"Do you ever wonder why you didn't know about a lot of what we do? It's easier to get people to the table to work with you on behalf of kids if you give credit instead of take it. We need everyone at the table."

Elaine lives in Little Switzerland and is a member of the Rotary in Spruce Pine.



Rotarian Elaine Percival presents a locally designed Rotary mug to Lori Gilchrist, Director, Rural Education Partners at the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine meeting on March 8, 2018.

# Relay Of The Blue Ridge

## Spotlight – Jackie Thomas And Lily Branch Baptist Church

By Don Ford  
Mitchell County

For almost 50 years, Mrs. Jackie Thomas has devoted herself to serving the Lord at Lily Branch Baptist Church in Mitchell County. She has been treasurer, clerk, Sunday School teacher and trustee. In addition to these responsibilities, "Ms. Jackie" has been the Relay for Life team captain of the church.

Even though she is small in stature, Jackie Thomas has a huge presence in the lives of people. This is especially true as a volunteer for Relay of the Blue Ridge. "My husband's death was due to cancer," she states very plainly, and adds "cancer has also affected the lives of nieces, nephews and sisters-in-law and that prompted my involvement with Relay."

Mrs. Thomas is lovingly known as the "Luminary Lady." She promotes luminaries as a priority of her fundraising efforts for the American Cancer Society. A luminary is a bag which is transformed and illuminated after dark at every local Relay for Life event. Each luminary is personalized with a name, decoration and message in memory, in honor or in prayer for a friend or loved one who has been affected by cancer. The luminary ceremony is a very personal and moving portion of the annual Relay for Life event and Jackie encourages everyone to be a part of it.

As a member of Lily Branch Baptist Church located in the Snow Hill community, Jackie Thomas and her church family have championed the cause of RFL for almost 20 years. Working together, Ms. Jackie and Lily Branch Baptist Church raised \$6000 for Relay of the Blue Ridge in 2017. All monies received through Relay for Life help fund the fight to find a cure for cancer. She adds, "It is nice to work alongside those who have struggled with cancer and know that I am helping in some way to help find a cure for this disease." For more information about Relay of the Blue Ridge, please call (828) 467-3439.

Don Ford has served the Lord as a minister for 40 years. He and his wife Deborah have one daughter who lives in Georgia.



Mrs. Jackie Thomas displays a luminary

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# Avery High School FFA

## Avery FFA Springing Forward in 2018

By Dewayne Krege  
Avery County

The Avery FFA Chapter has sprung forward with various activities to include, Career Development Events (CDEs), working in the greenhouse, traveling to leadership conferences, applying for degrees at the State and American level, and even going to school when it is not snowing! We appreciate the efforts and support of our volunteers, sponsors, parents, administration, our CTE director and support staff, but most of all, we thank our students for putting forth the effort in making FFA the #1 student led organization in the world.

### Career Development Events:

In February, Mr. Lane Richardson competed in the State level Truck & Tractor driving event in Raleigh for the second consecutive year. Lane won the federation truck driving event in September, qualifying him to compete on the state level. There were over 30 competitors and Lane made us all proud of his efforts. Lane is currently serving as our Avery FFA Chapter President and is very faithful to always show up and help where he can. Lane, we appreciate your consistent leadership.

Hunters Helping Kids, Daniel Boone Bear Club, with assistance from parents and community volunteers, and our local NC Wildlife officer are helping our Hunter Safety teams prepare for competition on March 24. We have had multiple practices at the NC Forest Service Mountain Training Facility on Saturdays and we look forward to competing in orienteering, rifle, archery, skeet, and skills. Final rankings will be based upon test scores and we appreciate our team members hard work on practice tests with the assistance of Mr. Jared Thompson, our Wildlife Officer.

We are preparing for our annual Region Rally on April 19 where we will have students participating in several CDEs to include, Job Interview, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, Tool Identification, Intro to Horticulture, and Landscape Nursery. FFA is for everyone and many of our students do not live on farms. Several of our active members and leaders have become part of our FFAfamily and support the efforts of the FFA Mission: "FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education."

### In the Community:

The Avery FFA continues to team up with the FCA/UIC to pack backpacks for the Avery Missional Network. The third Thursday of each month, students and teachers gather to help pack food for Avery County students prior to the week-ends. This is a great opportunity for our students to live out the Avery FFA Mission this year, "Living to Serve." As part of the FFA Motto, we feel very strongly about supporting our community and helping the citizens of Avery County.

Our greenhouse is gearing up to help support the Avery County Cooperative Extension's efforts at the community garden. We are happy to help "start" these plants early so those participating in the community garden can reap the rewards of growing their own food. Additionally, we are growing several plants for a local country club and plan to offer some flowering plants and vegetables for sale to the Avery County High School faculty and staff. Additionally, our upper level classes will be participating with the Cooperative Extension Service's annual Plant Sale. Traditionally, our students have assisted with clean up, set up, and preparation for this annual event. We the opportunity for our FFA members and students to meet community members who purchase plants as we sort and load their orders.

### Awards & Degrees:

As most of you know, Mrs. Gwen Clark retired in August of 2016, but she continues to "advise students from time to time, as the need arises." Mrs. Clark has helped our students in several ways, especially by assisting students who are eligible to become American Degree candidates. The American FFA Degree is the highest honor one can receive as an FFA member. This honor is earned after graduation, but prior to their 22nd birthday. We have been blessed with several recipients in past years, and Mrs. Clark has assisted 5 candidates recently with the large volume of required paperwork. Thank you, Mrs. Gwen Clark,!!

We also have a few current students who are finalizing paperwork for their State FFA degrees. Those who successfully complete the State Degree application will receive the award in June at the FFA State Convention. As always, we have several underclassmen working on their Greenhand and Chapter degrees. As an

incentive, we are awarding students with our latest Avery FFA t-shirt when they successfully complete any level of degree or proficiency application. We greatly appreciate the sponsors who have made this incentive a possibility.

### Recent Events:

FFA week was an opportunity for our students to host fun events during lunch to help make everyone aware of the importance of agriculture. In February, students also came up with an agricultural fact of the day for each day of FFA week. Several students participated each day and everyone seemed to have a great time. We hope that our passion for agricultural education will become contagious as we seek to grow our future leaders.

This past weekend, we took four students to the FFA MEGA Conference in Greensboro. The MEGA Conference focuses on leadership. Our students had the opportunity to work with State FFA staff, former and current NCFFA State Officers, and the FFA's National President. Ms. Breanna Holbert, the FFA's first female African-American President addressed the group about the fact that they can, "Make History!" She shared her personal FFA journey and how she has discovered her passion through FFA and is currently pursuing a degree in Agricultural Education.

As we spring forward, we are reminded that class registration for next year is happening. We encourage all rising freshmen to sign up for Agricultural Applications and we encourage all current students to continue their agricultural studies in Horticulture, Horticulture II, Landscaping, Turfgrass, and/or Sustainable Ag Production.

Again, we want to thank you for your continued support of our program and our students. We especially appreciate our sponsors, volunteers, and supports. We look forward to seeing you at our annual FFA Banquet on May 19!

*Krege Dewayne lives in Banner Elk, NC and works with the FFA at Avery High School.*



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Dear Dave,

Some of the people I work with have been buying into a new kind of supplemental insurance that protects against layoffs. It costs about \$30 a month per person, and the full payout if you're laid off is \$9,000. It seems to me you would have to be paying in for a long time to see that kind of return, so I wanted to see how you feel about this kind of thing. - Steve

Dear Steve,

Anytime insurance is there for something you could cover yourself, it's a good idea to stop and remember that every insurance company is still a business. They must cover all the costs of operation, plus make a profit. Believe me, that takes a lot of money.

Statistically speaking, if lots of people cashed in on a policy like this an insurance company would go out of business. We're talking about only \$30 a month to cover \$9,000. That alone tells you not many people cash in. It's gimmick insurance.

On average, you're losing money when you buy insurance of any kind. Again, on average, over the scope of your lifetime you'd be better off simply saving money and self-insuring against things like this. The only things I recommend buying insurance for are things you can't afford to cover personally. But you can afford to cover a layoff by saving an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses.

If I'm in your shoes, Steve, I'm not buying that stuff.—Dave

Dear Dave,

I just filed taxes, and it looks like I'll get a pretty big refund this year. A friend of mine told me I should adjust my withholding, so I don't get a refund. This seems pretty dumb to me. Why would I change my withholdings when I'm getting money back? - James

Dear James,

The only reason you're getting a refund is because you had too much taken out of your paychecks in 2017.

Let's say your refund is \$3,500. Basically, you loaned the government \$3,500 of your own money, interest-free. A refund isn't a gift or reward, James. It's your own cash that you get back because you paid in too much during the previous year. In your case, that adds up to almost \$300 a month!

Instead of loaning the government money that you worked hard to earn, wouldn't it be a better idea to keep it in your own pocket?—Dave

*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 13 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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# Grace Community Church

## Selfless Saints

By Jerry Lewis  
McDowell County

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Peter 1:10-12 ESV)

For the past week we have seen the faith of Old Testament saints. Hebrews 11 lists them and their accomplishments—all a result of great faith in God. Peter adds additional insight into the plight of these Old Testament prophets. Don't miss this—you will be surprised that you were on their minds. They prophesied about the grace that was to be yours. They knew a better day was coming—they just didn't know when.

They wanted to know who the Messiah would be and what time He would come. God did not reveal that to them. God did reveal to them what kind of Messiah he would be, so that when he appeared, New Testament saints would know it. In other words, they lived not for themselves or their own satisfaction, but for the fulfillment and satisfaction of a future generation. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you. While Peter was certainly writing to persecuted Christians spread throughout the greater Middle East in his day, his words are just as applicable to us today. Consider Isaiah.

- In Isaiah 52:13 Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be raised, lifted up, and exalted. In Philippians 2:9-11, Paul writes that God exalted him and that one day every knee will bow.
- In 52:14 Isaiah said that Jesus appearance was "marred beyond human semblance." Matthew 26:67 records the merciless beating of Jesus.
- In 53:3 Isaiah describes him as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. John confirms Isaiah's prophecies in John 11 by describing how many rejected Jesus, especially the religious leaders.

- In 53:9 Isaiah predicted his grave would be with the wicked and the rich. He was crucified between two thieves and buried in wealthy Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.

God revealed "clues" about the Messiah to the prophets, not for their benefit, but for yours. They faithfully wrote down what God told them and you benefit from it today. Their faithfulness builds your faith. How remarkable is this? So phenomenal that angels long to look into these things!

What should this encourage you to do?

Read the Old Testament with gratitude for imperfect saints who put their faith in a gracious God.

Ask yourself: what are you doing today that does not serve yourself, but others; that does not build your faith but someone else's; that does not help your cause, but another's.

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



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## Hospice of Yancey County

### April Showers Bring May Flowers

By Jacob Willis  
Yancey County



I will never forget my Grandmother saying those words to me as I sat by the window watching the spring showers. She knew the boy in me wanted to run outside and play. I was hastening on summer, as many of us do in life. I wanted the most fun part right then. I didn't have time for rain. Rainy days were times when I couldn't play ball, hunt in the woods, or ride my bike. What I didn't realize was the rain made the garden grow, the well stay full, and the fish bite. Rain is a blessing from God. Matthew 5:45 says, "45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

This means that spring time lets us know that God is good. Rain and sunshine are marks of the grace and mercy of God. He loves His creation, and is merciful to all creatures. God loves and forgives, yes, but God also supplies sustenance to us all. God doesn't send rain to the farmer's crops who believes in Him, and all the while sends no rain to the agnostic farmer's crops next door. The sun doesn't just rise on those same watered fields, creating photosynthesis for the believing farmer and not the unbeliever. God provides the same for both. God loves them both. God is merciful to them both. God loves all people, he wants to provide good things to all humanity. God isn't pulling for one person over another, He wants us all to do well.

God does this because His goodness leads us to repentance. Romans 2:4 "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" God wants us to change our minds about who He is. He isn't pulling against us. He is pulling for us. God wants everyone to do well. The great temptation is to sin, then to feel as God is against us. God is against sin and there is consequences to sin, but God is for you. He is for you to repent and believe. Many times we ask how the unbelieving seem to prosper? It is the goodness of God wooing them to change their minds. God wants us to obey Him because we trust His love for us. We trust that God knows what is best for us and is actively working for that in our lives. God isn't trying to harm you, He's trying to help you.

So sit back and watch the wonder of spring in the mountains unfold. The resurrected Christ and His grace are a picture of goodness to us all. Winter is over, the law is fulfilled, and God is pulling for you.

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



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How Are You Defined?  
By Dan Qurollo  
Burke County

The world in which we live defines who we are by what we do. Those who are successful in the world's eyes have accomplished certain things. The successful businessman has achieved a level of financial status and prestige among his colleagues. The world's success is measured in terms of tangible and in terms of the immediate.

On the other hand, the Bible defines us differently. Rather than defining us on the basis of achievement, the Bible defines us on the basis of our identity in Him. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Our standing before God is not based on what we can accomplish; it is based on what Christ already has accomplished.

Being and doing are two concepts that are interrelated, but we must be sure to place them in the right order. Paul commands believers in Philippians 2:12 to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" and explains the basis in 2:13 by stating, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The external action of doing is to be the result of the internal reality of being. Who we are in Christ must determine what we do.

The natural tendency among believers is to reverse this and allow the world's system to define us. When we allow this subtle shift to take place, our worth and identity begin to be determined by what we accomplish. The problem is that when we stop performing and achieving, we cease to be valuable.

But when we allow what we do to flow from who we are, we never cease to be valuable. In Christ alone, we have an unchanging foundation for determining our worth and dignity. These are based upon what God has done in and for us, not based on what we have accomplished. Therefore, that which we do must be based on who we are in Christ.



Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website [www.morgantonbaptist.net](http://www.morgantonbaptist.net) or find us on Facebook and YouTube.

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## Marlene's Meditations

### Legacy

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County

*Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*



I remember my mom's potato salad, rich and creamy with a mound of such bright yellow covering that it yelled, "Come and get it!" A rare dish, apparently unknown to Southern Living Magazine and internet recipes, it resides within my heart, a sweet legacy of Georgian comfort. What was the secret of that golden topping? She mashed a hard-boiled egg yolk through a wire mesh strainer onto the top of the prepared potato salad, its sunshine softly plopping on top. This is my legacy. Filling me with comfort and delighting me with endless tales, it forms the warp and woof of who I am.

A legacy is the sum of our ancestors' remembered stories as well as their values and ways of life. These ideas drift down through the generations, brimming with life and clamping the years together with a sense of connection and identity. Ultimately, a legacy can yield fruits of uniqueness, wisdom and pleasure as well as being enriched with our own stories.

Such was the case with Sarah, the Chief-tain Princess of God's people. Her historical legacy was rich in stories, drawing us into them through a sense of identity. For example, we can identify with Sarah as her husband Abraham deployed himself and his 318 regiment to fight four kings and their soldiers. (Genesis chapter 14) We feel the same heart-thudding adrenalin-pumping plummet of our fear when our own husbands are deployed overseas as we listen to ominous news reports. Sarah eventually recognized that God places us in an environment and then uses that world as a stepping stone to greater faith.



How does a Spiritual Legacy bolster my own faith?

Legacies are not always about end products but about lessons learned. Everything in which I've had a part has not been successful, but the lessons learned are priceless. If we do not have a legacy of spiritual value, there is no need to frantically find or create one. God has already given us the framework for a great spiritual legacy (the Bible). In one of the legacies bequeathed to us in the Scriptures, rules a feisty woman called Sarah who encounters primitive conditions every day and yet maintains her beauty. But, she goes beyond that incredible earthly loveliness to create a spiritual beauty of faith. It shines forth, breath-taking in its glorious reflection of her God and poignant in its depth. Sarah's faith rises in splendor, and she offers its glow to light our own paths. What can we learn from her stories, her actions, her decisions?

I watch as Sarah waits for 25 years for her baby Isaac. Can I at least wait for an important answer to a serious question and watch God at work in my life while waiting for the answer?

I observe Sarah, smiling as her husband acquires yet another group of maids and menservants and a 500-herd camel caravan. (According to <http://biblehub.com/genesis/13-2.htm>, "An Arab sheik is considered rich who has a hundred or two hundred tents, from sixty to a hundred camels, a thousand sheep and goats respectively. And Abram being very rich, must have far exceeded that amount of pastoral property.") And I think, can I possibly look over the current crisis to a place in the future where God smooths out my story and brings glory to Himself?

I see Sarah developing as a remarkable woman of faith who assesses God through His many promises in Hebrews 11:11 and decides to rely on Him, without facts, maintaining a certainty that God is Who He says He is. Can I do the same? I gape at Sarah's accomplishments in 1 Peter chapter 3 as the Lord pours forth His praise of her and think that, if I keep studying her story, I could perhaps emulate her. Sarah can be used as a springboard when I jump into my waters of faith.

We are influenced by our legacy. As a Southerner, I am predisposed to liking sweet tea, finding creative ways to cope with heat, and enjoying various eccentricities of Southern life. And my faith encourages me to find spiritual analogies to my earthly life: For example,

- Jesus is the sweet satisfying eternal drink that my soul craves.
- When the heat of life bears down upon me, I can cool down in the shelter of His wings.
- And when life takes an odd turn or two, God is there ahead of me.

Similarly, Sarah's legacy, (the parts of her cultural, genetic and historical past) became a stepping stone to her magnificent faith. And her faith shines onto the path of our own journey. Through her legacy we can emulate her faith! Study her story and follow her steps to a faith that will become your unique legacy to those in your world!

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



# Mine Creek Baptist Church

## My Two Cents Worth

By Preacher Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County



The CDC reports that excessive alcohol use led to approximately 88,000 deaths and 2.5 million years of potential life lost each year in the US from 2006-2010. Also, the CDC reported that 10,265 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2015, accounting for nearly 1/3 (29%) of all traffic-related deaths in the US. Of the 1,132 traffic related deaths among children ages 0-14 years in 2015, 209 (16%) involved an alcohol-impaired driver.

According to the CDC everyday 28 people die in the US in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. That's 1 death every 51 minutes. Annual cost of alcohol related crashes totals more than \$44 billion.

Researchers estimate that each year 1,825 college students between the ages of 18-24 die from alcohol related injuries including motor vehicle accidents. 696,000 students between the ages of 18-24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking. [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

You read that right but let us recap: approximately 88,000 deaths per year. Over 10,000 people died in 2015 in alcohol-impaired crashes, 209 were children. 28 people die every day in alcohol-impaired crashes. Estimated 1,825 college students die yearly from alcohol related injuries.

Where are the protests for alcohol control? Why is the media not outraged? Where are the special news reports on how many children die because of drunk drivers? Why are the politicians not meeting with the victims of alcohol related deaths?

**My opinion?**

#1. Is money. Alcohol generates billions of dollars in sales each year. No telling how much money politicians receive from the industry, not to mention the tax money that is generated. Even though the cost in human life and misery is there, it is ignored because of money. Everyone points to money when they argue for alcohol sales. We're still waiting for the chain restaurants and hotels to come to Spruce Pine, which was one of the arguments that was used.

#2. People want to drink alcohol. I personally abstain from alcohol and always strongly encourage others to do the same. Being in the ministry for years, I have witnessed the devastation that alcohol causes in individuals, their families, and people connected to them. Have you ever had to notify a family that their loved one was killed in a wreck because they were drunk? I have. People in my family have suffered because of alcohol abuse. It's just not worth the misery it causes, period. I personally struggled with alcohol abuse in my younger years. As a Christian the controlling influence in my life is to be the Holy Spirit, not alcohol (Eph. 5:18). Matter of fact Proverbs 20:1 teaches that Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Regardless of the facts about the devastation and misery caused by alcohol, people still want to drink. One of their arguments will go something like this: "My right to drink alcohol shouldn't be taken away just because someone else abuses it?" Really??!! Well guess what, I don't think my right to own a gun should be infringed upon or taken away just because someone else used a gun to commit a crime. Gun control advocates keep screaming that if we get rid of guns, gun deaths will go away. Well, what if we get rid of alcohol, wouldn't that cause alcohol related deaths to go away?

#3. Gun control is a better political talking point. Can you imagine the backlash any politician would receive if he began quoting the statistics about alcohol deaths and started proposing laws on banning or strictly controlling alcohol? What if our lawmakers proposed passing laws on how much alcohol individuals can buy? What if they passed a law that, because of all the deaths and abuse caused by alcoholism, individuals can only buy one beer per day? Can you imagine the backlash they would receive? That's all the media would talk about! Any politician who supported such would have their reputation drug through the mud and things they did as teenagers would be brought up just to discredit them!

Our society sells alcohol at sporting events knowing people are going to get in a car and drive home. You ever been to a car race and seen all the drinking that goes on? Fans watch cars do 200 mph and sit there drinking for most of the race and then go get in a car and drive home. The bars, clubs, etc., will sell alcohol to individuals knowing that they drove there and will have to drive to get home. Yet no one says anything about stricter alcohol laws. You know why? Because they don't want their right to drink infringed upon because someone else abuses alcohol.

I recognize that right now someone is probably mad at me. Matter of fact it's probably guaranteed someone's mad at me. Many are already thinking of how they are going to argue with me and prove how wrong I am. That's ok. I'm entitled to my say also, even if you don't agree, as you are entitled to yours. Just want people to recognize that no matter how many laws are passed on any issue it will not change men's hearts. Alcohol laws are in place and people still drive impaired and kill others. Gun laws are in place and people are still killing others. The studies of life in a womb are there, but people still think that by law they have a right to kill that baby. Laws against domestic violence and child abuse are on the books, but families and children are still suffering. Did you know that it's against the law to sell or use illegal drugs? Yet people are selling, using, and dying every day. How about stealing? It's illegal to take what belongs to someone else, it really is! I've found out a few times that it's against the law to go over the speed limit. Yet, coming home from Asheville hospital the other day folks passed me doing 80 or better.

The point I'm trying to make is this: No law will change men's hearts. Until we as a society, in our hearts, decide we are going to respect the life of others, nothing is going to change. It's been the same since the beginning of time. What men do on the outside comes from who they are on the inside (Mark 7:20-23). Take away guns, men will use knives. Take away knives, men will use something else, even

their own hands. Change man's heart.... that's when things on the outside will change.

As you probably already know, I personally support the Second Amendment in our constitution. It is my right to keep and bear arms, not because I want to kill somebody, but to be able to protect myself, my family, and my property, from those who would want to take any and all from me, even if it's my own government. The Second Amendment was put in place not just to protect my right to go hunting or shooting, but that you and I might be able to defend ourselves from a government who would wish to take freedom from its own citizens. I love God and I love people. As a Christian, a free man, an American, I believe I should have the right and opportunity to protect that which is mine. As a husband to my beautiful wife and father to my two sons, I believe it to be my responsibility, my duty, and my right to have the ability to protect them from those who do not respect our lives or any others. I will gladly tell others about how much God loves them and that His Son Jesus died on the cross for their sins and will do my best to love and treat them as I would want to be treated. But you better believe that I will defend my home and family with everything that is in me against any wicked person who would seek to do them harm. That's my duty, my responsibility, my right as a man and as an American citizen. I believe it to be our leaders duty to ensure we keep that right and the ability to do so. May God forgive our nation for what it has become, May He Bless America with the ability to become what He would have us to be. That's my two cents worth.

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

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[griffith25@frontier.com](mailto:griffith25@frontier.com)

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



## Avery County

Make plans now to join us on May 17, 2018 for the **20th Anniversary of the Hugh Fields Crossnore Children's Golf Classic**. For sponsorship opportunities or to register your team, contact: Courtney Lane Advancement Associate (828) 733-4305 [clane@crossnore.org](mailto:clane@crossnore.org)

**Crossnore Organization** - Dr. Jerry Mandoe is currently looking out for an assistant who is self-motivated, reliable, articulate and eager to learn with minimal supervision required to work-from-home part time as his Personal Assistant. Job Scope: Screen and direct phone calls and distribute correspondence, Manage diary and schedule meetings and appointments, Make travel arrangements, Produce reports, presentations and briefs. Wages: \$200.00 weekly Hours: An Average of 12hrs weekly. If interested, Submit your resume/cover letter to Dr Jerry Mandoe [mandoej1805@gmail.com](mailto:mandoej1805@gmail.com)

**Avery County Chamber** - May 14, 2018 Golf Classic, Linville Golf Club

## Burke County

**National Day of Prayer, Burke County Historic Courthouse**, Thursday, May 3, 2018, 12:00 noon for everyone.

**Be There at the Job Fair!** Area employers are invited to participate in the Fourth Annual Burke County Public Schools High School Job Fair on Wednesday, May 9, 2018. This annual event is a great time to connect with over 400 Juniors and Seniors searching for job openings and career opportunities. We will promote the event to students who may be looking for full-time careers/jobs upon graduation, as well as those seeking part-time jobs in any capacity.

This year we will host the event at Jimmy C. Draughn High School at 709 Lovelady Road in Valdese. Set up begins at 7:30 am, and the event will last until 12:30 pm. If you would like to participate, please click this link to R.S.V.P. If you have questions, please call Ms. Jamie Norton, MEd, CTE Coordinator. Career Development/ Instructional Mgmt. and Internship Coordinator for BCPS at 828-438-2997.

**"Duke Energy Grid Security and Resiliency"** - Guest Speaker Pruitt, Principal Engineer, Duke Energy Systems Operations and Engineering. America's electrical grid has been called the greatest engineering achievement of the 20th century and the "largest interconnected machine" on Earth. Protecting this complex digital and physical system against threats is vital to life and commerce in the US. Manufacturers, business owners, bankers, investors, healthcare providers, educators, government agencies, home owners and more all have a stake in the grid.

See how Duke Energy is investing to make our electric grid smarter, more reliable and more secure at this very timely event, while you enjoy a delicious breakfast and network with other Chamber members. FREE to Burke Chamber members, but reservations are required. To make yours, click here. Friday, April 6, 2018 Ervin Community Room Grace Ridge Retirement Community, 500 Lenoir Road in Morganton. Breakfast Buffet Opens at 7:30 am. Program 8:00 - 9:00 am. Save the Date! June 1, 2018 at Silvercreek Plantation Golf Course

**Burke County Chamber** - The Burke County Chamber is currently looking for our next President/CEO to lead the chamber. Please see the job description at this website. <https://tinyurl.com/y8or4cjp>

**Catawba River Baptist Association** - Our Sunday School Leadership Roundtable training is designed to help Sunday School Directors, Teachers, and Pastors strengthen and grow their churches through discipleship using Sunday School as the tool. This will be a great time of sharing and receiving ideas so please join us at 6:30 on Monday, April 23rd at the Catawba River Baptist Association. Our Director of Missions (Robby Smith) will be leading the discussion. OUT of the Box (Creative Ideas to Reach our Community for Christ) EASTER WEEKEND: INVITING YOUR COMMUNITY (adapted from Outreach Magazine)

1. Neutral Location. Instead of holding services at your church, consider scheduling them at a neutral location. One church uses a flower ranch located on the property of one of their members and draws many unbelievers each year.
2. Celebrity Connection. Engage your community by inviting a local Christian "celebrity" to participate in your Easter service. Ask the mayor to narrate your Easter musical; invite a sports figure to share his or her testimony; ask the local pageant queen to sing; or invite a local disc jockey or news anchor to participate in a reader's theater.
3. Baskets Benefit. Collect Easter gift baskets from local businesses and church members for a silent auction, benefiting a local charity.
4. Easter Photos. On Easter Sunday, give guests free family photos. Enlist a photographer, set up a spring backdrop and give each person their pictures the following Sunday at Church.
5. Visual Aid. Build or purchase a large wooden cross and place it at the front. Early in the Easter worship experience, explain the cross' significance.
6. Children's Participation in the Easter Worship Experience. Never underestimate the power of a children's musical or drama. Not only are children remarkably capable of presenting the Gospel in a compelling way, but parents, grandparents and friends who might otherwise never set foot in a church will come with cameras in hand.

7. Sermon on CD. Make the Easter sermon available free of charge to guests. On the CD cover, list the upcoming message series and topics that will be covered. Easter follow-up
8. Love Jars. Fill canning jars called "Love Jars" with brownie mix, attractively layered, sealed with a lid and covered with seasonal fabric. Then make a personal visit to the home of each Easter visitor. Make it a nonthreatening, nonpreachy visit that simply says, "We're glad you came.... hope to see you again."
9. Spring Family Festival. Follow up Easter Sunday with a spring family festival. Give the kids carnival tickets stapled to their Easter egg bags to use for rides and games. It's a strong motivator that turns an Easter-only visit into at least two visits. A barbecue and outreach-oriented message series give parents a reason to return as well.

**Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County** - Health Social - Sunday, April 15th., at 5:30 p.m. Please bring a plant-based dish and copies of the recipe to share if you would like! For directions and more information, please contact Cindy at 870-510-8048. Church Picnic - The Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church would like to invite everyone to attend their church picnic at Tuttle State Park in Lenoir, N.C., on Sunday, April 28th., from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

God's Closet - Morganton is a non-profit organization that will offer FREE clothing to parents and / or guardians of children ages 0 to 18 years of age. If you or someone you know is in need of children's clothing and / or would like to donate and get involved, please see the following contact information. We ask that everyone be in prayer for the new God's Closet - Morganton ministry that it will be a blessing to others in our Burke County community. God's Closet - Morganton Phone - 828-244-3876 E-Mail - [morganton@godscloset.com](mailto:morganton@godscloset.com) Website - [www.godscloset.com](http://www.godscloset.com) Facebook Page - God's Closet - Morganton @GodsClosetMorganton After visiting the God's Closet - Morganton Facebook Page please Like and Share with your friends!

**Town of Valdese Community Affairs & Tourism** - Ring in the Spring at the April Craft Market on April 14, 2018! Enjoy handmade crafts & gifts from over 35 vendors, door prizes, bake sale and so much more! Proceeds benefit the Historic Valdese Foundation to complete community projects like the Old Rock School Movie Theater Project. Entry \$1 per person. First 250 visitors will get a complimentary shopping tote! Also, be sure to visit the Piedmont Western Railroad Club open house while you're visiting.

April 29, 2018: Tour of the Past. Spend a Sunday afternoon strolling through many buildings and homes of Valdese that were built by the Waldenses in the early 1900's. This fundraising event will include transportation to each site with a tour guide and will conclude with a reception at the Waldensian Winery. Tickets will be available to purchase on February 1, 2018 at the Waldensian Heritage Museum. Tickets will be \$40 per person or VIP for \$60. Event is limited to 100 tickets.

- May 25, 2018: 6:00pm. Home brew competition at the LPDA.  
May 26, 2018: 10AM Festival at LPDA that will have family-friendly activities for all. Activities will include: bocce lessons, courenta, grape-stomping, basket weaving, and special food! Festival Di Birra: 3-7pm at Waldensian Mill  
May 28-June 1, 2018: Waldensian Archives/Genealogies and special events at the Waldensian Heritage Museum. Meet with a representative from the Archivio Tavola Valdese of Italy to learn more about your heritage. By appointment only.  
June 1-2, 2018: A Cultural Symposium- Four Faces of Waldensianism. Four Faces of Waldensian Witness: Italy, France, Germany, and South America. Special presentations by:  
• Claudio Pasquet: Pastor and Historian of the Waldensian/Methodist Church of Italy.  
• Gabriel Audisio: Writer and Historian of the Southern French Waldensians of the 15th & 16th Centuries.  
• Albert de Lange: Writer and Historian of the Waldensian Settlements in Germany.  
• Javier Paoli: Waldensian Historian from Uruguay on the settlements in Argentina and Uruguay and their ongoing witness today

## McDowell County

**MCDOWELL COUNTY, N.C., 01/31/2018: CarePartners Hospice & Palliative Care** McDowell, winner of the 2016 SHPBEST Hospice: Caregiver Satisfaction Top 5% Premier Performer Award, is currently seeking volunteers. Positions available are Patient/Family Care Volunteers, Veteran Care Volunteers, Special Program/Event Volunteers, and Administrative Volunteers. Flexible days and hours. To learn more about these volunteer opportunities, please contact Scott Sain at [scott.sain@msj.org](mailto:scott.sain@msj.org) or call 828-652-1318.

**Cross United Methodist Church** - 24/7 Sharing Food Pantry at Cross United Methodist Church in Marion. The food is available for anyone in the county who is in need and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with no questions asked. We do ask however that you take only what you need so items will be left for others who may be in need. The church is located at 85 West Cross Street in Marion just past Blue Ridge Terrace Apartments in the Cross Mill Community. Donations of non-perishable food items and gently used blankets are very much needed and can be dropped off at the pantry site or you may call 828-442-8098 or 828-460-9257. If you would like to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to Cross United Methodist Church c/o of Susan Gossett, 66 Willis Drive, Marion, N.C. 28752. Your continued prayers for this outreach ministry are very much appreciated!



**First Baptist of Marion** - Sinning Like a Christian: A New Look at the 7 Deadly Sins Begins Feb. 28th - 11 Weeks Led by Scott Hagaman; Location: Chapel Dr. Will Willimon, Duke Divinity professor and UMC bishop, grapples with the seriousness of sin, which is ultimately discovered not in the badness of humanity but in the goodness of Christ. Willimon's perspective provokes both conservative and liberal, as well as a lot of discussion. The focus is the "seven deadly sins," which identify human propensity, visible around us and in our own lives, to do evil. Grace Community Church--Ecuador Mission Trip

We will be taking a group to Ecuador in June of 2018 to help with construction, medical assessments and support for women and children. The cost is \$1500 (more info to come). If you are interested email: robin@graceforall.org

## Mitchell County

**Bear Creek Baptist Church** - April 29th, 6:30 Brian Burchfield will be singing at Bear Creek Baptist Church please come and join us for a true blessing! Celebrate Recovery

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

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

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

**Casting for Hope** - We hope to see you at the 7th Annual Casting for Hope We are so excited about our 7th Annual Casting for Hope, April 13-15, 2018. This event is our flagship fundraiser and three of our favorite days of the year. While the angler field has been full for some time, we have plenty of opportunities for you to become involved. On the one hand, if you can be present for the event and would be willing to serve as a volunteer, we have a need to fill over 250 volunteer positions across the weekend. Our primary need is for individuals to serve as stream monitors--a capacity that takes them to a river bank with one of the best fishermen in the country to measure the fish that are caught while learning a lot about fly fishing and enjoying the beauty of nature around them. All volunteers will receive an official tournament shirt as well as meals for all sessions that they work. If you would be interested in serving multiple sessions over several days, the Casting for Hope Retreat Center grounds will be wide open for fishermen and anglers to camp. Our three campfire sites will keep stories and time with friends going well after the sun has gone down! To sign up to volunteer, fill out this form. You can get an idea of what it means to stream monitor here. Want to read more? The Asheville Citizens Times did a great review of what's to come!

**Main Street Spruce Pine**--Our Downtown Spring Clean- Up is scheduled for Saturday, April 14th. We hope you will be able to lend a hand as we spruce up the town before the annual Fire on the Mountain Festival. We will have hot dogs and drinks afterward, for all who participate. (Many thanks to the Church of Latter Day Saints who will bringing a large group and have also graciously offered to provide the hot dogs).

**First Baptist Church** - We welcome back Dr. Terry Rae April 8-11 Sunday night 6pm Monday -Wednesday 6:30pm 125 Tappan St. Spruce Pine, NC 828-765-9511

2018 Missions Conference: April 6th. & 7th. Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC will be hosting the 2018 Baptists on Mission Conference. This includes worship, breakout sessions, mission's testimonials, exhibits, volunteer supper and much more! Registration deadline is March 29th. 2018. Please call 800-395-5104, ext. 5596 and make your reservations. Rev. Terry Rae will be speaking as well!

**Plant Swap at MCC!** April 28th 10:00-2:00pm, Main Parking Lot at Spruce Pine Campus. Join us at Mayland Community College for the first MCC Plant Swap!

Free Heirloom Tomato seedlings, grown in MCC greenhouses, will be given away while supplies last.

Bring plants to trade with others, purchase plants from MCC and local nurseries, and learn about programs and activities at MCC.

Free hot dogs and drinks will be available on a first come first serve basis beginning at 11:00 a.m.

All legal varieties of plants are acceptable for trade, from edibles, to perineal and annuals, to trees and shrubs! Please bring your own boxes or trays to transport your plants. There will be no storage available.

If you would like to have a table for your plants, or if you are a nursery that would like to reserve a spot, please contact the MCC Foundation at 828-766-1233.

Questions? Contact the MCC Foundation at 828-766-1233 or mccfoundation@mayland.edu

## Relay For Life, Hoops For Hope - Fundraiser - Friday, April 13th

Relay of the Blue Ridge encompasses Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Please join us in our second annual "Hoops for Hope" Basketball Game on Friday, April 13th at 6:00 PM at Mitchell High School in Ledger, NC. The first game will be current high school girls team members playing former players and alumni. The second game will be current high school boys team members playing former

players and alumni. Concessions will be sold during these games. Try your luck at the Half Court Shot contest for a \$50 prize. These events, while having fun, also raise awareness and help fund research to find a cure for cancer.

The American Cancer Society has been instrumental in leading the way in cancer research for many years. Relay of the Blue Ridge planning meetings are held at the Mitchell County Senior Center in Ledger on the first and third Tuesdays each month at 5PM. Anyone from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties interested in helping with the Relay for Life effort is invited to attend. For more information, please contact Rhonda Buchanan at (828) 467-3439.

**North Carolina Rhododendron Festival Celebrates 72 Years** and 2 full days of family fun. On June 15 and 16, the Town of Bakersville, "Gateway to the Roan and Home to the Arts," will host its 72nd North Carolina Rhododendron Festival which is among the oldest and most respected festivals in the Southeast. The Rhododendron Festival Arts and Crafts Fair on both Friday and Saturday will have live music all day; a special children's interactive play on Saturday; food vendors including local farm to table selections, authentic Hispanic and Oriental choices, wood fired pizza, and popular sweet treats; regional arts and crafts people; commercial vendors; inflatables and train rides for the kids; nonprofit exhibits, and the famous Ducky Derby. There's a classic car show on Saturday as well as a 10K run and street dancing both Friday and Saturday nights til midnight. The Festival will feature the Rhododendron Festival Pageant on Friday and Saturday evenings. Come to Bakersville! You will be a few steps away from 2 world class galleries and other great local artists. Arts and Crafts people as well as commercial vendor spaces are available: Contact Dr. Dan Barron drdanbarron@gmail.com or 828-284-1914 <http://www.ncrhododendronfestival.org/>.

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

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

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

**Downtown Spruce Pine** - I have completed the 2018 calendar of events for downtown. This year, we have added a new event- "Downtown Day". This will be a day geared to bring our locals downtown to celebrate Main Street and all we have to offer. We are still working out the details, but will have activities, games and music planned and hope you will be part of the day. We have also scheduled 3 outdoor movies, in addition to the summer concerts. (Sponsorship opportunities are still available for these events if you would like to help. Many thanks to Tree House Mountain Realty, Peoples Furniture, Superior Installation and Tropical Grill for their support this season).

- Our spring clean-up will be 2 weeks before the Fire on the Mountain festival. If you can help or want to get involved, let me know as we can always use extra hands getting the town spiffed up before the event.

- Restaurant owners- we would like to get your ideas/feedback on how we can help get more patrons to your door when we have our concerts/movies/farmers market. There is definitely a missed opportunity here. Coupons? special sales? Brown bag lunch? If you have ideas, please call or email me and share. I will take all ideas back to the PR committee for discussion.

- Fire on the Mountain will be the last Saturday in April from 10-4. Locust Street will be closed, as usual, beginning late Friday night until 5:00 pm on the 28th. Make plans to have all vehicles moved prior to that night. More info will be sent as we get closer to the event. Also, the BBQ festival will be in Riverside Park again this year, so you will not have to worry about any street closings affecting your businesses.

- If anyone wants one of the Historical Society Depot ornaments, I have them in my office still. Just let me know when you are coming if you are interested in one.

- I have multiple businesses interested in locating downtown. If you have a "move in ready" space available or one coming available, and I have not been in touch, please contact me asap.

In case you missed it... we are excited to partner with the Spruce Pine Farmers Market by hosting the event in Central Park every Wednesday, beginning April 18th. The winter market will be in the visitor center the first Saturday of March.

**Mitchell County Baptist Association** - Mitchell Association has volunteered to be a drop-off point for churches to bring in their old material, bibles and literature to be used by the organization "Love Packages." This material will be picked up on a regular basis.

For more information on this organization, please go to [lovepackages.org](http://lovepackages.org). Their purpose from the beginning has been to equip and strengthen the Church overseas. They are enabling missionaries and workers around the world to reach the lost, plant churches, train leaders, disciple believers and serve the poor.

The office has a list of what can be used.

**Baptist Children's Homes Food Roundup** is the month of April 2018

*continued on page 33*



Disaster Preparedness

By Carol Layton

NCBAM Teaches Churches How to Develop Disaster Preparedness Ministry  
CALLOUT Older adults were 15% of New Orleans' population, but accounted for 74% of Hurricane Katrina casualties.

CALLOUT "Be prepared and get yourself ready, you and your whole assembly that has been mobilized around you; you will be their guard." Ezekiel 38:7

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry's (NCBAM) newest outreach is a workshop designed to help churches develop Disaster Preparedness plans to help protect their most vulnerable members—those over 65.

NCBAM developed the workshop as part of its "Priority #1: Prevention" outreach. NCBAM Director Sandy Gregory explains, "Prevention programs play a huge part in helping older adults maintain their independence. And even though older adults are very diverse in terms of physical and mental health, statistically they are at much greater risk during emergency situations. Disasters reveal who is most vulnerable among us and aging adults typically bear the brunt. NCBAM wants to help churches change the outcomes in their communities."

The statistics are alarming. For example, according to "Disaster Ministry Handbook" (Aren, Boan, 2016) when an F5 tornado struck Alabama in 2011, 46% of fatalities were over age 55 and half of those were over age 80. Ninety percent of all fatalities were members of a local church. Sadly, none of the churches had a preparation program or a communications plan to assist older members in severe weather or other emergencies.

Gregory says, however, that disaster preparedness ministry is only partly about preparing for an extreme event. "A disaster preparedness ministry is even more about the core ministry of the church—serving those in need."

In addition to resource lists for helping churches get started, NCBAM's Disaster Preparedness for Aging Adults workshop explains why each church needs to have a preparedness plan for its senior adults, how to plan and maintain a preparedness ministry, and practical ways your church can help individuals 65+ prepare for emergency situations.

Disasters don't plan ahead for anyone—but your church can—and NCBAM is ready to help! Its Disaster Preparedness for Aging Adults workshop is appropriate for church leadership groups, senior adult groups, conferences and retreats, and non-profit ministries. Call 877.506.2226 for more information or to schedule a workshop for your group.

This is a ministry associated with the Crossnore School System.

Carol Layton is Office and Support Manager for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)



I Protest!

By Lana Ellis  
Kingsport, Tennessee

Shouting protesters waving signs have gathered in streets all over the country. Thousands of women participating in the "Women's March" of 2018 was immediately followed by the "March for Life" by pro-life women. West Virginia public schoolteachers walked out of classrooms protesting pay raises that they called too stingy. In February, after the tragic Florida school shooting, students around the nation staged walk-outs to protest gun violence. In 2017 "Black Lives Matter" activists held several protests. Colin Kaepernick staged his protest by kneeling during the National Anthem. Many descended on Charlottesville, VA to protest the city's plan to take down Confederate monuments following some episodes of monuments being vandalized by opposing protesters.

Protests are not limited only to "people's rights" as evidenced by activists in Madison, WI who protested the beef and dairy industry by carrying signs and chanting "cow's lives matter". I wonder if the Chick-fil-A cows were there with their "Eat more chicken" signs! Said cows are not the only bovine that have participated during a protest. A farmer in Brussels used a cow to make his point during a demonstration protesting the fall of milk prices by spraying riot police with milk directly from the cow! Now that's definitely getting your "point" across!

In 1773 chests of tea belonging to the British East India Company were thrown from ships into the Boston Harbor by American patriots protesting taxation without representation. It was this protest that led to America's independence from Great Britain. Undoubtedly the most tragic protest to occur in our country was in 1861 when the first shot

was fired in America's Civil War, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor. In spite of many lives being lost and relationships severed the war, however did lead to the end of slave ownership. December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks refused to take a back seat on the bus. Ten years later in the name of African-American voting rights Martin Luther King Jr. led demonstrators in a historic march. Even earlier in 1913 more than 5,000 women descended on Washington DC to fight for their right to vote and economic equality.

A protest that drastically changed many people's religious views, beliefs and practices began growing in 1517 in Germany. Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, began lecturing and writing against the teachings of the Holy Roman Catholic that did not coincide with "sola scriptura" (Latin: by Scripture alone) and "sola fide" (Latin: by faith alone) justification by faith alone and not by works. Twelve years later Luther and other Reformation leaders lodged a formal protest against Emperor Charles V and the Catholic Church. It was at that time the word "protestant" came into use. If you identify yourself as a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian or any other "sola scriptura", "sola fide" Christian Church you are a protestant. Our southern pronunciation of the word protestant is something like "prod-is-stunt" but look at the actual spelling of the word, "protest-ant", one who protests.

Jesus, Himself, gave this warning, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." In today's society many movements, even in the name of "Christianity", continue to teach contrary to Scripture alone and faith alone. It may come into our homes by way of charismatic television personalities and/or polite, modestly dressed representatives, with literature in hand, knocking at your door. Even more dangerous it will try to influence your church congregation. As a Protestant I'm very grateful to be associated with a protest that put the gospel of Jesus Christ back on the right tract according to the original writings and teachings of the New Testament. If we ever see heresy raising its ugly head, we must by all means stand firmly and say "I Protest!"

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





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# Enjoying Everyday Life

## Growing in Christ – Little by Little

By Joyce Meyer

I often teach on a variety of subjects, but I believe my primary calling is to help Christians grow up and mature in Christ and really begin to enjoy the great life He has in store for them.

As a young woman, I went to church for years, but I really didn't know much about spiritual maturity. I loved God with all of my heart, but I wasn't changing—I was still as critical, judgmental and rebellious as ever. And even though I knew my life should be getting better, I was still miserable from dealing with all of the same problems.

I believe this is one of Satan's greatest strategies. If he can't keep people from hearing the Gospel and accepting Christ, he will do everything he can to make sure they never grow spiritually and experience the peace and joy that's promised to them in the Bible.

You see, when we're born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our heart—God plants a seed of everything He is in our spirit. He instantaneously deposits inside of us everything we need to live a great life.

For instance, Galatians 5:22-23 (AMPC) says, "The fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy, [gladness], peace, patience [an even temper, forbearance], kindness, goodness [benevolence], faithfulness, gentleness [meekness, humility], self-control...."

Did you know all of these things already exist on the inside of you? You may wonder, Well, if that's the case, then why aren't I experiencing any of it in my life?

Well, when it comes to the maturity process, we have a part to play. Our part is to cooperate with God to cultivate and develop His character in our lives, so we can grow and become more like Him. How do we do that?

It all begins by spending regular time in God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 says, "The Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]...."

When we spend time in God's Word, we are spending time with God. His Word changes us—it changes how we think and how we act. It changes how we see God, ourselves and the world around us.

Romans 12:2 is a great scripture that shows us how we grow spiritually: "Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God...."

God has a "good and acceptable and perfect" plan for our lives, but we must renew our minds with His Word before we can experience it.

It's important to remember that growing spiritually is a process. When I first began to read and study God's Word, I immediately saw things I needed to change. For a while, I felt guilty and condemned that I wasn't "measuring up."

However, God helped me to understand that He never shows us these things to condemn us and make us feel guilty. He convicts us of our behavior in order to help us grow and come up higher in that area.

For example, I was extremely rebellious in the early years of my marriage. Because my father sexually abused me when I was growing up, I had developed a distrust of men. I vowed that no man would ever again push me around.

But as I learned God's Word, I saw that my behavior toward my husband, Dave, was wrong. The Lord was asking me to walk in love with Dave in my speech, attitudes and actions. This was easier said than done! But God always gives us the grace to do what He is asking us to do. He doesn't expect us to do it all on our own.

So, little by little, by God's grace, I began to change. The Lord transformed me from being rude, critical, harsh and rebellious into someone who has real peace, love and joy. But it was a process—it didn't happen overnight.

Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18. It says we "are constantly being transformed into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another."

The Lord changes us a little at a time. None of us will ever be perfect until we get to Heaven, and that's okay. But as long as we're here on this earth, God desires for us to continually cooperate with Him to learn and grow.

As we do—as we continue to grow spiritually and change "from glory to glory"—we will experience the incredible peace, joy and fulfillment that only God can give us. And we will show the world around us what God is really like.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-teaching CD series The Beauty of Spiritual Maturity. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and Unshakable Trust: Find the Joy of Trusting God at All Times (Hachette). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and Overload: How to Unplug, Unwind and Unleash Yourself from the Pressure of Stress (Hachette). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).



# Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care

## History of Hospice

By Ronnie Gregory  
Yancey County

Speaking for myself and the staff at Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care, it is humbling and an honor to serve our community. Our role is to provide comfort, compassion and quality care to our patients and their families at one of the most difficult and vulnerable times of their lives. When this is accomplished it brings a sense of peace to the entire family. That's a good feeling to go home with at the end of the day. While working in hospice is often difficult, it is also very rewarding.

Hospice of Yancey County was organized at the grassroots level with an all-volunteer staff in Yancey County in 1982. Medicare certification was achieved in 1984. We have served our community as the local, non-profit hospice unaffiliated with any other hospice organizations for over 35 years. We moved into our beautiful administrative offices on Georges Fork Road around 2000. Through the years our program has grown and in 2016 we launched a Palliative Care Program. We are now doing business as Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care serving patients and families wherever they call home in Yancey, Mitchell and Madison Counties.

All Medicare certified hospices are required to provide certain core services to hospice patients such as Nursing, CNA, Chaplain, Social Work, Bereavement and Volunteers. The manner in which those services are delivered vary greatly from hospice to hospice. Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care focuses on a Higher Standard of Care and that is evidenced by the receipt of national recognition for four years of Hospice Honors and most recently Hospice Honors Elite, which recognizes hospices that provide the highest level of care according to the patient caregiver.

Let me say that ALL hospice care is palliative care, but all palliative care is not necessarily hospice care. Both palliative and hospice care provide comfort. Palliative Care is a specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and family. Palliative Care can begin at the time of diagnosis and continue along with aggressive treatments.

When a family is coping with a serious illness and a cure is no longer possible, hospice provides the type of care wherever the patient calls home that most people say they want at the end of life: comfort and dignity. Considered to be the model for high-quality, compassionate care for people with a life-limiting illness, hospice care includes expert medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support. Expert care is provided by an inter-disciplinary team of professionals and trained volunteers. The wishes of the patient and family are always at the center of care.

Far too many people wait until they are in the midst of a health care crisis before thinking about what options are available or what care they or their loved ones would have wanted. One of the best ways to make sure you and your loved ones benefit fully from hospice, should you ever need this care, is to talk about it before it becomes an issue.

The goal of Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care is to provide a Higher Standard of Care. We are dedicated to being recognized as the hospice of choice in our community and for being the most respected and trusted experts in palliative and hospice care. Our patients and families are our own families. We treat them with Respect, Excellence, Compassion, Integrity and Professionalism.


We were established in Yancey County and have served our community for over 35 years as your local, community, non-profit hospice and plan to be here for many years to come.

For further information or to make a patient referral give us a call 828.682.9675 and someone from our staff will address your concerns and needs to the best of our ability.


Ronnie is from Burnsville, NC. He is the Executive Director of Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care.



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# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGE

## US House of Representatives NC District 11



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

### Our Work on Gun Safety

I wanted to give you all an update on my recent efforts involving gun safety and keeping our children secure in schools.

As you know, in light of the recent school shooting in Florida, there has been much debate about the issue of gun control and whether we should tighten restrictions around guns. I want to be clear about my position on this: I am a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, and I believe taking the right to bear arms away from law-abiding Americans is not the answer. Not only would gun control run afoul of the Constitution, but the proposals I've heard would do very little to stop the risk of shootings. It's not an option from my standpoint.

Instead, what I believe we ought to focus on is coming together to take extra precautions to keep our schools secure and our children safe. The best and most effective path forward we can take, I believe, is one that safeguards our schools from becoming "soft targets," or areas with little to stand in the way of someone with bad intentions.

Over the past few weeks, I've been in close communication with our district's sheriffs and law enforcement officers to see what we can do to make our schools safer. The conversations have been extremely productive, and their help has been invaluable. In fact, one of our sheriffs, Henderson County Sheriff Charles McDonald, was personally invited by President Trump to the White House to participate in a school safety roundtable, sharing ideas and giving input on how to keep schools secure.

In the coming days, my office will be releasing multiple pieces of legislation that will provide solutions on how to provide school districts more financial resources for security. Stay tuned as we release more information. I believe we can get this done. Gun control is not the answer, but making our children safer in school is.

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) has officially announced his annual Congressional Art Competition for 2018. The 2018 Artistic Discovery Contest is open to all high school students who reside in the 11th District. All entries must be original in design, concept, and execution, with open categories such as painting, drawing, print, and more. Winners will be chosen by a panel of art professionals and there will be a reception for all the students who enter, as well as their teachers and families, on April 28, 2018. The over-all winner of our district's competition will receive two round-trip tickets to the National Reception in Washington, DC; a \$3,000 scholarship to a prestigious Southeastern art college; and their art will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol! The deadline to enter this year's competition is Friday, April 13, 2018. Entries may be dropped off earlier, but all entries must be received by 5 p.m. on April 13 at Rep. Meadows' main district office located at 200 North Grove Street, Suite 90, Hendersonville, NC.

## NC Senate District 47



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

It is not surprising that healthcare consumers are worried about associated costs of rising premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and drug costs. They are especially upset by surprise bills for services they believed were covered. These surprise bills occur when a patient receives an unexpected bill from an out-of-network provider, usually located in an in-network hospital or doctor's office. The bill is usually the difference between what the insurance company paid and what the provider charged. Because the provider is out-of-network, the insurance company has no way of limiting the amount charged by the provider. Often unexpected, these bills pose a significant financial burden on patients and their families.

According to The New England Journal of Medicine, more than one in five patients visiting the emergency room may face surprise bills. In a 2015 Consumer Reports survey, nearly a third of Americans indicated they had received a medical bill in the previous two years in which their health plan paid less than expected. Among those, nearly one in four had received a surprise bill from an out-of-network physician, such as an anesthesiologist or radiologist, for care delivered at an in-network facility. Only 28 percent of those who received a surprise bill were satisfied with how the problem was resolved, and 57 percent ultimately paid the bill out of their own pockets.

Some states have tried to solve the problem withholding harmless provisions that require the insurer to pay the bill. This creates the odd incentive for providers to stay out of network because the insurer has to pay whatever the provider bills. And, although this limits what the consumer pays, the insurer will simply pass these costs on to consumers through higher premiums. Other states have legislated a mediation process, but this just puts the consumer in the middle and creates uncertainty until the insurer and provider reach a resolution.

Surprise bills are a result of a market failure: a lack of competition and too much regulation. There is evidence of this in North Carolina, with some physicians charging 1000% of Medicare. Patients don't get to pick their emergency room doctor or anesthesiologist when they go to the hospital. They don't get to pick their lab when they go to their primary care physician. But they have to pay the bill – and if they don't, they can find themselves dealing with a collection agency.

Last session, I filed legislation to prohibit out-of-network providers from balance billing and limit the amount they can charge when the patient doesn't have the ability or opportunity to be treated by an in-network provider.

The legislation focused on three things: increasing transparency about cost and network status, making sure surprise billing protections exist for consumers, and getting patients out of the middle by creating a more predictable process and price.

Health care consumers should get the care they need without facing unexpected financial hardship and bill collectors at the door. Providers and insurers both agree that a solution is needed. I look forward to continued work on a common-sense solution for consumers who have no option to shop or negotiate a better price.

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



This week, I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee's hearing on the need for security clearance reform. We received testimony from both businesses and the executive branch, and it is clear that the security clearance process has long been in need of reform.

The Vice Chairman and I agree that a backlog of 700,000 people waiting for a security clearance is unacceptable, and the government runs the risk of losing qualified candidates who want to serve, but also need to be employed to support themselves and their families. It is also clear that investigators are hamstrung by 20th century technologies and processes that should be easy fixes in 2018. I look forward to working with the executive branch and the private sector to identify needed solutions as soon as possible.

The Senate is also considering the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act. This bipartisan legislation will help small- and medium-sized employers get access to the capital they need to invest and create jobs. Smaller banks continue to suffer under the burden of unnecessary and time-consuming paperwork, and this bill will provide Main Street with the relief they need so they can grow and hire more Americans. Even my friends on the other side of the aisle agree with us on this no-brainer, and I hope to pass this legislation next week.

# God Bless America



## Military Ball

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

Connelly Springs — With an evening steeped in formal military tradition — females in elegant gowns and males in their Army dress blue uniforms — the East Burke High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) Cavalier Battalion celebrated its annual Army Military Ball at East Burke High School on Saturday. It was a formal occasion in which cadets and their guests were able to get together for one night of camaraderie, dinner, awards, and dancing.

The night started with a receiving line, a military tradition that goes back hundreds of years. The purpose is for guests to introduce themselves to the dignitaries of the event. Cadets and their guests then proceeded to assemble in the auxiliary gym, preparing for the posting of the colors by the JROTC Color Guard, the national anthem, introduction of guests and welcoming remarks.

Calling attention to a small, unoccupied but fully set table at the front of the gymnasium, Cadet Command Sergeant Major Montejó narrated the "Missing Man" ceremony, honoring and remembering those who are prisoners or have gone missing in combat. "The empty chair represents Americans who were or are missing from each of the services — Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard," he said. "They are unable to be here with us this evening, so we join together to pay our humble tribute to them, and bear witness to their continued absence." The tradition of setting a separate table to remember missing comrades is symbolic of

the frailty of one prisoner alone against his or her oppressors. It has become an important part of many military banquets and this night, was no exception. The narration of the "Missing Man" was immediately followed by one of the evening's toasts.

"Let us now all stand and raise our glasses in a toast to honor America's Prisoners of War

and/or Missing in Action," directed Cadet Command Sergeant Major Montejó, who served as the night's Master of Ceremony. After all in attendance were standing, he announced — "To the success of our efforts to account for them, and to the safety of all now serving our nation!" Cadets in attendance responded with "Hear, Hear" as an affirmation of their support, concluding this solemn tribute.

Cadet Colonel Green, the battalion commander, was then introduced and proceeded to address the Corps of Cadets and all in attendance. He thanked the special guests, which included

Mr. Shane Mace, principal of East Burke High School, Mr. David Learner, District Attorney for the 25th District and a host of others from various community organizations.

"Many of these community members have supported our program for several years," stated Colonel Arthur Scott, Senior Army Instructor, for the JROTC program at East Burke. Echoing the comments of the Battalion Commander, Scott went on to say, "We are truly thankful for their support and commitment to the success of our cadets. It is an honor to be with these members of the community this evening."

Upon the conclusion of the Battalion Commander's speech, during which time he reflected on the past, extended his thanks to all who "presently offered their 'untiring support,'" and concluded by challenging the cadets to "continue the many successes of the program in the future."

Next, all were once again asked to stand and participate in several ceremonial toasts, led by members of the Cavalier Battalion's Command and Staff who proposed toasts, beginning with a salute to the President of the United States, the Army and Armed Services, and more.

The 25th District Attorney David Learner served as the event's keynote speaker where he delivered a motivational message about the importance of staying persistent and never losing sight of goals. Learner, whose parents served in WWII, served as an Assistant District Attorney in the 25th District under Robert Thomas and also David Flaherty, Jr., prior to assuming his current position. He spoke on integrity and encouraged the cadets to always conduct themselves in moral and ethical ways.

Learner also praised the East Burke High School JROTC program for its success. Cadets displayed a great deal of discipline as they listened, and at times, acknowledged their agreement to Mr. Learner's statements. When his speech was over, Cadet Colonel Green presented Mr. Learner with a statue of an eagle, "...as a token of appreciation from the Corps of Cadets," and applause rang out.

The meal was prepared and served by Chartwells. A review of chartwells catering web-site noted the following: "Schools are a great gathering place and our catering service focuses on high-quality food attractively presented with professional, attentive service." When asked about this, COL Scott provided the



*continued on page 39*

**Mitchell County Chamber** - Spruce Pine Farmer's Market Finds New Home We have a new winter location for the market!! We will be at the community room of Spruce Pine Main Street at 167 Locust street. We will be inside from 12-4pm. This will be our winter location the 1st Saturday of the month from January till April. Come shop local with us.

The Chamber will host a Candidates Forum on Tuesday April 3rd at 6 PM. Mark your calendars to come and hear from the candidates in the upcoming elections. At the old Historic Courthouse.

**Mitchell/Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force** - April 2-6 - 3 Task Force representatives to attend National RX Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit  
April 21 - Task Force table at ChildFest in Mitchell County (volunteers needed!)

**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.

**Tipton Hill Community Center Easter Egg Hunt** - Get your Easter baskets ready, boys and girls ten years of age and younger, for the first community-wide Easter Egg Hunt On March 31 at the former Tipton Hill Elementary School Playground from 1:00 p.m. -2:30 p.m. A free hot dog lunch will be served from 12:00 - 12:45p.m. at the Tipton Hill Community Center across from Griffith's Store. The Easter Bunny will be there, too! In case of inclement weather, the hunt will be moved to the Tipton Hill Community Center. Please call 688-2524 after 7:00 p.m., if you want to make a donation!

**Women's Prayer Breakfast:** If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God's will, and fellowshiping, come join us for breakfast at DT's in Spruce Pine. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all-for more information call Barbara Harrell at 828-467-3644 or email at bararah@brcnews.com. April meeting is 13th, at 8:00am.

## Yancey County

**Yancey Food Ministries Gathering (YFM)** - Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

We invite you to our second annual YFM gathering April 10, 2018 beginning 5 pm at Western Sizzlin Steak House. Please purchase your meal as soon as you arrive, and we will gather in the large back room to the left.

If you cannot make it for dinner we appreciate your participation in the program which begins at 5:45. We will be sharing information and ideas about our food ministries. County officials will be invited to learn about our work to make Yancey County more food secure.

We will share with each other information and ideas that:

- Inspires our work and strengthens our food ministries
- Educates our county about food insecurity and becoming food secure
- Increases public support for food ministry and food security
- Connects food insecure individuals to Mayland Community College for free education and job training possibilities
- Provides healthy, locally grown food

Please let us know if you can attend by contacting: Herb Walters at herbrsvp@gmail.com. 675-4626.

Yancey Food Ministry Coordinators: Connie McMahan, Shelby Jean Simmons, Brenda Banks

Toe River Food Security Network: Jana Bartleson, Health Department, Herb Walters, Listening Project, John Miller, Reconciliation House, Kathleen Wood, DigIn Community Garden, and Katherine Savage, YAY- Children

**Parkway Playhouse Invites You To Get Involved** - Burnsville, NC: Become a member of the Parkway Playhouse Volunteer Guild. Volunteer to usher, bake a cake, cook a casserole, lend a truck or your muscles. However, you want to plug in, we can use you. By becoming a member of the Guild, you make the continued success of Parkway Playhouse and Parkway Playhouse Junior a reality, but you also get great incentives. You can earn a free ticket for every nine hours you volunteer. The biggest bonus is the family you will be joining and the fun and satisfaction you will get working with your new friends. Visit our website at [www.parkwayplayhouse.com](http://www.parkwayplayhouse.com) or send us an email for information on how you can get involved at [guild@parkwayplayhouse.com](mailto:guild@parkwayplayhouse.com).

Next on April 7, from 10am-2pm, Parkway Playhouse will have its Annual Spring Work Day. During the course of the event, volunteers will work with Parkway Playhouse staff and board to open up the theatre building after being shuttered for the winter. Activities for the day range from landscaping and yard work, to maintenance and repairs throughout the building. It is a great way to explore and learn about one of Burnsville's most iconic landmarks and cultural attractions, as volunteers will be working in every area of the building inside and out. Participants who work for four hours will receive a complimentary ticket to a 2018 Parkway Playhouse Mainstage performance. All are encouraged to wear "work clothes" and bring a pair of work gloves. This activity is suitable for kids aged 12 and up.

For more information about Parkway Playhouse, including performances, classes, and volunteer opportunities, please call 828-682-4285 or visit the Parkway Playhouse website at [parkwayplayhouse.com](http://parkwayplayhouse.com).

**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.



Resurrection

By Timothy Eller  
McDowell County

As I sit here and think about the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I think about His sacrifice. He came and was manifested in the flesh as God with us. The gospels denote, He shall be called Emmanuel "God with Us". He is the prince of peace, the great "I Am". Isaiah calls him the wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). God told Abraham when he was offering up Isaac, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering". Jesus states, "no greater love does a man have than he lay his life down for his friends". While all of us were yet sinners Jesus Christ died for us. I cannot get past that Jehovah God loved me so much that he came down from heaven and manifested himself in the flesh to die on a cross for my sins. The angel stated that he shall be called "Jesus" for he will save his people from their sins. His name is not the name his parents gave him. It was God through the angels ordered that he be named Jesus. It is a derivative of the name Joshua which means Jehovah Saves. The name of Jesus then means Jehovah has become our salvation. He is my savior, my counselor, my friend, my healer, and my soon coming king. IN the end, every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

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



Spring Needs

By David Burleson  
Burke County

Even though spring is officially here, the month of March has reminded us that winter has not lost its grip. We all know that late March and early April can bring some snow and bad weather to Burke County.

Spring brings a flurry of activity at Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM). Our ministry continues to meet the needs of over 10,000 individuals who need a hand up for an assortment of reasons. Our Soup Kitchen is serving an average of 1,250 meals per week. Our food pantry is providing an average of 14,500 lbs. of food per week to our families. Our clothing closet continues to stay busy providing clothes, shoes and other items to our clients. Also, the very cold temperatures in January have stretched our funds for financial assistance. BUCM has had many clients needing some additional assistance with higher than usual utility bills.

To support our clients and provide them with an additional hand up, BUCM is opening a Learning Lab with 16 computer workstations and other teaching resources. Because of a generous grant from James Tool and Waldensian Presbyterian Church and the support of Western Piedmont Community College, our clients will be able to use this lab to work toward obtaining their high school equivalency (formerly a GED), enroll in on-line college classes, complete job training programs, do job searches, have food preparation classes, learn how to budget, and a variety of other activities. We also plan to offer tutoring in the lab for our students in the afternoons and during the summer months. Our prayer is that these new resources will provide new opportunities for those we serve.

BUCM is very thankful for all our volunteers, donors and sustaining churches who provide the resources we need to meet the needs of our clients. BUCM is very blessed to have the support essential to do the work that is accomplished daily in our ministry. To say thank you to our volunteers and donors, BUCM will be having our Volunteer Banquet on Monday, April 16 at the Morganton First Methodist Church at 6 p.m. We look forward to seeing all our supporters on this very special night. Please call Elizabeth Norris at (828) 433-8075 ext. 237 or email her at info@bucm.net to let her know that you will be joining us. The theme this year is, "Being Part of Something Greater Than Yourself".

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the ministry of Burke United Christian Ministries. Year after year, volunteers contribute time and energy to assist our agency. During the last fiscal year, volunteers at BUCM gave 36,353.96 hours. Volunteering at BUCM provides individuals with the opportunity to help and support others.

The Burke United Christian Ministries would like to invite willing individuals to partner with our ministry and serve with us. Here are some volunteer opportunities:

Food Harvesting – Going to local grocery stores and restaurants to pick up donated food.

Clothing Closet – New opportunity – Assist clients in our clothing closet as they shop with a clothing voucher. The social workers write up a clothing voucher that allows the client to shop. Volunteers assist clients and then tally up their selection. No money is exchanged.

Sorting, Inspecting, and Hanging – Interested in being behind the scenes of the clothing closet or Saved for You Clothing Store? Volunteer to prepare items for the sales floor or clothing closet.

Warehouse – Unload, sort and organize perishable and non-perishable food items. Assist in stocking the Food Pantry. Help keep the warehouse, freezers, and refrigerators organized.

Clerical Support– Assist with production of newsletters, bulk mailings, flyers and more.

Learning Lab Support – As our learning lab gets up and running, BUCM will need volunteers to take the lead in developing and organizing the resources that are offered. Volunteers will be needed to just open the lab, work with students, tutor students or assist with students as they work on the computers.

Willing to do whatever or being on-call – Is your volunteer time flexible? Are you interested in just being called on in a time of need? Volunteer to be called on when the donations are plenty or support is needed in the food pantry, clothing closet, dining room, front office, or anywhere in the ministry. We are especially in need of an on-call soup kitchen team for times when something comes up for the scheduled team or in times of bad weather.

Anyone interested in volunteering should submit an application and let's talk about how you can make a difference with BUCM. BUCM asks volunteers to commit to a schedule, if possible. It could be weekly, bi-weekly or once a month. This allows for our department staff to plan and prepare for volunteers. For on-call volunteers, commitment is not requested. Without volunteers, we would be unable to operate, so we are willing to work with you to fit your schedule.

We have lots going on this spring, and we certainly appreciate the support of everyone in Burke County as we work to meet the needs of each of the clients we serve. As we look forward to the summer, we are asking our churches to consider doing a backyard Bible School at BUCM. We had a couple of churches do this last year and they were able to reach a large number of children.

Thank you for making Burke United Christian Ministries a special and wonderful place for all of our clients. We wish for you and your family a wonderful spring!

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



12TH ANNUAL

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

SPRUCE PINE, NC

April 28th, 2018

10 am - 4 pm

in

Historic Downtown Spruce Pine!

Blacksmithing Festival

Free Admission!!

Join hundreds of Artists & Blacksmiths for Hands-On activities and displays. Forging competition, tool vendors, great food AND MORE!

Featuring Master Blacksmith Maegan Crowley

Demonstrations by Featured Artists will be occurring throughout the day.

Master Demonstration Workshop on Friday, April 27th

Pre-registration req'd. Contact stacey@penland.org

Toe River Arts Council Blacksmithing Exhibit April 1st-28th. Contact Kathryn@toeriverarts.org

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# Evergreen Church

## The Greatness and Goodness of God

By Rev John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee



As we observe Easter let us look at Psalm 113. It is the first of a group of special Psalms which were sung at the Feast of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Psalm 113-118 are known as the "Hallelujah" Psalms. The first three of this group were sung before the meal and the last three after the meal. Most believe that the last three composed the "hymn" which our Lord and His disciples sang after the Passover just before they left the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane. The Psalm before us is one of pure praise. It deals exclusively with the greatness and the goodness of God. In the Psalm we find 1. The Universal Call to Praise (v.1-3). 2. The Unutterable Conception of Power (v.4-6). 3. The Unexplainable Compassion of Pardon (v.7-9). Although this Psalm refers to the past history of God's people, it is quite evident that it also points forward to the celebrations of God's millennial people. There the praise of the Lord will be universal and unceasing. THE CALL TO PRAISE (v.1-3). Thanksgiving (v.1a). Praise is the primary element in true worship. Someone has said, "Prayer is the myrrh, and Praise is the frankincense, and both of these must be presented unto the Lord. How can we pray for mercy for the future if we do not bless God for His love in the past? Thus, in praise, we adore God for what is and for what He has done. Testimony (v.1). All men should praise God because they are the workmanship of His hands. Christians above others should praise Him because they are the sheep of His pasture, and preachers of His Word should praise Him above other Christians because they are the shepherds of the sheep. Only the saved can properly praise God because only they are acquainted with the reasons for His praise. Those who serve God best praise Him best, because service is praise. Theme (v.1-2). We have seen to Whom praise is due and from Whom it is due; now notice for what it is due to His "name." By emphasizing "the name", the Psalmist would have his readers to think upon the attributes of God. His different names reveal His different attributes. While praising God aloud in Verse 1, the Psalmist would have the people to bless Him in the silence of their hearts. In Verse 2 The saved should celebrate to His Name, Completion to His Cause, and Triumph to His Truth. In the latter part of Verse 2 we see when this praise should begin and when it should end. It should begin now. If we have never praised Him before, let us enter into today. Then the Psalmist tells us that once this praise has begun, it should never end. Our praise should continue as long as the blessings of God flow. Territory (v.3). Concerning praise, we have seen Who, What, and When; now notice Where. From morning till night from east to west, the praise of God should be rendered. The sun should never set on the praise of God. Thus, His praise is to be not only Unceasing but also Universal. Tidings (v.3). Once again, the Name of the Lord is emphasized. It is interesting that the word "name" occurs in each of these three verses. Someone has pointed out that here is a reference to the Trinity in Unity. Our praise should include Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity working in unity has made us secure throughout all eternity. Thus, the Psalmist states that the name of the Lord should be praised and proclaimed by everyone, everywhere, and for evermore. THE CAUSE FOR PRAISE (v.6). His Loftiness This verse clearly teaches that God transcends all things. He is not only above the earth, but also above the heavens. Heaven is lower to Him than it is high to us. God is enthroned far above all principalities and powers. No one can put God too high because the highest heaven is beneath Him. Thus, above all we should adore Him who is above all. His Loneliness (v.5). Our God is one of a kind. He stands without comparison. In Isaiah 40: 18 the question is asked, "To whom then will ye like God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him? And in Isaiah 46:5 the Lord Himself asks a similar question, "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" These questions will never be answered. There are no words in the language of men that can adequately describe God, and only in Jesus Christ can the Godhead be seen. His Lowliness (v.6). God's dwelling place is so high that He has to stoop to observe heavenly things. But He humbleth Himself beyond words when He stoops to help fallen man. Thus, He who is so great in his exaltation is equally great in His reverence. He is above the highest, and yet stoops to the lowest. This is unparalleled honor. None is so great, and therefore able to stoop so low. None is so good, and therefore so willing to stoop. None is so wise, and therefore so able to know our every need. None is so infinite, and therefore able to sympathize with the smallest grief. THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF PRAISE (v.7-9). Improvement (v.7, 8). These two verses are almost word for word from the song of (Hannah (I Sam. 2: 8). Here we find God's gracious stoop or love. When God stoops, it is to lift up. He often lifts the lowest of mankind out of their poverty and misery and places them in Positions of power and honor. Gideon is fetched from threshing, Saul from seeking the asses and David from keeping sheep. The apostles, from fishing, are sent to be "fishers men." The treasure of the gospel is put into earthen vessels, and the weak and the foolish ones of the world are called upon to confound the "wise and mighty" (I Cor. 1:27,28). Thus, what a stoop - from the height of His throne to the trash pile of earth God specializes in lifting men from the dust of sorrow and from the dung-hill of sin. Let me remind you that God does nothing by halves. When He raises men from the mired clay, He is not content till He places them among the peers of His Kingdom Revelation 1: 6 reminds us that He has "made us kings and priests unto God...." Instead of poverty He gives us the wealth of heaven and instead of dishonor He gives us an exalted position, greater than any on earth. This is what I call real improvement. Intervention (v.9). In Israel barrenness was regarded as a curse; hence this verse is placed last as if to crown the whole and to serve as a climax to the story of God's greatness and goodness. Here the Psalmist says that the God of Infinite Majesty is also the God of Infinite Mercy. As wickedness in men is accounted a great unhappiness, so is barrenness in

women. But as God lifteth up the lowly out of the mire, to set him with princes, even so doth He "make the barren woman a joyful mother of children." Thus, we see that children are Divine gifts and a mother's joy. And may I add here that the two greatest curses of mankind are bad mothers and thankless children. In the last statement we find that the Psalm makes a complete circle, ending where it began by praising the Lord. May our life's psalm take on a similar character, and never know a break or a conclusion. In an endless circle let us bless the Lord, whose mercies never cease. Thus, in this Psalm we find that height and depth are the same thing merely looked at from opposite ends.

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

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# Bridge42 Church

## Forgotten Gospel

By Jason Koon  
Burke County

Gospel is one of the most overused words in our culture today, but perhaps one of the least understood. Everything can be Gospel. If it's remotely related to Church, somewhere someone has attached the word Gospel to it. Anybody ever been to a gospel business meeting before? I hope not. But the Word Gospel literally means "good news," it's a word that was used for a town-crier running through the streets with an announcement. Sometimes, in ancient Greece, it would also be used of a herald going into a town ahead of the King, announcing, "the King is coming." I wonder if that's what Early Christian's had in mind when they coopted this word and made it their own.

I am all for taking the truths of God's Word and making them understandable to as many people as possible, but I think in our effort to make things palatable to the world, some of the great truths of this announcement of "Good News" are becoming endangered. Over the next several months we will explore some of these together.

### Grace

We'll start with the truth that is the least endangered, we'll just call this one threatened. You'd be hard-pressed to find an Evangelical Church that doesn't confess salvation by Grace alone, but I would submit that it would be almost as difficult to find Evangelicals who have taken this idea of Grace and made it their default way of thinking. It's difficult, we live in a world that runs on merit. Slogans like "You get what you give" and "there's no such thing as a free lunch" dominate our cultural landscape and have even found their way into the "Gospel Preaching" of many Churches. But Scripture is clear, there is such a thing as a free lunch because, when it comes to our souls, we get what He has already given.

We talk about grace, most of us believe in grace on some level, but I think many of us have a less-than-biblical view of Grace. It's not necessarily anti-biblical, it's just a piece of the picture. Grace is not the same thing as absolution. Unfortunately, many of our Churches are preaching absolution, where all our sin is forgiven and that's it. This isn't unbiblical, it's just incomplete. All our sin is forgiven at the cross, AND God imparts His righteousness to us. The Father knows us, not according to what we have done wrong, but according to what Jesus has done right, AND then Jesus gives us the ability to live out that new righteousness in real time. Christian's are not people who are just like everybody else except for the fact that we've been forgiven. Christians are people who were just like everybody else, but now have been forgiven and are being made to be just like Jesus. There's a big difference.

On the other side, Grace is not only available to those whose lives measure up. That wouldn't be grace. The Gospel is not a message of do this, don't do this, wear this, don't listen to that kind of music, don't drink that or hang around people who do. That's not good news, it's exhausting. The Gospel is an announcement that all who believe are accepted. Accepted into what? Well, that's next month, but for now, the Gospel is the announcement that the King has come, and everyone who believes is accepted, and transformed, and made into His image. This kind of message is difficult, sometimes, for us to wrap our minds around, and that's why we have to keep reminding ourselves over and over and over, again and again, until it begins to stick.

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



# Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force

## Narcan Available

By Jeff Spargo  
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

We all have been impacted by the terrible opioid epidemic, either by enduring the pain of watching a loved one suffer or knowing neighbors and friends who have lost someone to overdose. One of the goals of the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force (MYSATF), a program of Partners Aligned Toward Health (PATH), is to provide education and resources for our community regarding prevention and treatment of substance abuse. One such resource is naloxone – a lifesaving medication that, when administered as a spray into the nose of a person suspected of opioid overdose, can reverse overdose in 93% of cases.

"I changed my mind about the use of naloxone when hearing the testimonial of a young woman who was saved by naloxone. She is now a successful professional woman with a family. She was so thankful to survive. It was the catalyst she needed to turn her life around. In the moment I heard her testimonial, I decided to put efforts behind naloxone kits 100%," states Mechelle Akers, pharmacist and Executive Committee Member of the MYSATF. "While working with those who suffer from addiction I have learned that many of them have become caught up in something they can't control. They are afraid of dying. Anything I can do to encourage affected individuals to seek help and protect themselves is important to me. Families are also fearful that their loved ones will die of overdose. I have had mothers, wives, fathers express gratitude that naloxone is available for their loved ones."

According to an article published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly on June 19, 2015, organizations who distributed 152,283 naloxone kits to the public received reports of 26,463 overdose reversals. Having kits readily available is an important step in making our community prepared to meet the challenge of the ongoing opioid epidemic. The Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force obtained a limited number of NARCAN (naloxone made by Adapt Pharma) rescue kits from VAYA Health for those in our community who cannot pay for them, but may need them. Anyone in need of a kit is eligible to request one while supplies last. Patients who take high doses of opioids for chronic pain should have one in the event of an emergency. Family members or individuals who are in contact with persons at high risk for opioid overdose are eligible for a naloxone kit.

"Kits of naloxone are also available at local pharmacies for a copay or fee through insurance or private pay," says Mechelle Akers. "Many insurances including Medicaid and Medicare will pay for naloxone kits, all you have to do is ask the pharmacist to prescribe a kit for you. Your prescription is completely confidential and the pharmacist can instruct you how to use the kit." You may request a kit for yourself or for a family member at your local pharmacy, even without a prescription from your physician. A list of pharmacies participating in the prescribing of naloxone as well as patient education materials can be found at [naloxonesave.org](http://naloxonesave.org) under the general information tab.

"These kits need to be in the hands of those friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors who are in close contact with persons using opioids," says Jessica Farley, Chairman of the MYSATF and Health Prevention Coordinator for the Toe River Health District. "If you would like a kit and cannot afford one, please contact Jeff Spargo, Coordinator of the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force for your confidential receipt of a kit, while supplies last." Jeff can be reached at 828-682-7899 or [jeff@pathwnc.org](mailto:jeff@pathwnc.org).

To learn more, support our work, or get involved as a volunteer, contact PATH staff at (828)682-7899, [info@pathwnc.org](mailto:info@pathwnc.org), or [www.pathwnc.org](http://www.pathwnc.org). Follow the efforts of the MYSATF at [www.facebook.com/MitchellYanceySubstanceAbuseTaskForce](http://www.facebook.com/MitchellYanceySubstanceAbuseTaskForce)





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# Penland Gallery Exhibition Showcases Unconventional Use of Materials

Contact Robin Dreyer  
Mitchell County

The year's first exhibition at the Penland Gallery is a collection of work by artists who, in the words of gallery director Kathryn Gremley, "have erased dividing lines or untethered themselves from material and creative constraints." Titled "I dwell in Possibility" after a poem by Emily Dickinson, the exhibition includes work in ceramic, glass, metal, painting, photography, printmaking, and wood with considerable mixing of media. The fifteen artists represented will be teaching workshops at Penland School of Crafts in 2018. The show runs through May 13 with an opening reception on Saturday, March 31 from 4:30 to 6:30 PM. Walking into the exhibition, visitors will be greeted by a three-foot tall, precisely rendered image of a young woman—leaves and geometric shapes float by her in the foreground. The piece can easily be mistaken for a painting, but closer inspection reveals that it is made entirely from embroidery thread. The artist, Ruth Miller, spends about a year stitching one of these pieces.



Ruth Miller, *The Evocation and Capture of Aphrodite*, hand-embroidered wool on fabric, 36 x 30 inches.



Tom Shields, *Mediation*, cast iron, 60 x 18 x 39 inches (photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center)

are just some of the wonders and possibilities presented in this exhibition.

Also, on view in the Focus Gallery, is a small exhibition, titled "GATHER | Eat, Drink, Enjoy," which showcases elegant, functional glassware by Courtney Dodd and Nikolaus Fruin. The Visitors Center Gallery has an ongoing display of objects that illuminate the history of Penland School, and the Lucy Morgan Gallery presents a selection of work by dozens of Penland-affiliated artists. On display outside the Penland Gallery are large sculptures in stone and steel by Hoss Haley, Carl Peverall, and Daniel T. Beck. The Penland Gallery and Visitors Center is located at Penland School of Crafts on Conley Ridge Road, just off Penland Road in Mitchell County (near the town of Spruce Pine). It is the first building on the right as you enter the Penland campus. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM and Sunday, Noon-5:00 PM; it is closed on Mondays. For more information call 828-765-6211 or visit [penland.org/gallery](http://penland.org/gallery).

Penland School of Crafts is an international center for craft education dedicated to helping people live creative lives. Located in Western North Carolina, Penland offers workshops in books and paper, clay, drawing and painting, glass, iron, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors artists' residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution which receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

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# Crossword

**ACROSS**  
 1 they which could \_\_\_\_ should cast themselves first into the sea (Acts 27:43)  
 5 Never be lacking in \_\_\_\_, but keep your spiritual fervor (Rom 12:11)  
 9 the Philistines and of the \_\_\_\_ who lived near the Cushites (2 Chron 21:16)  
 14 by the Spirit, not by the written \_\_\_\_ (Rom 2:29)  
 15 listens to me will live in safety and be at \_\_\_\_ (Prov 1:33)  
 16 Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a \_\_\_\_ (Ps 58:4)  
 17 I see \_\_\_\_ of an almond tree (1,3) (Jer 1:11)  
 18 Which \_\_\_\_ shadow of things to come; but the body is (3,1) (Col 2:17)  
 19 bring it to \_\_\_\_ and cook the bones in it (1,4) (Ezek 24:5)  
 20 What harmony is there between Christ and \_\_\_\_? (2 Cor 6:15)  
 22 father of Seth (Gen 5:3)  
 24 was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy \_\_\_\_ him (Luke 17:12)  
 25 the book after Joel in the Old Testament  
 27 I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you \_\_\_\_ (1 Kings 5:9)  
 29 do not \_\_\_\_ what is evil but what is good (3 John 11)  
 32 Woe to those who \_\_\_\_ iniquity, to those who plot evil (Mic 2:1)  
 33 Go out to the roads and country \_\_\_\_ and make them come in (Luke 14:23)  
 34 the sixth angel poured out his \_\_\_\_ upon the great river (Rev 16:12) KJV  
 37 They built a siege \_\_\_\_ up to the city (2 Sam 20:15)  
 40 was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning \_\_\_\_ up the world (Ps 77:18)  
 41 He is the God who \_\_\_\_ me (2 Sam 22:48)  
 44 and for the \_\_\_\_ that is in the land of Assyria. (Isaiah 7:18)  
 45 The law of his God is in his heart his feet do not \_\_\_\_ (Ps 37:31)  
 47 a prophetess, \_\_\_\_, the daughter of Phineas (Luke 2:36)  
 48 Two sons were born to Eber: One was named \_\_\_\_ (Gen 10:25)  
 50 two women will be grinding with a hand \_\_\_\_ (Matt 24:41)  
 52 the sun, and to the moon, and to the \_\_\_\_ (2 Kings 23:5) KJV  
 54 to lay waste defenced cities into \_\_\_\_ heaps (Isa 37:26) KJV  
 57 They will turn their \_\_\_\_ away from the truth (2 Tim 4:4)  
 58 he that endureth to the \_\_\_\_ shall be saved (Matt 10:22)  
 59 Why make ye this ado, and \_\_\_\_? (Mark 5:39) KJV  
 61 the council together, and all the \_\_\_\_ of the children of Israel (Acts 5:21)  
 65 Those who see you \_\_\_\_ at you, they ponder your fate (Isa 14:16)  
 67 But \_\_\_\_ found favor in the eyes of the LORD (Gen 6:8)  
 69 Am I \_\_\_\_, that you come at me (1,3) (1 Sam 17:43)  
 70 To \_\_\_\_, mine own son after the common faith (Titus 1:4)

71 the \_\_\_\_ has faded and has not spread in the skin (Lev 13:6)  
 72 "At midnight the cry \_\_\_\_ out: Here's the bridegroom! (Matt 25:6)  
 73 vines with hail and their sycamore-figs with \_\_\_\_ (Ps 78:47)  
 74 upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and \_\_\_\_ (Hos 4:13) KJV  
 75 The \_\_\_\_ of the LORD are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)

**DOWN**  
 1 a rising, a \_\_\_\_, or bright spot (Lev 13:2) KJV  
 2 and \_\_\_\_ a coat of scale armor (1 Sam 17:5)  
 3 Asa destroyed her \_\_\_\_, and burnt it by the brook (1 King 15:13)  
 4 If a man sins against another man, God may \_\_\_\_ for him (1 Sam 2:25)  
 5 Simon who was called the \_\_\_\_, (Luke 6:15)  
 6 and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his \_\_\_\_ (Mark 14:47)  
 7 there was what looked like \_\_\_\_ of glass (1,3) (Rev 4:6)  
 8 seems right to a man, but in the end it \_\_\_\_ to death (Prov 16:25)  
 9 You strain out a gnat but swallow \_\_\_\_ (1,5) (Matt 23:24)  
 10 to ambush and \_\_\_\_ everyone who passed by (Judg 9:25)  
 11 a golden cup in her hand, filled with \_\_\_\_ things (Rev 17:4)  
 12 the mirth of the wicked is \_\_\_\_ (Job 20:5)  
 13 if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made \_\_\_\_ again (Luke 14:34)  
 21 Absalom had appointed \_\_\_\_ over the army in place of Joab (2 Sam 17:25)  
 23 Keep me as the \_\_\_\_ of your eye (Ps 17:8)  
 26 the thin ears devoured the \_\_\_\_ good ears (Gen 41:24)  
 28 slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam 7:11)  
 29 they are not plagued by human \_\_\_\_ (Ps 73:5)  
 30 and he was armed with a coat of \_\_\_\_ (1 Sam 17:5) KJV  
 31 He had been hired to \_\_\_\_ me so that I would commit a sin (Neh 6:13)  
 35 took him to an \_\_\_\_ and took care of him (Luke 10:34)  
 36 the love of God (Greek)  
 38 And Moses went out to \_\_\_\_ his father in law (Exodus 18:7)  
 39 All the tent \_\_\_\_ of the tabernacle (Ex 38:19)  
 42 Of what \_\_\_\_ is an idol, since a man has carved it? (Hab 2:18)  
 43 my father's hired men have food to \_\_\_\_ (Luke 15:17)  
 46 he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll \_\_\_\_ David to the wall." (1 Sam 18:11)  
 49 The evil deeds of a wicked man \_\_\_\_ him (Prov 5:22)  
 51 stairway went up from the \_\_\_\_ floor to the top (Ezek 41:7)  
 53 I received from the Jews the forty \_\_\_\_ minus one (2 Cor 11:24)  
 54 The land enjoyed its sabbath \_\_\_\_ (2 Chron 36:21)  
 55 and continued his speech \_\_\_\_ midnight (Acts 20:7)  
 56 endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good \_\_\_\_ (Job 39:17)

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60 The burning sand will become a \_\_\_\_, the thirsty ground (Isa 35:7)  
 62 With the Lord \_\_\_\_ is like a thousand years (1,3) (2 Pet 3:8)  
 63 I wish I could be with you now and change my \_\_\_\_ (Gal 4:20)  
 64 The owl will nest there and lay \_\_\_\_ (Isa 34:15)  
 66 give God a tenth of your mint, \_\_\_\_ and all other (Luke 11:42)  
 68 the bracelet that was on his \_\_\_\_ (2 Sam 1:10) KJV

Solution on page 14



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It Happened to Me.

By Beth Davis  
Mitchell County

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

I could easily write a boring, boilerplate article filled with enough statistics and generalities that would make your eyes glaze over.... yawn....and quickly turn the page to another, more uplifting story.

But because of one particular Facebook post by a woman whom I've never met, and because of the #MeToo movement, I'll tell you a true story about sexual assault. It's my story. To tell the truth, I hadn't thought about it for years.... decades, really.

I was at home for summer break from college in the very early 80s; I was 20-21ish. I started dating a very dreamy, oh-so-handsome, very popular, clean-cut, well-mannered-from-a-good-family, every-parents'-dream guy. I'd known him for years; my parents adored him. His name was Paxton.

He was 3-4 years older than I. He'd been a Sargent in the Marines, and he was a boxer, too. He was a dreamboat! And we had so much fun together those first few weeks that summer.

Late one afternoon, we met friends for a couple of margaritas before our "date". Afterwards, Paxton said he needed to run by his house before we started out for the evening. No big deal. I'd been to his house several times, so I thought nothing of it. And I thought nothing of it when he yelled something to me from his bedroom. I willingly went to his bedroom, and stood just inside the door. That's when everything went upside-down. Everything went terribly wrong.

He put his arms around me and hugged me. Then he kissed me. Nice, right? Sweet, right? No problem, right? No warning signs, right? WRONG.

Before I knew what was happening, he pulled me over to his twin bed in the corner - which had no bedspread, just a blanket, but you could have bounced a quarter on it. He pushed me down, then he pinned me down, and, no matter what I said or did or tried to get him off me, I was trapped.....it was game-over. I didn't stand a chance against him or his strength. He raped me. It didn't matter how much I fought him. It didn't matter how much I demanded he stop. It didn't matter how much I begged. Afterwards, he behaved like this was "typical". This was "normal".

When he was finished, he very casually got off of me, went to the bathroom to splash some water on his face....and splash on some fresh aftershave. And then he changed into a fresh, pink polo button-down shirt. AND he asked me if I was hungry. He was starving!

Probably you think I was angry, defiant, upset, and demand that he take me home right away.

Nope.

We went out for dinner, continuing on with our planned "date", although I really don't remember anything about it.

Even though we'd been dating for several weeks, we'd never had sex. I was ashamed of myself afterwards. I blamed myself for putting myself in that situation.....after all, we had been drinking, and I did have a couple margaritas. What's worse, I continued to see him until I went back to college!

I never told my Mom/parents what happened. He was a great guy; they really approved of and liked him, and I figured it was probably all my fault anyway. Maybe I led him on?

So, I bet you're wondering whatever happened to the oh-so-dreamy-parent-approved Paxton?

A couple years later he married a beautiful, sweet, talented girl I went to high school with. He beat her throughout their marriage. Finally, he threw her through a sliding glass door, and nearly killed her. Probably she shouldn't have put herself in that situation.

If you have been raped, sexually assaulted, or sexually harassed, we would love to hear from you. Although we know it happens in our community, very few victims come forward to report.... perhaps out of fear, perhaps out of shame. We invite you to call us; your identity will always be anonymous, and your story will always remain completely confidential. Sometimes, just telling your story lifts a load off of you. Our compassionate, experienced Advocates are also here to help you if you want it. Please feel free to call the Mitchell County SafePlace 24-hour Hotline at 828-765-4044. And, above all else, remember: whatever happened to you is not your fault. You did not ask for this. You did not deserve this.

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



following. "Based on the positive comments from the cadets, it is clear that this is a true statement." The final events of the formal portion of the program began. This included the presentation of awards to cadets and the traditional Grog Bowl Ceremony.

No military ball would be complete without the Grog Bowl ceremony. The mixing of the cadet punch was described by Green as a "wicked mixture of incompatible ingredients blended together." "It is a tradition that brings together the past, present, and future cadets of the Cavalier Battalion," Green said. Cadet Master Sergeant Gross, representing Alpha Company, started the disgusting concoction by pouring coke into a punch bowl, with other cadets adding mountain dew, hot sauce, whipped cream, salt, and a vast assortment of other ingredients. Cadet commanders were invited to sample the finished product, with Green stepping up to the plate and drinking a cup of the mixture to a background of groans, moans, and laughter, followed by more applause. "This is one of our program's most popular events," added Montejo, yet admitting he prefers the more rigorous, competitive activities offered throughout the year.

Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Freeman, a junior at East Burke said, "JROTC has been an amazing program for me. I had confidence issues before I started the program and it has helped me become more outgoing," she said.

For high school Principal Shane Mace, Saturday marked his first-ever military ball. He addressed the crowd and spoke about leadership, encouraging the cadets and reminding them they are the future leaders of the country.

A. J. Schwankert, History teacher at East Burke High School and military veteran, who served in the Army, Marines, and National Guard, also attended the ball. He stated, "This event seemed to be well planned and that the support from the community was amazing." He was particularly impressed with how closely the program followed military etiquette. "They (JROTC) did the whole military traditions and formalities correctly," he said. "The dedication and enthusiasm of the cadets who worked to put this together is impressive and reflects highly on the individuals, the program, and the school."

At the conclusion of the formal program, many of the special guests departed as the cadets then prepared to enjoy the music provided by a local DJ. This portion was enhanced as the Grog Bowl was made available to all cadets to enjoy. "This a great event for our cadets to experience their first formal dinner and dance," said Cadet Colonel Green.

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

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## RE-ELECT Matthew "Vern" Grindstaff County Commissioner

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## Blossoms And Songs In Unseen Places

By Ken and Jan Merop  
Avery County



Have you ever gone caving or hiked a mile up a mountain?

Though I've never gone caving ~ as in crawling into a hole in the side of a mountain and exploring ~ I have gone on guided tours of caves and found them fascinating.

Yet, it is still not my favorite adventure ~ being underground in the side of a mountain. However, caves hold beautiful, impressive secrets.

The darkness, dirt and dank coolness must spell adventure and discovery for spelunkers. Without them, we wouldn't know about the incredible stalactites and stalagmites that hang down and stick up in splendid, artistic formations.

It causes us to wonder. Why such beauty in virtually unseen places?

Hiking for me is far more enjoyable.

I love being outdoors and breathing in the pristine air of the mountains. I delight in the openness and freedom I feel. Climbing to heights that open to unimaginably majestic vistas are sure rewards.

The mile-high hike was grueling. But there was much beauty along the way with a stream rippling alongside the steep path we were on. But, at the top, beauty beyond our hopes awaited.

A plateau of the clearest lake I'd ever seen fed by a thundering waterfall took our breath away. This same waterfall continuously fed the stream that had been splashing and dancing alongside us as we climbed.

The highway below is not visible from this protected, circular environment. People drive by unaware of the hidden beauty. Yet, the music of the waterfall never stops singing whether anyone hears it or not.

God, the Creator of all things, places beauty in unseen places ~ because. He is inherently beautiful and whether we can see it or not, he creates it. And, then, should we happen upon it, we are blessed, inspired and awed. His winsome artistry declares his glory ~ much like the night sky that is far denser with stars and planets than our natural eye can see.

Whether in the bosom of the earth or atop a mountain peak, the joy of it all is that we can never escape his presence. As Psalm 139: 7a-8a, in The Message, asks, "Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there!"

His beauty is all encompassing, and he never sleeps. Whether we see him in action or not, even unseen places declare his glory; and, we can declare with the Psalmist, "In Your presence is fullness of joy." Selah

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A beautiful white water lily  
with sunshine center  
stands upright;  
Like a jewel displaying its brilliance.*

*"Look at the lilies...how they grow...  
Solomon in all his glory was not dressed  
So beautifully as they are.  
Matthew 6: 28 & 29*



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ [pauseandconsider.net](http://pauseandconsider.net), Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at [kenmeropphotography.com](http://kenmeropphotography.com).

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## Paul's "Theology 101"

By Shawn Thomas  
Burke County

The Apostle Paul preached at Mars Hill. He has been criticized by some for it not being directly based upon the Old Testament scriptures. But upon further inspection it is an amazing compendium of knowledge about the One True God. Notice what all he teaches the theologically inquisitive Greeks about the nature of God here:

Paul said in verse 23: "What you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you":

— :24 "The God who made the world and all things in it." He teaches that He is the CREATOR (In :26 he adds: "and He made from one man every nation of mankind ...")

— :24 "Since He is Lord of heaven and earth" He teaches that He is SOVEREIGN, adding in :26 "having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation."

— :24 "does not dwell in temples made with hands" God is TRANSCENDENT, Paul asserts, beyond our ability to contain.

— :27 "though He is not far from each one of us" Although transcendent, He is also IMMANENT, present with us now; as :28 says: "for in Him we live and move and exist"

— :25 "nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything" God is also SELF-SUFFICIENT.

— :25 "since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things" He is the PROVIDER of every good thing.

— :28 "For we also are His children", "Being then the children of God" The one true God is also FATHERLY in His attitude towards all men.

— :29 "we ought not to think that the Divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image ..." Here he teaches the SPIRITUAL nature of God!

— :30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance" He is also PATIENT towards mankind.

— :30 "God is now declaring to men" This God speaks; He COMMUNICATES with us.

— :30 "that all people everywhere ..." He is the UNIVERSAL God; not merely some "regional deity" but Lord of all.

— :30 "should repent" God is HOLY; He is moral. Sin is an offense to His holiness and must be repented of.

— :31 "He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world" God is also the JUDGE of all.

— :31 "through a Man whom He has appointed" He did send His Son Jesus to earth; He is a MERCIFUL/SAVING God!

— :31 "by raising Him from the dead." He is OMNIPOTENT, miraculous and powerful. Nothing is too difficult for Him!

What a treatise on the nature of God, in only eight brief verses! One might expound these verses in months of sermons and not begin to plumb the depths of this compendium of knowledge of God. It is truly Paul's "Theology 101"!

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



## The Importance of Worship

By Pastor Kurt Bomar  
Avery County

Reading through Genesis again, I came to a verse that initially bothered me. Its:  
Gen. 8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Keep in mind, the Ark had just landed and there is no land life anywhere on the earth. That means the cargo on board is not only valuable and scarce, it's crucial to survival. Any pair of animals that does not reproduce in that generation is automatically extinct.

When Noah went on board he took one pair of every unclean animal and seven pair of every clean animal. It was from this "clean" livestock that Noah took selective animals and birds and sacrificed them. Note that this wasn't done for food

(which is one reason there were extra pairs) but just for a sacrifice.

That's the part that bothered me. I want to say "Noah, what are you doing? This is not the time to waste any of the animals. They need to get out and reproduce. You're going to need them later. When you have a surplus, then you can sacrifice. Get practical!"

But then I was reminded of a couple of people who thought the same exact thing as I did.

Just before Jesus went to the cross he visited a home for a meal. While he was there a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. (Matt. 26). By reading this story in all four Gospels we learn that this event irritated two people. One was a Pharisee and the other was Judas. In fact, it was immediately after this event that Judas decided to betray Jesus.

I can hear my own thoughts echo through their mouths "why the waste?"

We don't have to read much further to see how Jesus felt about it. "Leave her alone" he said. "She has done a beautiful thing!"

After reading the Master's words I realized a spiritual truth that often contradicts our worldly thinking. It is this: In God's economy, the act of worship is far more valuable than the item sacrificed.

After all, God made everything and owns everything. The value of what we sacrifice is not nearly as important as is our attitude of worship. I believe the sacrifices of Noah and Mary came from the heart and that is what pleased the Lord. That's why he says to the Pharisee, to Judas, and to me: "Leave them alone. They are doing a beautiful thing." In fact, I think he would say, "If you're looking for a way to truly please me—follow these guys, they've got it figured out!"

Conclusion: No matter what your job: missionary or mason, preacher or plumber—worship is the highest, most precious ministry you will ever perform. Give God your best and you will have done a beautiful thing in His eyes. And remember, God will be a debtor to no man. He knows how to reward his children.

Selah, (think about it)



Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

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## Faithfulness

By Pastor Ed Couser  
Yancey County

I am a retired Air Force Reserve chaplain. During my journey as a chaplain, I had the privilege of ministering to soldiers who fought during WW II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. These soldiers were willing to give their lives for something bigger than themselves: freedom. Some received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Silver Star, few, the Medal of Honor.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are soldiers in our Lord's army. As his soldiers we find ourselves involved in a spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6). My favorite Christian author refers to this spiritual warfare as, "the Great Controversy," between Christ and His angel versus Satan and his angels. Yes, our spiritual commander, Jesus Christ, has won the war, but as His soldiers today, we find ourselves facing personal battles every day against our enemy Satan. Satan attempts to influence us to lose our focus on Jesus, to doubt His word and His promises, and to forget our real purpose in life.

Recently, our first elder at our church, Will Willis, died. He died on his 34th birthday. He was a loyal, dedicated, committed, faithful follower of Jesus. Because of his faithfulness, he believed in this promise in Revelation 2:10; "be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life." Will demonstrated being a faithful soldier three ways: his personal and family life, to others, and his love for the Bible. Will was grateful to be raised in a Christian home. His dad and mom instilled in him Christian values. The Upper Laurel Baptist church he attended as a young person and teenager helped reinforce these Christian values. He was a spiritual leader in his home. Leading in family worship. Teaching his children how to pray. Many observed how he lovingly cared for and encouraged his wife, Bonnie, and their four children. He was respected by all in our church family. Recognized as a young man filled with wisdom beyond his years. In addition, he assisted with helping our church family minister to the needs of others in our community. He demonstrated Christ love to others too. Several months ago, while sitting on his front porch with him. He said to me, "Pastor, my desire is to have a public meeting." At this public meeting he wanted to share with others his journey with Jesus in his battle with cancer. Because he was getting weaker, this public meeting never took place. As he shared with me later, "God's plan was a better than mine." What was God's plan for him? The people whom he wanted to invite to hear his public testimony, began visiting him in his home. He told me, "Sometime during my visit with each one, I would say, 'Now I don't mean to preach', but I want to tell you about my love for Jesus, His love for you, and the hope I have in Christ." I remember sitting with Will at his bedside following some of these visits. He just praised and thanked God for this special blessing for him. All who were touched by his life were reminded of 1 John 4: 19: "We love Him, because He first loved us."

Will enjoyed studying the Bible. He believed and claimed the promises of our Lord often. One promise he would want me to point out to us is the promise of the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is the hope Will had, this is the hope he would want each one of us to have too. One day soon, there is going to be a resurrection at the second coming of Jesus. Three of his favorite Bible texts regarding Jesus second coming are: John 14: 1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18, and 1 Corinthians 15: 51-55.

The resurrection of Jesus as undeniable. When Jesus resurrected His friend Lazarus in John 11, it was undeniable. When Jesus comes the second time, the resurrection of the righteous is promised, both the dead and the living. I believe Jesus and Will would want us to know that God's grace is amazing. That God's promises are true. Will was a faithful follower of our Lord. He believed in God's promises. There is one promise that meant so much to him, as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ. It is found in Revelation 2:10: "be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life," (eternal life). Will had this hope, he would want us to have it too!

God Bless You.

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



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By Nina Mastandrea, content manager  
Avery County

New Opportunity School for Women at Lees-McRae College now accepting applications for summer 2018 session



BANNER ELK, N.C. — The New Opportunity School for Women at Lees-McRae College will kick off its 14th year during the summer session June 10-30, 2018. Registration for the session is now open.

The program's mission is to improve the educational, financial and personal circumstances of low-income women who live in or hail from the Southern Appalachian region.

The three-week residential session includes instruction in creative writing, public speaking, interviewing and Appalachian literature. Experienced volunteer instructors also teach basic accounting, computer and resume writing skills and how to navigate the college application process. Internships in the local community provide the opportunity to explore career paths. Women participating in the program attend cultural events, such as concerts, theatre productions, and a series of lectures related to local Appalachian culture.

There is no cost to the students attending this program. Assistance with childcare costs and travel costs are available. Applicants should have or be working toward a GED or high school diploma, be of low-income and have an interest in a new career and/or higher education.

"Our mission is to help women improve their personal, educational and financial circumstances," said Jennie Harpold, director of the NOSW at Lees-McRae. "Women who would benefit from our program are those who really want to improve their situation but need access to additional resources. We supply the tools they need to fulfill their potential."

Founded in 1987 in Berea, Kentucky, the New Opportunity School for Women opened an expansion site at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk in 2005. The program at Lees-McRae has now graduated more than 130 women.

For more information and to request an application, contact the NOSW Director, Jennie Harpold, at 828-898-8905 or [harpoldj@lmc.edu](mailto:harpoldj@lmc.edu).

Learn more about the New Opportunity School for Women.

Three new Lees-McRae College programs approved by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

BANNER ELK, N.C. — The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved three new Lees-McRae programs and included them in the institution's existing accreditation. Effective spring 2018, the three programs are health and wellness science, outdoor recreation management and an online business administration completion program.

Health and wellness science, within the May School of Nursing and Health Sciences, prepares students for careers in health promotion and client-focused leadership positions. Students in the new program will take courses and practice their skills in the advanced facility featuring \$1.4 million in state-of-the-art equipment.

Both housed within the School of Business and Management, outdoor recreation management and the online business administration programs offer a variety of ways to expand on a student's individual passion.

The outdoor recreation management program is the nation's only program of its kind found within a school of business. Students can learn beyond the classroom by venturing outdoors to develop essential skills in leadership, program management and environmental stewardship.

The online business administration completion program gives students the ability to finish a baccalaureate degree or gain new skills to advance their career. Online courses offer working and nontraditional students the convenience to learn on their schedule, at their pace and on their budget.

Provost and Dean of Faculty, Dr. Todd Lidh, shared his excitement over the accreditation of the three new programs.

"The recent approvals mark both an exciting new chapter for the college and students as well as validation of the great work our faculty have put in to make these programs a reality," Lidh said. "These dynamic programs add to the fabric of the college, providing wonderful and enjoyable opportunities for students, staff, and faculty alike."

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the recognized regional accrediting body in the eleven U.S. Southern states and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees, according to the SACSCOC website. To gain or maintain accreditation with the Commission on Colleges, an institution must comply with the standards contained in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and with the policies and procedures of the Commission on Colleges.

Explore the health and wellness science program, the outdoor recreation management program, and the online business on our website administration completion program here.

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, Lees-McRae College is a private, four-year college offering diverse baccalaureate degrees, strong athletic programs and outstanding faculty. Field-specific career preparation and hands-on learning enhance the broad core curriculum. For more information, please visit [www.lmc.edu](http://www.lmc.edu) or call 828.898.5241.

Nina Mastandrea is the content manager of Lees-McRae College



It Could Happen in a Moment

By Allen Buchanan  
Mitchell County

As I write this article, outside a fresh blanket of snow is covering the ground. The snow is still falling since before midnight and other than the howling of the wind ripping across the top of my house all is quiet. Snow seems to always quieten things down. Especially if the temperature falls drastically and our roads become slippery. For those of you who don't like snow, I wonder what it takes for you to slow down, take a deep breath and rest. Periods of quietness are good for the mind, body, and soul. Yet at times it can be scary.

Back in the mid-nineties, Sherri and I decided to take a weekend vacation to Pigeon Forge at Christmas time and see the lights. Not long after dark, we drove to Gatlinburg to see theirs. As we entered the town along with several other vehicles, all at once traffic came to a halt. While at a standstill, we were looking around and noticed there wasn't any movement other than us and the ones who had followed us. The streets, store windows, and sidewalks were lit up and fully decorated. Some store doors were standing wide open. The strangest thing of all, not a single person was walking the sidewalks. No one could be seen inside the buildings or even in the cars in front of us or in the one's going in the opposite direction. And even far ahead to a curve in the street no one could be seen. Sherri turned to me and said, "did everyone get raptured?" You would think so. With us still on earth, we knew that couldn't be. Little did we know that on the other side of town, a Christmas Parade was in progress. Though we've laughed about that occurrence at times from that day until now, the rapture will happen someday, and people will disappear.

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* 1 Corinthians 15:52

When the Adult Choir at Bear Creek Baptist Church sings the song, "It Could Happen in A Moment" the Holy Spirit inside of me quickly puts me in that frame of mind. Though I haven't stood in twenty-two years, when Joyce Boone begins to blow her trumpet at the beginning of verse two, I want to jump to my feet, dance and shout: "Praise God, I'm going home!"

If you aren't already looking for Jesus' return, then something must be wrong with your heart and soul. Every day, something that we've been warned about unfolds before our eyes. People get ready, Jesus is coming!

"It could happen in a moment! in the twinkling of an eye it could happen in a moment He could split the eastern sky, though our hearts will feel unworthy yea how happy we will be, when the saviour comes from Heaven when his blessed face we'll see! I am listening every moment, for the mighty trumpet sound what a time we'll have together when the saints will leave the ground! all our toiling will be over! all our sorrow and its pain! it could happen in a moment Jesus Christ could come again! (could come again) it could happen in a moment, any minute of the day! he could call us home to Heaven there forevermore to stay! hold the fort a little longer in your struggle over sin! Trust the Great Commander's promise, He will surely come again! I am listening every moment for the mighty trumpet sound what a time we'll have together when the saints will leave the ground! all our toiling will be over! all our sorrow and its pain! it could happen in a moment! Jesus Christ could come again! (could come again) Jesus Christ could come again!!!!"

Joe E. Parks is the Author of "it could happen in a moment".

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



9th Annual Burnsville Fit Families 5K on May 12th

By Molly McCade  
Yancey County



Burnsville, NC – The 9th Annual Burnsville Fit Families 5K will take place on Saturday, May 12, 2017 with a 9:00 AM race start time. The USATF certified 5K course starts and finishes on the Burnsville Town Square, running through downtown Burnsville. Packet pick-up and race-day registration will be at First Baptist Church in Burnsville, beginning at 8:00 AM on race day.

We welcome runners of all ages, strollers, groups who run together, first-time 5K runners and experienced runners! We provide smoothies, music, and prizes, and our volunteers and community provide motivation and support. We encourage costumes, crazy hats, bubbles, music, noise makers, and all manner of silliness! The runners are really motivated by businesses and community members along the course who show their race support.



The Burnsville Fit Families 5K has a special emphasis on engaging youth and the surrounding community to develop lifelong fitness. All youth under 18 run for

free! Please plan to join us for this fun event.

Learn more about the race and register to participate at <http://bit.ly/bff5k>. Register by April 24th to guarantee a t-shirt. Details can be found on our Facebook event by searching "9th Annual BFF 5K".

Join us after the race for the awards ceremony, held on the Burnsville Town Square. We will be giving out smoothies, prizes and more!

We would like to extend a special thanks to the 2018 5K Title Sponsor, Mountain Community Health Partnership, for their generous support of this event.

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

4			2		1			
		6		7	4		9	
		2						8
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		5				8		
6	3				8	2		
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# New Little Miss McDowell

## Begins a "Lifelong Journey"

By Marion Stephan  
McDowell County

Serving as Little Miss McDowell has been a "once in a lifetime journey . . . I want to thank God for providing me all these amazing opportunities." With these recorded comments, aired toward the close of the 2018 Little Miss McDowell pageant March 10, Addison Cunningham summed up her year as Little Miss McDowell 2017. Shortly afterward, Kayleigh Freeman, a seventh grader at East McDowell Middle School, was selected to embark on this "once in a lifetime journey" in 2018.

Ava Effler, a third-grader at Pleasant Gardens Elementary School, and Stella White, a sixth-grader at West McDowell Middle School, were named second and first runners-up, respectively. Tessa Ross, a sixth-grader at West Middle School, was voted Miss Congeniality by her fellow contestants.

The pageant took place in the East McDowell Middle School auditorium. On a stage decked with palm trees and tropical flowers, in line with this year's

"A Tiki Night" theme, 22 contestants demonstrated the results of week-long rehearsals. They honed singing, dancing, and acting skills, and displayed presentation skills and poise through an evening gown competition.

Vocalists during the talent competition included 12-year-old Kaylyn Fairchild, twanging out "Oh Darling" in a country/bluesy style. Ava Effler, 8, crooned out "I Will Always Love You." Her voice rose in intensity as the song progressed, ending in a subdued tone for the final iteration of "I Will Always Love You." Heaven "Emerald" Greene, 10, in a pink doll-like dress, and Patricia Minor, 9, in a white top and flowing skirt, applied their own distinctive singing styles to Disney Studio's "How Far I'll Go." In a mellow voice, 10-year-old Hope Wakefield expressed her longing for a place "where I can take my pen and draw/the girl I mean to be."

Jada Fairchild, 10, yielded her dream-like voice to the strains of "What a Wonderful World," while 10-year-old Macy Slagle lifted her voice in a plea that "God Help Me." Ryan Hunt, decked out in red and black as the ladybug in James and the Giant Peach, crooned out "Everywhere That You Are" from the Disney studio movie.

In an acting performance, 8-year-old Ava Buchanan donned a blue dress to perform Lucy's "I intend to be a queen" monologue from "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown." Eleven-year-old Tessa Ross, wearing the traditional black garb of a concert musician, maneuvered her fingers across a piano keyboard to produce "My Heart Will Go On."

Eleven of the 22 contestants displayed dancing skills during the talent competition. Kayleigh Freeman, 11, clicked her heels in a tap routine to "Na Na Na." Kaidyn Johnson, 7, ascended from an oversized music box to dance as a music box figurine to "Music Box Dancer." Eight-year-old Raigan Crummie's fluid upward arm movements depicted the spirit of the song



Kayleigh Freeman Little Miss McDowell



Ava Effler 2nd Runner up

"Rise Up."

A combination of gymnastics and dance was the genre for contestants Kaida Burnette, 7; Autumn Oliver, 11; Arhianna Cardeas, 7; and Skylar Woody, 7. Miss Woody, sporting the blue pantaloons of the genie in Disney's Aladdin, cavorted and cartwheeled through the genie's ditty, "Friend Like Me." Miss Burnette flipped, leapt, and spun to the beat of "Chillen like a Villian." A series of polished gymnastic movements, culminating in splits, distinguished Autumn Oliver's and Arhianna Cardeas's performances. The two danced to "The River" and "BidiBidi BomBom," respectively.

Gyrations and leg lifts characterized Olivia Moore's flashy steps to "Shake Your Groove Thing" and Alyssa Hemphill's jazz dance to "Can't Get Enough." Miss Moore is 8 years old, and Miss Hemphill is 9.

Nine-year-old Gracie Johnson added an international tone to the event. She twirled an array of multi-colored ribbons as she performed a Chinese ribbon dance to "Flower Drum."

In a routine that included arms circling upward and ended kneeling in prayer, a white-robed Gianah Rometti, 7, performed a praise dance to "Worth." Eleven-year-old Stella White, brandishing a sword and shield, asserted, through dance, that she wanted to "fight like a soldier . . . till the final day." Miss White was dancing to the gospel/Christian song "Brave."

The Little Miss McDowell pageant was initiated 44 years ago by the McDowell High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC), says Captain Steven Ross, NJROTC instructor and organizer of the pageant. Its purpose was to serve as both an NJROTC fund-raiser and a morale booster for the McDowell community.

The pageant itself is only one component of the Little Miss McDowell experience, culminating a week of intensive rehearsing, fun, and relationship-building. In questionnaires completed during the week, contestants put interacting with others at the top of their list of positive pageant experiences. "You get to express yourself and meet new people," said Patricia Minor. "I love getting to know the other girls," asserted Skylar Woody.

Especially important, the girls noted, was the opportunity to bond with the NJROTC cadet big sisters who supervised and encouraged the contestants throughout the week. "My favorite things have been making friends and having my big sister Sandra help me, said Ahianna Cardenas. Alyssa Hemphill enjoyed "meeting new friends and hanging out with my big sister."

The big sisters, in similar questionnaires, expressed pleasure in building relationships with their little sisters. Ariel Revis noted that her bond with little sister Jada Fairchild "will last a life time." Rebecca Broughton enjoyed "coloring together" and "getting to brighten the week of a little girl." Lindsey Armer notes that "after I leave my stressful day at school," being around her little sister "always brightens my day."

Katlyn Davis said she enjoyed relating to her little sister, Stella White, and "all the other little sisters. . . It's really interesting to spend time with someone who is younger than you are and to see their perspective on things."

In a letter to pageant attendees, printed in the pageant program, Hailey Corman, cadet pageant director, described the comradery that permeates the pageant. "The little girls, as well as cadets and adults, have had so much fun this week putting it all together."

Marion Stephan is a Christian freelance writer and attends New Covenant Community Church in Marion.



Stella White 1st Runner Up



Tessa Ross Ms Congeniality

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# North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry

## Grant Awards

By Carol Layton, Director of Communications

### Ministry Announces Matching Grant Awards for Rampin' Up! 2018

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) will use proceeds from its upscale resale store, Fancy Finds, to help fund \$10,000 in matching grant awards for wheelchair ramps built during Rampin' Up! 2018.

The grants will be awarded to churches participating in the ramp-raising marathon held in conjunction with Operation Inasmuch on April 28 and May 5. Rampin' Up! is an outreach of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)—one of the many ministries of BCH.

Since 2012, NCBAM and Baptists on Mission, an auxiliary to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, have partnered to build more than 850 wheelchair ramps. While ramp builders generously donate their time and talents, many frail-aging individuals cannot afford the full cost of ramp supplies. The average cost of materials for one ramp is \$1,500. NCBAM Rampin' Up! matching grants will be awarded up to 50% of the total cost of materials—with a maximum award of \$750 per ramp.

Operation Inasmuch is a national nonprofit that employs proven models to motivate, train, and equip church leaders to mobilize its members for serving community families and individuals in need.

In announcing the Rampin' Up! Matching Grant awards, BCH president Dr. Michael C. Blackwell explained that accessibility ramps are a vital part of NCBAM's mission to help aging adults maintain their independence.

"A key to independence is mobility to and from one's home," he said. "Social isolation causes a downward spiral in emotional and physical health and we want to do everything we can to keep North Carolina's aging safe and part of the life of their communities."

BCH administers more than a dozen ministry outreaches to people of all ages. From newborns to centenarians, BCH shares hope with thousands through its organizational vision of "sharing hope...changing lives." Fancy Finds is located on BCH's Mills Home campus in Thomasville and is open the first and third Friday and Saturday of each month. The store features donations of gently-used antique furniture and home decor that have been creatively restored and repurposed by Fancy Finds. Hand-crafted products from local artisans are also available. In addition, Fancy Finds offers estate sale services, DIY classes, and custom repurposing.

Not only do all proceeds from Fancy Finds benefit the ministries of BCH, older children in care at Mills Home have learned repurposing and customer service skills as store employees. Grieving families have also benefited by the compassionate care intrinsic to Fancy Finds estate sale services. And now, frail aging adults in need of wheelchair ramps will benefit from the resale store's mission—Repurposed for a Purpose.

NCBAM also received a Special Projects grant from the North Carolina Baptist Foundation. This generous grant will provide an additional \$2,500 in matching funds for Rampin' Up! To meet the immense need, NCBAM is still seeking sponsors, individual donations, and volunteer ramp builders!

For more information about Rampin' Up!, contact the NCBAM Call Center at 877.506.2226. The matching grant application may be completed at [www.ncbam.org/rampin-up!](http://www.ncbam.org/rampin-up!)

#### Information about NCBAM

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) has been connecting individuals (65+) with resources to meet their needs since 2009. Through partnerships with more than 4,000 churches and other organizations, NCBAM provides "help for the journey" to North Carolina's aging.

### Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference

**Hit the mark in senior adult ministry!**  
**Aging Adults Innovating Ministry**  
An NCBAM Leadership Network



Philippians 3:14

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) will host a State Leadership Conference on May 1 in Thomasville. Living Forward will provide leadership training for pastors and lay leaders of senior adults. The conference will also be encouraging and informative to senior adults themselves. The event will be held 9:30am-3:00pm at Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomasville.

Dr. Michael Blackwell, president/CEO of Baptist Children's Homes of North



**SAVE THE DATE!**

Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference

# Living Forward

May 1, 2018  
Rich Fork Baptist Church  
3993 Old US Hwy 29, Thomasville

Carolina will provide the keynote address, Living Forward! Attendees will be encouraged to maintain a positive attitude and finish their races with joy.

Carolyn Hill Edwards, senior adult retreat planner, will provide the closing address, "What's Your Calling?" Edwards will share how self-examination helps leaders discover who they are in ministry.

Six breakout sessions are also planned: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren by Leisa Henderson, Building an Intergenerational Community by Josh Lail, The Nuts and Bolts of Senior Adult Ministry by Sandy Gregory, Looking Forward, Living Forward by Martha McDowell, Rediscovering Your Best Self by Whitney Brooks, and Ageism and What to Expect with Aging by Elizabeth Thomas.

Along with great music, fellowship and food, exhibits from select vendors will be on display and a Parade of Churches will showcase innovative approaches to senior adult ministry. Cost for the conference is \$10 and includes lunch.

NCBAM's "ENCORE" outreach to pastors age 65+, will also hold fellowship and planning meetings during the conference.

The Living Forward conference is an outreach of NCBAM's Leadership Network, AAIM (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry). For more information about AAIM or the Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference, or to reserve your space at the May 1 event, visit [ncbam.org/aaam](http://ncbam.org/aaam) or call 877.506.2226 today!

Carol Layton is the Director of Communications and Administration for NCBAM at Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina



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# Berry Chapel Baptist Church

## The Planting Season Is Here

By Pastor Steve Williams  
Mitchell County

Whenever you get to experience a little warm weather, people start thinking about planting their gardens. I have found out that the people who have the best gardens are those who are willing to work hard and get their hands dirty. See, you will never plant a garden sitting in your recliner, it doesn't work that way. You have to be willing to invest your time and put great effort into your garden if you ever expect to see a harvest in return. Again, great gardens don't just appear, you have to be willing to work hard, and that is what we see in God's Word.

Listen to what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."*

Every Farmer or hobby gardener knows that a seed in a basket will not produce a harvest. Yes, everyone knows that in order to reap, one must be fruitful and diligent to sow the seeds. The principle is true not only in the field, but also in the life of every believer. To sow bountifully is to invest in God's Kingdom, physically, spiritually and financially. When we do this, our heavenly father returns the investment with His Rich Blessings. On the other hand sowing sparingly will bring a small harvest and a small reward. Think about this, you have never heard a Farmer or a Gardner ever boast on how small their harvest was. They are always excited of how much they produced. To the Farmer and to the Gardner it makes them happy to share or give their goods to others.

Since this is true, believers should not plant or give out of cold-hearted calculation, but from warm-hearted jubilation. We should not give spiritually or financially with a sense of obligation, but with a sincere heart concern and generosity. We have the greatest seed in the world that can be planted, and that seed is Jesus Christ. Remember that our Lord loves and delights in the kind of plant and giving that comes from a cheerful attitude. Take joy today in the privilege of blessing others with the seed of



Jesus Christ and helping others along the way. God has given you a wonderful seed to plant in the hearts and lives of others. Do not sow sparingly but give that seed to as many people as you can. Why you say? Because God Loves a Cheerful Giver. Just a little thought to leave you on. You are never more like Jesus than when you are giving of yourself and sowing the seed of Jesus with others. So let's get busy planting this Spring.

### Words of Wisdom

- Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time. Thomas A. Edison
- Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more. H. Jackson Brown, Jr.
- Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love. N/A
- You can never give anything away if your hands are always closed. N/A
- I saw this in a book: I have a motto on my bedroom wall: 'Obstacles are what you see when you take your eye off the goal.' Giving up is not my style. I just want to do something that's worthwhile. N/A
- When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. N/A

### A Little Humor:

A little boy, who wanted \$100.00 very badly, prayed for two weeks but nothing happened. Then he decided to write GOD a letter requesting \$100.00. When the postal authorities received the letter to GOD, U.S.A., they decided to send it to the President.

The President was so impressed, touched, and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the boy \$50.00. Mr. President thought that this would appear to be a lot of money to the little boy.

The little boy was delighted with the \$50.00 and immediately sat down to write a thank you note to GOD that read:

"Dear God, Thank you very much for sending me the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you had to send it through Washington, D.C., and, as usual, those devils took half of it."

### Just a thought:

If you never plant the seed of Jesus, what will happen and who's fault will it be?

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



# Beginnings

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